



## Equal Opportunities Policy

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# Equal Opportunities Policy

## 1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 Ripley ITT SCITT ('the SCITT') is a part of the Bay Learning Trust ('the Trust').
- 1.2 The SCITT is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all trainees and applicants to the SCITT programme. It aims to create an environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.3 The SCITT does not unlawfully discriminate against trainees on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**).
- 1.4 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which trainees treat pupils, parents of pupils, visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and staff members.
- 1.5 All trainees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other trainees. Attention is also drawn to the SCITT's separate Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- 1.6 This Equal Opportunities Policy applies to all aspects of the SCITT's relationship with trainees and to relations between trainees and SCITT personnel at all levels.
- 1.7 The SCITT will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.
- 1.8 This policy is not intended to form the basis of a contract between the SCITT and the Trainee and may be amended at any time.
- 1.9 The SCITT programme operates in line with the legislation applicable to the DfE ITT Criteria as follows:
  - The Equality Act 2019
  - Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 3139)
  - The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

- Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) in Higher Education
- Disability Rights UK education and skills guidance for people with disabilities
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice that relate to equal pay, race, disability and gender discrimination
- Fitness to Teach guidance
- The Health and Safety Executive's Five Steps to Risk Assessment
- Guidance from the Office for Fair Access

## 2 **WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?**

2.1 This policy covers all trainees and SCITT personnel working at all levels and grades.

## 3 **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?**

3.1 The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the SCITT Director.

3.2 The SCITT Senior Leadership must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the SCITT's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. The SCITT Senior Leadership will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The CEO of the Trust has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training.

3.3 SCITT personnel who are involved in management or recruitment, or those who have any questions about the content or application of this policy, should contact the SCITT Director to request training or further information.

## 4 **DISCRIMINATION**

4.1 Trainees and SCITT personnel must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people when on placement, outside placement, on programme related training or events, trips or social occasions.

4.2 Discrimination by or against a trainee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:-

4.2.1 **Direct discrimination:** this occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more Protected Characteristics. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race or because of their sexual orientation.

4.2.2 **Indirect discrimination:** this occurs where a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic, more than others, and is not justified. For example, a requirement to work full time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be objectively justified.

4.2.3 **Harassment:** related to any of the Protected Characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in the SCITT Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

4.2.4 **Victimisation:** is also prohibited. This includes less favourable treatment of, or retaliation against, someone who has complained or supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

## 5 **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

5.1 Recruitment and selection exercises will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. The SCITT's recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

5.2 People with disabilities will be offered facilities at interviews to enable them to demonstrate their suitability for the SCITT programme. This is offered before the SCITT interviews via the Interview Guidance Booklet.

5.3 Interviewees will only be assessed on the programme entry criteria.

- 5.4 Recruitment and selection data will monitor the outcomes for different groups of applicants.

## 6 **TERMINATION OF PLACE ON PROGRAMME**

- 6.1 The SCITT will ensure that any disciplinary or fitness to practise criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- 6.2 The SCITT will also ensure that disciplinary and/or fitness to practise procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## 7 **DISABILITIES**

- 7.1 Trainees may be required to declare any disabilities on their application form as required by UCAS or the Department for Education. If a trainee is disabled or becomes disabled, the SCITT encourages them to tell it about their condition so that it can support the trainee as appropriate. Our Admissions Policy states that a medical check is a condition of offer of a place on the programme which will confirm Fitness to Teach or otherwise and provide details of any support or readjustments needed.
- 7.2 If a trainee experiences difficulties on placement because of their disability, they may wish to contact the SCITT Director to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The SCITT Director may wish to consult with the trainee and their medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. The SCITT will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate the trainee's needs within reason. If the SCITT considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, it will explain the SCITT's reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 7.3 The SCITT will monitor the physical features of its training venues to take account of the needs of all participants.

## 8 **BREACHES OF THIS POLICY**

- 8.1 If a trainee believes that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against then they are encouraged to raise the matter through the SCITT's Complaints Policy or Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy, as appropriate. If a trainee is uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed they should speak to the SCITT Director. Any complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

- 8.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant policy or procedure. Trainees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the SCITT's Disciplinary Policy.

Any trainee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. The SCITT takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.