

# Equality and Diversity Policy Objectives

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## Document Change History

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Version:</b>	<b>Description of Changes:</b>
September 2023	1.2	New policy with revisions made by Trust Board

## Mission Statement

*“To nurture and develop all people in our Trust so that they reach their full potential academically, vocationally, and personally, including being positive role models for future generations in the community. We will achieve this by providing high quality values-based education that cultivates employability and life skills making our schools the first choice for young people, parents, carers, staff and employers.”*

## Values

The values of Respect, Excellence, Collaboration, Independence, Perseverance, Enjoyment, Leadership, Integrity and Care are central to everything we do at the Skills for Life Trust.

## Statement of Equality

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## Purpose

The Trust’s aims are to ensure that all children within our schools gain a first-rate education, develop the skills necessary for the next stage in their lives and are equipped with the personal values and attributes that will make them successful in a fast-changing world.

The principle of Equality is fundamental to the Trust achieving its aims for employees, children, volunteers and visitors. The Trust will ensure that all aspects of Equality are addressed in line with the expectations and directives of the Equalities Act, through every area of the curriculum and all areas of school life. The Trust aims to:

- To treat all individuals with equal value
- To eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- To foster positive attitudes and good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (i.e. tackle prejudice and promote understanding).
- To take such steps as are reasonable to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- To take such steps as are reasonable to meet the needs of the persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- To provide a range of education and training programmes which encourage everyone to participate in learning.
- To ensure that recruitment, retention, and development of staff or volunteers is done so following the equality principles.
- To consider equality implications before and at the time that policies are developed, as well as keeping them under review on a continual basis.
- To carry out equality impact assessments to assess whether policies and/or plans are having negative or adverse, or positive impact on specific groups of individuals.
- To ensure that all marketing activities and procurement processes meet equality and diversity best practice.
- To respect the religious beliefs and practices of individuals.

In both its delivery of services and the employment of its staff, the Trust will ensure that no person will be discriminated against due to any of the protected characteristics, as detailed in the Act. This includes discrimination due to association or perception (where it is believed an individual has a particular characteristic). The characteristics protected by the act are:

- Age (as an employer – but not applicable to students)
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition to this, no employees will be discriminated against due to trade union membership or activities. The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a Trust to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student:

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for students
- In the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility, or service
- By excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

## 1. Roles and Responsibilities

### The Trust Board will:

- Ensure that the Trust complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Effectively communicates and adopts this policy throughout the Trust
- Meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to publish equality objectives at least every four years, commencing on the date of the last publication.
- Ensure that the Trust's policies and procedures are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans.
- Ensure that the Trust's Admissions Policy does not discriminate in any way
- Ensure equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, professional development programme and in membership of the Governance Boards.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the equality policy annually
- Monitor education outcomes, incidents of harassment and discrimination and referrals by a range of criteria including protected characteristics.

### The Executive Team will:

- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities, given necessary training and support, and report progress to the Trust Board.
- Ensure that the recording and reporting of equality and diversity is sufficiently scrutinised
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, a shared sense of cohesion and belonging and ensure this is promoted in our policies, procedure, and activities.
- Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention, and development, and ensure that all policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees

regardless of any protected characteristic, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

- Reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- Ensure staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the Trust, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and showing appropriate support for students with additional needs, maintaining a good level of awareness of issues surrounding equality.

### **Headteachers will:**

- Implement this policy and its procedures
- Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training, as part of their induction and CPD
- Ensure that all parents, visitors, and contractors are aware of, and comply with the provisions of this policy.
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance
- Produce an annual report on the progress meeting the equality objectives set out in this policy.

### **Employees will:**

- Be mindful of any incidents of harassment or bullying in the Trust
- Address any minor issues of harassment or bullying and report any major breaches of the policy to the Headteacher
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the Trust's culture.
- Promote equality and good relations, and not harass or discriminate in any way.
- Monitor students' progress and academic needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place
- Keep up to date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training.

## 2. Equality Objectives

The Trust is committed to promoting the welfare and equality of all its staff, students, and other members of the Trust community. To achieve this, the Trust has established the following objectives for the period 2022-2024.

### Trust wide student objectives:

**Objective 1:** Monitor changes to the curriculum to ensure they result in good outcomes for students in all vulnerable groups.

**Objective 2:** Provide an inclusive education experience for all students.

**Objective 3:** Ensure all students receive independent, rich, and supportive careers advice to ensure all students are prepared for the world beyond our doors.

**Objective 4:** Ensure all students explore a curriculum which provides a rich and diverse experience.

### Trust wide staff/volunteer objectives:

**Objective 1:** Undertake an analysis of recruitment data and trends regarding race, gender and disability and report on this to the Trustees

- We have adopted this objective to track the diverse groups who are applying for roles within the schools/Trust and to ensure that we maintain a fair recruitment and selection process.
- To achieve this objective, we plan to request applicants complete equal opportunity monitoring forms and to record this data anonymously and keep it centrally.

**Objective 2:** Have in place a reasonable adjustment agreement for all staff with disabilities to meet their needs better and make sure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed

- We have chosen this objective to ensure no staff are disadvantaged in any aspect of their role because of any disability.
- To achieve this objective, we plan to understand any needs staff have and draw up a support plan in consultation with the Trust HR function.

**Objective 3:** Increase the representation of teachers from diverse background applying to work for Skills for Life Trust and its schools.

**Objective 4:** Train all members of staff, Governors and Trustees involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination.

- Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those attending have a good understanding of the legal requirements.

**Objective 5:** Include the ‘Two Ticks’ positive about people with disabilities symbol on all job adverts, application forms and information to help address the under-representation of people with disabilities in the school workforce.

**In addition, each academy will set equality objectives specific to their context and student and staff populations that support these overarching objectives.**

### 3. Promoting equality

To meet our objectives, the Trust has identified the following priorities:

- The Trust will provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled student’s educational needs, as a reasonable adjustment, so they can integrate wholly in all parts of the Trust life.
- Staff will ensure that all students are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and the Trust will monitor uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- The Trust will ensure that all forms of prejudice-motivated bullying is taken seriously and dealt with equally and firmly.
- The headteacher will ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for all students.
- There will be a clearly defined disciplinary system in each school stipulated in the behaviour policy, which will be consistently enforced.
- The Trust will increase access for disabled children and young people to the Trust and will take necessary steps to meet students’ needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled students, enabling them to take as full a part as possible in the activities of the Trust. [Subject to listed building status planning requirements]
- The Trust schools will ensure there is adequate access to the physical environment of the Trust.
- The Trust schools will improve the delivery of written information to disabled children and young people
- The Trust will seek the views of the staff, outside agencies and local academies
- Throughout the year, the Trust Schools will plan ongoing events to raise awareness of equality and diversity.



The Trust will consult with stakeholders to establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning.

Equality objectives will be published at least every 4 years, commencing on the date of the last publication.

All forms of prejudice-motivated bullying are taken seriously and dealt with equally and firmly. The Trust Schools have an Anti-Bullying and a Behaviour policy to cover the areas that are not within the scope of the Equality Act.

Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying.

## 4. Addressing prejudice-related incidents

- The Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that students and staff who experience any form of prejudice-related discrimination may fare less well in the education system.
- The Trust will ensure that students and staff are aware of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents from occurring.
- If incidents continue to occur, the Trust will address them immediately and report them through the appropriate procedure.

## 5. Curriculum

- All students will be entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum and to teaching and learning opportunities which meet their needs, including extra support where this has been identified as a statutory need.
- When planning the curriculum, the Trust will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
- When teaching the curriculum, the Trust will promote equality and will not subject individuals to discrimination. The Trust will develop an appropriate curriculum for all students in all vulnerable groups.
- The Trust will ensure PSHE lessons are designed for students to develop their knowledge of the world and the importance of equality.

## 6. Employment Provisions

- The Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel, it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.
- As an employer, the Trust strives to ensure that discrimination and harassment is eliminated in our employment practice, and we actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- The Trust will not discriminate against a potential employee in respect of whether to offer a job or the terms on which a job is offered. With regards to existing employees, the Trust will not discriminate against an individual in respect of the benefits, facilities, and services it offers, including training opportunities, promotion or dismissal (including discipline and suspension). All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit, ability and in compliance with the law.
- The Trust is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for employees or potential employees and will ensure that staff with disabilities have access to appropriate support in the form of aids, adaptations and other specialist services and will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage.

*More information about our procedures relating to staff can be found in the following policies:*

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Policy

*Enquiries about health and disability*

- The Trust will not enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work for the position that has been applied for.
- In some instances, the Trust may decide to ask necessary health questions after a job offer has been made to an individual. In such a situation, the Trust will ensure that health-related questions are targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

### *Training*

- All staff will receive equal opportunities training, which will include disability awareness/equality/unconscious bias. This training will be part of staff induction, as well as the CPD programme. All staff will receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.
- The Trust will ensure that no member of staff is denied access to any form of training because of an inaccessible venue, or because the provision does not account for their disability. Staff with disabilities will be actively encouraged to attend courses which will support their career progression and personal development.

### *Staff discipline and suspension*

- The Trust is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and consistently and this is held to account through our staff appraisal, discipline, conduct and grievance policies.
- Staff performance will be monitored, and we expect that staff will feel able to voice complaints and grievances in confidence, trusting that the Trust will deal with their grievances fully, promptly and fairly.

## **7. Collecting and using information**

The Trust will collect equality information for the purposes of:

- Identifying key issues, e.g. unlawful discrimination in teaching methods
- Assessing performance, e.g. benchmarking against similar organisations locally or nationally
- Taking action, e.g. adapting working practice to accommodate the needs of staff who share protected characteristics

The Trust will build an equality profile for staff to assist with identifying any issues within their recruitment regime. The Trust will obtain the following information from their staff:

- Recruitment and promotion
- Numbers of part-time and full-time staff
- Pay and remuneration
- Training
- Return to work of women on maternity leave

- Return to work of disabled employees following sick leave related to their disabilities
- Appraisals
- Grievances (including about harassment)
- Disciplinary action (including for harassment)
- Dismissals and other reasons for leaving

If requested, the Trust will provide the statutory information required with regard to equality responsibilities, i.e. information about gender pay gap or the fair treatment in the application of pay policies.