



## Equality & Diversity Policy - Staff

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<b>Monitoring &amp; Review</b>	People & Resource Committee	
<b>Links</b>	All employment policies; SEN Policy; Admission Policy	
<b>Staff responsible</b>	HR Director	

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# 1. Purpose of Policy and Guiding principles

The purpose of this policy is to define the Trust's commitment to equality and diversity and represents our commitment to a common set of values and objectives, and to a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring the policy.

The Trust is committed to equality in both employment and education provision. We aim to ensure that students, parents, governors, employees, contractors, partners, clients and those who may potentially join the Trust community, are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect.

This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics :

- Age;
- Disability;
- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;
- sex (including transgender);
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation; and
- marriage and civil partnership (for employees)

The Trust recognises that it is also unlawful to discriminate by association or perception, e.g. treating an employee unfairly based on the Protected Characteristics of their parents or other family members. This policy recognises the four types of unlawful behaviour (see Appendix 1)

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

Every possible step will be taken into account in the aim of ensuring individuals are treated fairly and decisions are based on objective criteria.

## 2. Equality Statement

This statement is underpinned by the Equalities Act 2010, and the Trust will ensure that equal opportunities and the principles of fairness underpin all aspects of policy, procedure, education provision, consultation and decision making.

The Trust is committed to equality in its delivery of education, whether or not the service is directly provided by us or contracted out to a third party provider.

The Trust aims to provide high quality education services, making sure services are easily accessible. We will improve what we do by continuing to consult with staff, students, parents and governors, their communities and partners about equalities issues, on a termly basis. We will

promote our equal opportunities policy in our contact with parents, staff, governors and external organisations.

We will make every effort to create equality in opportunities in order to ensure they are accessible and fair to everyone. Every person has the right to be treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age culture, religion, nationality or caring responsibilities. Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments, or additional support, to ensure equality of access to the workplace and supporting the employee in a suitable working environment.

Our staff, Board of Trustees and governors who agree and deliver our education provision will recognise diversity and demonstrate a proactive approach in their day-to-day work. They will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, recognising special needs and understanding differences. Behaviour will reach our high standards of conduct (staff and students) and the learning and working environment we provide will be safe and accessible for those studying and working.

The Trust will adhere to statutory Government legislation and give consideration to other relevant guidance, which aim to make sure that everyone is treated with equity. The Trust will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against members of the Trust family.

### 3. Employment

The Trust is committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to jobs, training, and professional development opportunities.

Under the Equalities Act 2010, the Trust recognises that the Act extends beyond the protected characteristics of an individual employee and has broader responsibilities to employees and situations that maybe covered by the Act. For example an employee with parental or caring responsibilities for a disabled dependent may have rights under the Act which the Trust would need to consider.

All recruitment will be within the provisions of the act, and applications will be monitored to report on recruitment activity, in line with the act.

Employees who are in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

#### **Contractors and Service Providers**

The Trust will ensure that all service providers that are contracted to provide services to students, staff or visitors will comply with Equalities legislation. Where services are deemed not to meet Trust standards, in relation to equal opportunities and fairness, contracts will be terminated.

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board are responsible for:

- Making sure the Academies follow all equality and diversity policies and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality.

All Principals are responsible for:

- Demonstrating consistent and high profile leadership on equality and diversity.
- Putting the Trust's equality and diversity policies into practice.
- Ensuring that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out.
- Following the relevant procedures and taking swift action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

- Actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination, related to protected characteristics perpetrated by students, other staff or visitors.
- Keeping up to date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training.
- Complaints from parents, students and the community will be dealt with in line with the Trust's complaints procedure, and as such appropriate staff will deal with the relevant stage of the complaint

## 5. Complaints

The Trust will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful (or potentially unlawful) discrimination.

Any complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Trust's grievance or complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.

## Appendix 1 – Four types of unlawful behaviour

The Equalities Act 2010 defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

**Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if an employee was refused a promotion because of their race.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents’ meeting on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend, or arranging the weekly professional learning sessions for teachers on days when no part time staff are available for work. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

**Harassment** has a specific legal definition in the Act. It is: “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic. Where academies are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does not mean that academies are free to bully or harass pupils or staff on these other grounds - to do so would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable. Any case against the academy would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment.

**Victimisation** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to not discourage people from raising what they feel are, at the time, genuine concerns about discrimination.