

UNDER REVIEW – INTERIM USE ONLY
Pending Board Update – February '26

Equality Policy

(including Public Sector Equality Duty Statement and Objectives)

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The Board of Trustees, CEO and Strategic team are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.

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| This policy was created and ratified by the Trust Board in: | February 2020 |
| The policy owner is: | Chief Executive Officer |
| This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board in: (unless earlier review is recommended by the Trust) | February 2024 UNDER REVIEW – INTERIM USE ONLY Pending Board Update – February '26 |
| Policy Version: | V2 |
| Signed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees: | J. Smith |

Related Policies:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Employees
- Anti-bullying (pupils)
- Flexible Working Policy
- SEND Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Accessibility Plan

1. Definitions

The Trust: refers to The Wensum Trust

Headteacher: also refers to any other title used to identify the Principal/Headteacher where appropriate.

Employee: refers to any member of the staff, teaching and support, employed to work at an academy in the Trust.

2. Introduction

The Trust is deeply committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and actively promotes this with its staff, Trustees, Governors, volunteers, pupils, parents/carers and all in the academy community.

All our academies are inclusive where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth. We believe that the Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

3. Scope of this Policy

This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Trust does not tolerate any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

4. The Legal Context

4.1. The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that no-one should be discriminated against or treated less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity, age, marriage and civil partnerships.

4.2. The Act requires all public organisations, including Academy Trusts to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

4.2.1. Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty”

This requires all public organisations, including Academy Trusts to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

4.2.2. Two “Specific Duties”

This requires all public organisations, including Academy Trusts, to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

4.3. We understand from time to time further legislation and guidance is published by Government and relevant legal bodies and we will continually monitor and implement relevant policy and practice to ensure compliance.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. All Trustees, Governors, staff, volunteers, students and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the Trust’s Equality and Diversity Policy.

5.2. In addition the Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Trust prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews an Equality and Diversity Policy and in particular the employment implications of meeting the Duty.

- 5.3. Each Local Advisory Board is responsible for the implementation of this policy and will delegate the day to day operational responsibility to a named senior manager, usually the Headteacher.

6. Publishing Equality Objectives

- 6.1. The objectives which we identify represent the Trust's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.
- 6.2. We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups. We produce equality data analysis which informs our discussions about the Equality Objectives.

7. Our Trust Equality Objectives for 2020-24 are:

- a) Narrowing the gap objectives e.g. to narrow the gap between boys and girls / between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups
- b) All staff will receive equality of opportunity in relation to whole Trust training, with a commitment to encourage respectful communications, self-regulation and empathy across the whole community of staff, children and families.
- c) Advertising of roles across the Trust will aim to attract more applicants from underrepresented minority groups from within the local population profile. This will include; Inclusion of statements of encouragement within advertising campaigns to encourage more balanced recruitment e.g. gender, ethnicity, disability

Each academy also has their own objectives, specific to their setting, which can be found in the academy specific policy.

Every academy in the Trust will undertake equalities data reporting to its Local Advisory Board and will set a minimum of one annual objective at school level in line with locally identified priorities.

We note also that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

8. What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- The Trust takes account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way it provides education for its students and the way in which they provide access for students to facilities and services
- The Trust is aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils/students; designed to enhance access and participation to the level of

non-disabled students and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers

- Headteachers ensure that all recruitment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities
- The Trust takes seriously the need to consider the equality implications when they develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever they make significant decisions about the day to day life of the academies
- The Trust actively promotes equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all
- The Trust ensures that admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity
- The Academy's Behaviour Management Policy takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act. The Trust makes reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for students with a disability. The Trust closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from Academy for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.
- Academies challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling the Trust's commitment to inclusion and equality. Academies treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

9. What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- We know the needs of our pupils very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements
- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our admissions meetings
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support Academy improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills
- We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups
- We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able"
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils
- We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality

- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary
- We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the Academy's Equality Objectives.

10. What we are doing to foster good relations

- We work closely and openly with parents/carers
- We communicate and engage with a variety of community groups including the local church
- We enable employees and other groups to work with pupils in the academy to broaden and deepen their educational experience

Each academy has their own arrangements for fostering good relations in addition to those listed above. These can be found in the academy specific policy.

11. Monitoring and Reviewing the Objectives

- 11.1. The Trust reviews and updates the equality objectives every four years. We will publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives for parents and carers, on the Trust website.

12. Disseminating the Policy

- 12.1. The Equality Policy along with the objectives and data is available;
- On the Trust and academy websites
 - As paper copies in the Academy office
 - In the staff handbook
 - As part of induction for new staff