Southwark Diocesan
Board of Education
Multi-Academy Trust

Part of the 2026/2027 Trust Operating Manual

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 In developing an equality and diversity policy, Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust have been guided by the following principles:

(a) that all stakeholders are of equal value

(b) difference should be recognised and respected

(c) positive attitudes and relationships should be fostered, resulting in a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

(d) clear evidence of this policy in the practices of staff recruitment, retention and development

(e) the reduction and eventual removal of pre-existing inequalities and barriers

(f) wide consultation with, and involvement of, all stakeholders in the formulation of policy

(g) sound evidence is used as a base for our policy and practices

(h) objectives pertaining to this policy are specific and measurable over reasonable timescales

1.2 With regard to particular groups as described under Section 5.2 below, we will ensure that they are all treated of equal value. Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same. Our policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate, but will take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage that people may face in relation to their choices.

1.3 Additionally, we intend that our policies, procedures and activities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, should promote positive attitudes and interactions between people in these groups, leading to mutual respect and good relations between all, and with an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

1.4 The Trust is committed to policies and procedures that benefit all employees, current and potential, in recruitment and promotion and their continuing professional development, and will take opportunities to maximise positive impact by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of these groups.

1.5 The Trust will 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, consulting and involving, wherever possible, members within these groups.

1.6 The Trust intends that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion between, and encouraging greater participation in public life of, people in these groups.

1.7 The Trust, within the annual framework of improvement planning and processes of self- evaluation, will set out specific and measurable equality objectives that the Trust, its employees and stakeholders shall pursue and review. The objectives which we identify will take into account national and local priorities, and available information as appropriate.

1.8 The Trust will regularly review and renew this policy and our overarching statement pertaining to equality across all our organisations.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 The UK has specific legislation on equality that outlaw discrimination and offers protection and redress to employees and stakeholders, underpinned by core British values, individual freedom, belief in personal responsibility, and mutual respect and fairness.

2.2 This policy describes how the Trust is meeting statutory duties in line with national guidance. It includes information about how its academies are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

3.1 This policy applies to all stakeholders, pupils, employees, including volunteers, agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

4.1 Southwark Diocesan Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The Trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to colleagues identified within each school.

5. LEGAL DUTIES

5.1 As an organisation we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

(a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

(b) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

(c) Foster good relations between different groups

5.2 The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific protected characteristics. A protected characteristic under the Act covers the groups listed below:

(a) Age

(b) Disability

(c) Race

(d) Religion and belief

(e) Sex (including issues of transgender)

(f) Gender reassignment

(g) Sexual orientation

(h) Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

(i) Maternity and pregnancy

6. BRITISH VALUES

6.1 All who work in the Trust will aim to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in a world where we value individual liberty, democracy, the law, mutual respect and tolerance. Our pupils will meet, live and work with people of different cultures, religions, languages and ethnic origins. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all and recognise that preparation for life in a diverse society is relevant to everyone.

6.2 In addition, these British values are also promoted at various times in and across the curriculum throughout the year. The curriculum offer in all Trust schools is broad and balanced, complies with current legislation, and provides a wide range of subjects to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in Modern Britain. It actively promotes fundamental British values and promotes tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths, cultures, and lifestyles through effective spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

7. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

7.1 The Trust is committed to equal opportunities and to preventing discrimination, victimisation, and harassment. In particular:

(a) no employee, volunteer, pupil, governor, parent or any other stakeholder shall suffer discrimination on the grounds of their sex, gender identity, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability. (Discrimination)

(b) no employee, volunteer, pupil, governor, parent or any other stakeholder will be treated less favourably because of exercising his or her statutory rights. (Victimisation)

(c) no employee, volunteer, pupil, governor, parent or any other stakeholder will be subjected to unwanted, unwelcome, upsetting or embarrassing behaviours based on their sex, gender identity, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability. (Harassment)

(d) it is the responsibility of all staff, pupils, and governors at every level of the Trust to adhere to this Equality and Diversity Policy and to ensure it is effective

(e) The Trust will provide a friendly and secure environment for all

(f) every pupil should have the opportunity for full involvement in academy activities

(g) the contributions of all members of the school, pupils, teaching and support staff should be valued and respected

(h) no form of harassment, whether religious, racial, sexual or any other sort will be accepted

(i) the Trust will show due regard for the principles of equal opportunities in the selection, promotion, deployment and training of staff

(j) resources should be free of inappropriate stereotypes, and, where appropriate, selected with a view to promoting the ethos of equal opportunities and to reflect the pluralism of society

(k) all pupils should have equal opportunity to study any area of the curriculum to the level that best suits their ability and should be encouraged to take a full and active part in lessons

(l) the whole curriculum should take account of the issues of equal opportunities

7.2 To achieve our aims we will:

(a) publish and share our policy with all stakeholders of the Trust community to show compliance with the Equality Duty

(b) reinforce our ethos of the value we place upon equality and diversity

(c) analyse appropriate data to ensure compliance with legislation

(d) challenge inappropriate behaviour that does not fulfil any equality commitment.

7.3 Success criteria

(a) pupils are aware of the impact of prejudice and understand their responsibility to prevent it

(b) staff are aware of the Single Equality Policy

(c) data is collated and analysed to monitor equality

(d) Incidents, that contravene the Equality Act 2010 are logged and reported

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

8.1 Promoting equality is the responsibility of all employees within the Trust and other stakeholders.

8.2 The Trust is responsible for ensuring that legislation relevant to this policy is complied with, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

8.3 The Headteacher of each Trust school is responsible for the local implementation of this policy, ensuring that:

(a) all staff are aware of their responsibilities

(b) all staff are given appropriate training and support

(c) appropriate action is taken in cases of unlawful discrimination

8.4 A designated, senior member of staff within each Trust school will:

(a) have day to day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy, providing regular reports on its progress and any significant incidents

(b) ensure the principles within this policy are embedded, integral to, and encompassed within all other policies at each school

(c) review the school response to all allegations of inequality with regard to any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010

8.5 All staff are expected to:

(a) promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in and around the school

(b) deal with, and report, any prejudice-related incidents that occur

(c) plan and deliver curricular lessons that reflect the objectives in paragraph 6

(d) support pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL)

(e) support pupils and staff who may have social, emotional, mental health concerns

(f) support pupils and staff who may fall under the areas covered in para 6 and 7 of this policy

(g) keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

8.6 Pupils are expected to:

(a) treat each other with respect and courtesy

(b) explore and value diversity with a healthy and positive approach

(c) speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour, or feel that they have been treated unfairly.

9. INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

9.1 We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all employees and governors of the Trust and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

9.2 All employees and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

10. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

10.1 We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all employees, pupils and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

11. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

11.1 We ensure that all Trust employees, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as cohorts.

12. RECORD KEEPING

12.1 Detailed records will be made to include decisions, action taken and the reasons for these. All records will be retained securely as mentioned above. Whilst we acknowledge that such allegations (as all others) may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge that they may be founded. It is therefore essential that all allegations be investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

13. SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED

13.1 The Trust has a duty of care to its employees and will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The investigating officer will appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual e.g. contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support, access to welfare counselling or medical advice. The Trust will deal with any allegation of abuse made against a teacher, other member of staff, or volunteer, in a quick, fair and consistent way in order to minimise the stress inherent in the situation, thus providing effective protection for the child, whilst simultaneously supporting the subject of the allegation.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

14.1 The Trust will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2002 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State or the General Teaching Council for Wales publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

15.1 The Trust collects, studies and uses quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and may make adjustments to it as appropriate.

15.2 In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down according to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin/status, and gender.

16. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

16.1 This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust, which will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively