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Equality Information

and Objectives

2025 - 2028

Mission Statement

To inspire our family of schools to provide opportunities for our pupils, staff and leaders to be the best they can be; to create a passion for lifelong learning; to enable our pupils to become kind, confident and impactful world citizens.

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1. Aims

Our Trust aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will:

Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout its academies, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years;

Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Principals.

The CEO will:

Meet with the Principals and other relevant staff members, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed;

Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document;

Attend appropriate equality and diversity training;

Report back to the Trust board regarding any issues.

The Principals will:

Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst his/her staff and pupils;

Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to the Local Governance Committee (LGC).

All staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 8.

4. Eliminating discrimination

The Trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every at least annually. This will be reported to Trustees annually when the objectives are reviewed.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the Trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying);

Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling transgender pupils to transition in a supportive environment);

Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies).

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the Trust's academies will:

Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing;

Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information;

Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying);

Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils.

Put in place a full range of pastoral, well-being and educational measures to address disadvantage and work towards equality of outcomes.

Deliver a curriculum which celebrates equality and diversity and through which the core British values of mutual respect and tolerance are interwoven including, but not exclusively, through PSHE, RSHE, RE and SMSC.

6. Fostering good relations

The Trust aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures

Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and external speakers will be invited to contribute

Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups and groups which represent people with protected characteristics to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community.

Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs with attendance monitored for inclusivity. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures

Links have been developed with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach. Expertise is shared across the Trust.

The Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice and prejudice-related bullying. There is guidance on the staff intranet on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with and we ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training in this area.

We take seriously our obligation to regularly review and analyse the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are addressed, including lessons learned and how these impact changes to our provision. This information is reported to, scrutinised and challenged by our governors.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The Trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. As appropriate, we consult and involve groups and individuals in relation to the protected characteristics.

Its academies must always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

Cuts across any religious holidays

Is accessible to pupils with disabilities

Has equivalent facilities for boys, girls, transgender and gender neutral students

The Trust and its academies keep written records (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show equality duties have been actively considered and relevant questions have been asked. This is recorded in the minutes of the relevant decision making meetings.

8. Equality objectives

1. Develop attendance of all sub-groups of students, working towards at least the level of the national average for those outside of the sub-groups.

2. Repeat above for exclusions.

3. Repeat above for examination performance.

4. Reduce the number of students receiving suspensions by occasion.

5. Minimise incidents of bullying based upon prejudice and ensure that education is a key component of rehabilitation of perpetrators.

6. Ensure that Empower Learning Academy Trust remains an equal opportunity employer.

9. Monitoring arrangements

The CEO and Principals will update the equality information we publish, at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by the Trust board at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by the CEO.

10. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Academy Accessibility plans;
- Risk assessments.

Appendix A: Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics that relate to schools are:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (with regard to schools as employers)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Disability

A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

In relation to physical impairment:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.
- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis.
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met.
- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.

Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

Sex

A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to either boys or girls.

Race

Race means a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin

and a racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethic or national origins.

A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'. Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

Religion or belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

A religion need not be mainstream or well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within religions may be considered a religion. Cults and new religious movements may also be considered religions or beliefs.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.

'Religious belief' goes beyond beliefs about and adherence to a religion or its central articles of faith and may vary from person to person within the same religion.

A belief which is not a religious belief may be a philosophical belief, such as humanism or atheism.

A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to.

- Some people are only attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men).
- Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people).
- Some people are only attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people).

Everyone is protected from being treated worse because of sexual orientation, whether they are bisexual, gay, lesbian or heterosexual.

Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, as is more likely for school pupils, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention known to someone – it does not matter who this is, whether it is someone at school or at home or someone like a doctor:

    - once they have proposed to undergo gender reassignment they are protected, even if they take no further steps or they decide to stop later on
    - they do not have to have reached an irrevocable decision that they will undergo gender reassignment, but as soon as there is a manifestation of this intention they are protected
- start or continue to dress, behave or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person
- undergo treatment related to gender reassignment, such as surgery or hormone therapy

  or

  have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004

It does not matter which of these applies to a person for them to be protected because of the characteristic of gender reassignment.

Pregnancy and maternity

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is covered in Appendix B.

Appendix B: Unlawful Behaviour.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another pupil because of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination based on association

Direct discrimination also occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity).

This might occur when you treat a pupil less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination based on perception

Direct discrimination also occurs when you treat a pupil less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic.

Discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity

It is discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger.

It is direct **sex discrimination** to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when you apply a provision, criterion or practice in the same way for all pupils or a particular pupil group, but this has the effect of putting pupils sharing a protected characteristic within the general student group at a particular disadvantage.

Discrimination arising from disability

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when you treat a disabled pupil unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment.

Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs because of the protected characteristic of disability. For discrimination arising from disability, the motive for the treatment does not matter; the question is whether the disabled pupil has been treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability.

Discrimination arising from disability is also different from indirect discrimination. There is no need to show that other people have been affected alongside the individual disabled pupil or for the disabled pupil to compare themselves with anyone else.

Harassment

There are three types of harassment which are unlawful under the Equality Act:

- Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- Sexual harassment
- Less favourable treatment of a pupil because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

The relevant protected characteristics for the schools' provisions are:

- Disability
- Race
- Sex

Harassment related to a protected characteristic

Harassment occurs when a pupil is subject to unwanted behaviour which is related to a relevant protected characteristic and which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating a pupil's dignity or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the pupil

The word 'unwanted' means 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. It is not necessary for the pupil to say that they object to the behaviour for it to be unwanted.

In this context 'related to' has a broad meaning and includes situations where the pupil who is on the receiving end of the unwanted behaviour does not have the protected characteristic himself or herself, provided there is a connection between the behaviour and a protected characteristic. This would also include situations where the pupil is associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, or is wrongly perceived as having a particular protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment occurs when a pupil is subject to unwanted behaviour which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating a pupil's dignity or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, offensive or sexualised environment for the pupil

'Of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails with material of a sexual nature.

It is unlawful to treat a pupil less favourably because they either submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex.

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. For a full definition of child-on-child sexual harassment, see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.

Victimisation

Victimisation is defined in the Act as treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act' (or because the school believes that a person has done or is going to do a protected act).

There are additional victimisation provisions for schools which extend the protection to pupils who are victimised because their parent or sibling has carried out a protected act.

A ‘protected act’ is:

- Making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Act)
- Helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information
- Making an allegation that the school or someone else has breached the Act
- Doing anything else in connection with the Act

Appendix C: Further Reading & Support

The Equality Act 2010 and Schools

Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Equality and Human Rights Commission: The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty

Equality and Human Rights Commission: What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools, March 2014

What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools | Equality and Human Rights Commission (equalityhumanrights.com)

DfE: Preventing and Tackling Bullying
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Ofsted Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges

DfE: Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

DfE: Behaviour in schools
Behaviour in schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

UKCIS: Tackling race and faith targeted bullying face to face and online
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-race-and-faith-targeted-bullying-face-to-face-and-online-a-guide-for-schools

Gov.uk: Equality Act 2010: advice for schools
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools

Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools

Promoting fundamental British values through SMSC - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)