

International School Anti-Discrimination Taskforce (ISADTF)

Human Resource Committee Guidance Document

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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ANTI-DISCRIMINATION TASK FORCE



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ABSTRACT

The International School Anti-Discrimination Taskforce (ISADTF) is committed to creating inclusive environments within international schools. Recognizing the significant role Human Resources (HR) plays in shaping school culture and practices, this document offers recommendations to promote fair and inclusive HR policies and procedures, supporting employee retention and ensuring transparent and balanced compensation and benefits.

Key strategies for creating an inclusive workplace begin with equitable recruitment, hiring and onboarding practices, along with robust anti-discrimination policies. This includes bias-free job descriptions, diverse sourcing networks, blind resume screening, structured interviews, and transparent hiring criteria. Onboarding programs emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), cultural awareness training, and mentorship are crucial. Additionally, strong anti-discrimination policies, transparent reporting mechanisms, regular training, and legal compliance are essential for maintaining a safe and inclusive environment.

To ensure employee retention, it is vital to create a workplace where all employees feel valued and supported. ISADTF's recommendations highlight the importance of equitable treatment, support networks for underrepresented employees, regular feedback mechanisms, and inclusive leadership development. Equal professional development opportunities, transparent promotion criteria, and regular performance reviews ensure merit-based advancement.

Achieving pay equity and fair benefits is essential for fostering an inclusive workplace. Strategies include eliminating salary history queries, implementing narrow pay bands, promoting transparent compensation practices, offering comprehensive health benefits, equitable bonus structures, inclusive leave policies, and regular cost-of-living adjustments. These measures, along with equal access to professional development and supportive work-life balance policies, contribute to a workplace where all employees feel valued.

Sustaining DEI efforts requires a multifaceted approach that integrates equitable treatment, support networks, and consistent feedback mechanisms. Regular audits, performance metrics, and transparent reporting ensure DEI goals are met. Building strong partnerships and community engagement further enhances inclusivity and diversity. Allocating appropriate resources, detailed action plans, and regular DEI training facilitate effective implementation. Addressing challenges through education and open dialogue is crucial, and continuous evaluation ensures long-term progress and accountability. Collectively, these strategies foster a workplace where all employees can thrive, contributing to higher retention and overall organizational success. However, please note that these are guidelines and best practice recommendations. They should only be applied after ensuring that they do not conflict with national or local laws in the respective country where a school resides.

ISADTF Human Resource Committee Guidance Document for Schools

Introduction

The International School Anti-Discrimination Taskforce (ISADTF) is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable environments within international schools. Recognizing the critical role of Human Resources (HR) in shaping school culture and practices, this document aims to promote fair and inclusive HR policies and procedures in schools to enhance employee retention and ensure fair compensation and benefits. These recommendations are designed to serve as actionable, measurable goals that international schools can adopt to create and maintain a fair and inclusive work environment. Please note that these are guidelines and best practice recommendations. They should only be applied after ensuring that they do not conflict with national or local laws in the respective country where a school resides.

Goals Objectives and Key Participants

The primary goals of the ISADTF's recommendations are to:

1. Promote fair and inclusive HR policies and procedures in international schools.
2. Enhance employee retention by fostering an inclusive work environment.
3. Ensure fair and equitable compensation and benefits for all employees.

These objectives aim to create a work culture that values diversity and provides equal opportunities for all staff members, regardless of their background. Key participants in implementing these recommendations include:

1. **School Leadership** who are responsible for endorsing and prioritizing DEI initiatives.
2. **HR Departments**, tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring policies and procedures.
3. **DEI Committees**, which are groups dedicated to overseeing diversity and inclusion efforts.
4. **All Employees** as they engage in creating an inclusive work environment through participation in training and adherence to policies.

Policymaking

An inclusive work environment in schools begins with equitable recruitment, hiring and onboarding practices, and robust anti-discrimination policies. The following recommendations provide details on how to achieve this more effectively:

Recruitment and Hiring Policies

1. **Bias-Free Job Descriptions and Advertisements:** Ensure all job descriptions are free from gendered or biased language. Use neutral terms and focus on skills and qualifications relevant to the job. This minimizes unconscious biases that may deter diverse candidates from applying.
2. **Diverse Sourcing Networks:** Use various platforms, agencies, job boards, and networks to attract candidates from different backgrounds. Expand outreach to underrepresented groups and beyond elite universities. This helps in reaching a broader talent pool that reflects diverse backgrounds and experiences.
3. **Blind Resume Screening:** Implement blind resume screening processes to prevent bias related to gender, ethnicity, or other personal identifiers. This process can include removing names, addresses, and other personal information from resumes during initial screenings.
4. **Structured Interviews:** Develop standardized interview scripts and train interview teams to conduct behavioral-based interviews that focus on objective criteria. Include diverse interview panels to minimize affinity bias. Structured interviews ensure all candidates are assessed consistently and fairly.

5. **Transparent Hiring Criteria:** Define and communicate objective hiring criteria to all members of the hiring team to ensure consistency and fairness throughout the evaluation process. This transparency helps in building trust and ensuring that all candidates are evaluated on the same standards.
6. **Inclusive Recruitment Practices:** Ensure recruitment processes are unbiased and accessible to a diverse range of candidates. This includes removing candidate fees, providing clear information about visa requirements, and minimizing personal information requirements during the initial application stages.

Onboarding and Orientation Policies

1. **Inclusive Onboarding Programs:** Develop onboarding programs that integrate principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Provide new hires with comprehensive information about the school's commitment to DEI and the resources available to support them. This helps new employees feel welcomed and supported from the beginning.
2. **Cultural Awareness Training:** Offer cultural awareness and sensitivity training to all new employees to foster an inclusive environment during their induction period. This training can include information on different cultures, languages, and practices represented within the school community.
3. **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship programs that pair new hires with experienced staff members who can provide guidance and support during their transition. Mentorship programs can help new employees navigate their new environment and integrate more smoothly into the school community.

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies

1. **Strong Anti-Discrimination Policies:** Implement and regularly update comprehensive anti-discrimination policies. Ensure these policies are clearly and regularly communicated to all staff and included in the employee handbook. Policies should cover all forms of discrimination, including race, gender, sexuality, and disability.
2. **Transparent Reporting Mechanisms:** Develop transparent and accessible reporting mechanisms for discrimination and harassment complaints. Ensure multiple channels for reporting and involve third-party systems to increase trust and accountability. This helps in ensuring that complaints are handled impartially and promptly.
3. **Regular Training:** Provide ongoing training for all employees on anti-discrimination policies, bystander intervention, and how to report and handle complaints. Regular training helps keep staff informed about policies and best practices for maintaining an inclusive environment.
4. **Legal Compliance and Best Practices:** Ensure compliance with local and international anti-discrimination laws. Adopt best practices from leading institutions and regularly review policies to align with evolving standards and legal requirements.

Retention

The following provides details on how to promote an inclusive work environment in schools, professional development considerations, and work-life balance strategies:

Inclusive Work Environment

1. **Equitable Treatment:** Ensure all staff are treated equitably and consistently, without any form of discrimination through regular review and updates to policies. Equitable treatment includes fair distribution of work, opportunities for advancement, and access to resources.
2. **Support Networks:** Establish support networks and affinity groups for employees from underrepresented groups or communities to foster a sense of community and belonging. These groups can provide peer support, mentorship, and advocacy within the organization.

3. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement regular feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, to gauge employee satisfaction and address concerns related to inclusivity and equity. Use the feedback to make informed changes to policies and practices.
4. **Inclusive Leadership Development:** Promote inclusive leadership by offering training programs that emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion. Ensure that leaders and managers understand how to create and maintain an inclusive work environment.

Professional Development

1. **Career Advancement Opportunities:** Career advancement programs should be transparent and merit-based. Ensure that all employees have access to equal opportunities for professional development and career advancement through training and resources needed to progress in their careers.
2. **Transparent Promotion Criteria:** Define and communicate clear, objective criteria for promotions. Use a uniform evaluation cycle to ensure consistency and fairness in performance reviews. Transparent promotion criteria help ensure that all employees have a fair chance at advancement.
3. **Regular Performance Reviews:** Conduct regular performance reviews based on standardized metrics. Provide managers with adequate time and training to conduct thorough and unbiased evaluations. Regular reviews help identify areas for improvement and ensure ongoing professional development.

Work-Life Balance

1. **Flexible Work Policies:** Implement flexible work policies that support caregivers and promote work-life balance for all employees. Ensure these policies are accessible and utilized equitably. Flexible work policies can include options for remote work, flexible hours, and job-sharing arrangements.
2. **Parental Leave:** Offer paid parental leave and smooth transitions back to work. Provide sufficient facilities, such as lactation rooms, to support returning parents. Parental leave policies should be inclusive of all types of families.
3. **Childcare and Eldercare Support:** Provide access to affordable, quality childcare and eldercare services to reduce the burden on employees with caregiving responsibilities. Support services can include on-site childcare, partnerships with local childcare providers, and financial assistance for eldercare.

Compensation and Benefits

Achieving pay equity and benefits is a critical component of fostering a fair and inclusive workplace. The following strategies address wage disparities and ensure equitable compensation practices:

Pay Equity

1. **Eliminate Salary History Queries:** Do not ask candidates for their salary history during the hiring process to prevent perpetuating wage disparities. This helps ensure that compensation is based on the candidate's skills and experience rather than past earnings.
2. **Narrow Pay Bands:** Create narrow pay bands to reduce disparities and ensure equitable starting salaries. Conduct annual reviews of pay data to identify and address any inequities. Narrow pay bands help ensure that employees in similar roles are compensated fairly.
3. **Transparent Compensation Practices:** Publish pay ranges and compensation levels for all roles, broken down by population demographics, where differences exist. This transparency holds the organization accountable and fosters trust among employees. Regular audits of compensation practices can help identify and correct disparities.
4. **Equitable Pay and Benefits for Local Staff:** Address disparities in pay, health insurance, working hours, professional development, school fees for their children, and other benefits between local and

expatriate staff. Schools should ensure local staff receive comparable compensation and benefits and provide language upskilling for locally-hired staff, fostering collaboration and a unified school community.

Benefits

1. **Comprehensive Health Benefits:** Offer health insurance packages that cover specific needs of diverse employees, including reproductive health, mental health services, and support for domestic violence survivors. Comprehensive health benefits help ensure that all employees have access to necessary care.
2. **Equitable Bonus Structures:** Ensure that bonuses and other incentives are distributed equitably. Conduct regular analyses to identify any discrepancies and implement corrective measures. Equitable bonus structures help recognize and reward employee contributions fairly.
3. **Inclusive Leave Policies:** Develop leave policies that recognize and support diverse family structures, including chosen families and caregiving responsibilities beyond immediate family members. Inclusive leave policies help ensure that all employees can take the time they need for personal and family matters.
4. **Cost-of-Living Adjustments:** Regularly adjust salaries to reflect changes in the cost of living, particularly for expatriate hires. This helps ensure that all employees can maintain a reasonable standard of living regardless of location.

Conclusion

The ISADTF's recommendations provide a structured approach to creating an inclusive and equitable HR environment within international schools. By implementing these comprehensive policies and procedures, schools can ensure that their HR practices are free from discrimination and supportive of all employees. Developing a detailed action plan, along with clear goals and measurable metrics, will help schools achieve their DEI objectives and foster a culture of inclusivity (see Appendix A for details). Continuous evaluation and community engagement are key to sustaining these efforts and making meaningful progress toward a discrimination-free workplace.

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APPENDIX A—Sustaining the DEI Efforts

Sustaining DEI efforts over time requires a multifaceted approach that integrates equitable treatment, support networks, and consistent feedback mechanisms within an inclusive work environment. The following strategies are aimed at ensuring that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts become integral to the fabric of the school environment and are sustained over time.

Measuring Success and Accountability

1. **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular audits of recruitment, retention, and compensation practices to ensure compliance with DEI goals.
2. **Performance Metrics:** Develop specific, measurable metrics to track progress in DEI initiatives.
3. **Reporting:** Provide regular reports to school leadership and stakeholders on the progress and effectiveness of DEI efforts.

Partnerships and Community Engagement

1. **Diverse Recruitment Partnerships:** Collaborate with organizations and institutions that support diverse hiring practices.
2. **Community Outreach:** Engage with the broader community to promote inclusivity and support diversity initiatives.
3. **Employee Resource Groups:** Encourage the formation of groups that represent various demographics within the school.

Budgeting for DEI Efforts

1. **Funding for DEI Initiatives:** Allocate sufficient funds to support DEI training, mentorship programs, and other related initiatives.
2. **Staffing for DEI Roles:** Ensure that there are dedicated roles and personnel responsible for implementing and monitoring DEI efforts.
3. **Technology and Tools:** Invest in tools and technologies that support unbiased recruitment and inclusive workplace practices.

Action Plan

1. **Implementation Timeline:** Develop a detailed timeline for implementing each recommendation.
2. **Assign Responsibilities:** Clearly assign responsibilities to specific individuals or teams for each action item.
3. **Training Programs:** Schedule regular DEI training sessions for all employees.

Challenges and Mitigation

1. **Resistance to Change:** Address resistance by communicating the benefits of DEI initiatives and providing education on the importance of diversity and inclusion.

2. **Resource Limitations:** Mitigate resource constraints by prioritizing key initiatives and seeking external funding or partnerships.
3. **Cultural Barriers:** Overcome cultural barriers through continuous education and fostering an open, inclusive dialogue within the school community.

Evaluate and Monitor Progress

1. **Regular Review Meetings:** Hold regular meetings to review the progress of DEI initiatives and make necessary adjustments.
2. **Feedback and Adjustments:** Collect feedback from employees and stakeholders to continuously improve DEI efforts.
3. **Long-Term Monitoring:** Establish long-term monitoring systems to ensure sustained progress and accountability.