

Equality Information and Objectives

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust and its academies are proud to be inclusive organisations where individual differences are accepted and valued and where everyone is able to fulfil their potential in a welcoming, safe, and non-threatening environment.

The Trust is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion for all its learners, employees, trustees, governors, parents, and for anyone who comes into contact with the Trust and/or one of its academies.

We believe that every student, employee (staff member), and stakeholder has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It is the duty of every student, member of staff and stakeholder to act accordingly.

We strive to create a culture where everyone feels valued, included, and empowered to achieve their full potential. Our policies, practices, and curriculum are designed to reflect and celebrate the diverse communities we serve, and we actively challenge discrimination and prejudice in all its forms.

As a Multi-Academy Trust, we ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and hold ourselves accountable through regular reviews of our policies, data, and practices. We are committed to closing gaps in achievement and opportunity and fostering a safe and supportive environment for all.

2 Aims & Objectives

- 2.1** The Trust and its academies uphold the legal duty to ensure that unlawful discrimination does not take place and are committed to fulfilling our obligations under equality and diversity legislation. The Trust and its academies are mindful that the Equality Act 2010 requires us to have due regard of the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Furthermore, we seek to:

- Engage with those affected by inequality, to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.
- Celebrate diversity by recognising, valuing, and celebrating differences.
- Enable inclusion through the removal of barriers and ensuring equal access to facilities and opportunities.

- Raise awareness and create a culture in which all negative discrimination, including unconscious bias, is challenged.

This commitment covers the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and is operationalised by the Trust's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy. Our commitment to equality extends to other areas, including socio-economic disadvantage, student carers and looked-after learners.

3 Legislation and guidance

This document is underpinned and informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities>
- DfE Equality Act advice for schools <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on the Equality Act and the Public Sector Duty
<https://betacdn.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010>
<https://betacdn.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>
https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/psed_essential_guide_-_guidance_for_english_public_bodies.pdf#:~:text=The%20Act%20included%20the%20public%20sector%20equality%20duty%2C,overview%20of%20the%20public%20sector%20equality%20duty%20requirements.

This document also complies with the Trusts funding agreement and Articles of Association.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Trust

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this statement is published and communicated throughout the Trust, including to academy Local Governing Body (LGB) members, employees, learners, and parents.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.
- The Board delegate responsibility for the oversight of the objectives to the CEO, who shall ensure that a high-level summary against the protected characteristics is prepared for the Trust Board.

4.2 Local Governing Bodies

LGBs shall be responsible for monitoring the achievement of the objectives within the academy. They delegate the day-to-day operation and monitoring to Principal/Head. They receive an annual report on the academy's equality objectives and progress thereon from the Principal/Head.

4.3 Principals/Heads and academy Senior Leadership Team

The Principal/Head will, for their academy, promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils, and monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to the Local Governing Body.

Principals/Heads and their senior leadership teams, are responsible for ensuring that:

- This document is communicated and made readily available to academy staff, parents, and guardians.
- This document and its related procedures are implemented.
- Academy staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support to enable them to effectively deliver this document and the academy Equality Statement and Objectives which has the detail of how the objectives will be met.
- Appropriate action is taken in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Academy staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and provide reasonable adjustments to staff when appointed. All appointment panels give due regard to this document, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- Academy staff and learners are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.
- All incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, are treated with due seriousness and dealt with under the appropriate Trust or academy policy.
- The principle of equal opportunity is promoted when developing the curriculum.

4.4 All Trust Employees (staff)

All Trust employees are expected to have regard to this document, the Trust's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in Appendix 1.

5 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.

Trustees, LGB members and all employees 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.

Principals/Heads ensure new staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive appropriate refresher training every September, and this is included in the academy Equality Statement and Objectives.

Each academy has a designated member of staff who is responsible for monitoring equality issues. They make senior leaders and LGB members aware of any issues as appropriate.

6 Advancing Equality of Opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the Trust and its academies aim to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people connected by a particular characteristic they have.
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic.
- Encouraging those who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities provided by the Trust and its academies.

7 Publishing information about pupils

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty the Trust will, for every academy:

- Publish attainment data for each academy, each academic year showing how learners with different characteristics are performing.
- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement,
- Implement actions in response and publish this information.
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups.
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics,
- Identifying any issues which could affect our learners.

Relevant information about each academy will be published on their individual websites.

8 Publishing information about staff

In addition to the information about learners, we will consider how our activities as an employer affect employee (staff) with protected characteristics.

As a Trust, we will publish information to show:

- The make-up of our workforce, with breakdowns of staff with different protected characteristics.
- Gender pay gap reporting and other pay equality issues.
- Recruitment, selection, and retention rates for staff with different protected characteristics.

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- Policies and programmes in place to address equality concerns from staff.
- Information from staff surveys.

The Trust will make sure that with any data we publish to show how we meet our equality duties, individual employees or learners will not be identifiable. This means we may suppress some data if it relates to a very small number of staff or pupils to preserve their confidentiality.

9 Fostering Good Relations

The Trust and its academies aim 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 the curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Learners may be encouraged to take a lead in any such assembly and academies will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Making sure academies work with their local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of learners within each academy should they arise. For example, school/college councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds.
- All learners are encouraged to participate in their academy's extra-curricular activities.
- Academies also work with parents and guardians to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.
- Academies also seek to develop links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop how they implement their approach.

10 Equality Considerations in Decision-Making

The Trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

All academies, we will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups, e.g. when planning trips and visits, and will keep records as appropriate.

11 Review

The Trust will update the equality information it publishes, at least every year, and review its 4-year equality objectives to identify any amendments

Appendix 1

Equality Objectives

All employees across the Trust are expected to work to achieve the equality objectives of the Trust and its academies.

The Principal/Head will, for their academy, identify objectives, monitor and promote knowledge and understanding of their academy's equality objectives amongst academy staff and learners, and monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back annually to the LGB and the Trust.

Objective	Details	Evidence	Review period
1	Monitor and evaluate attainment levels and participation of all groups (undertake an analysis of recruitment data and trends in regard to race, gender, disability and socio-economic background, and report on this to the Trust Board and LGBs as appropriate)	Results analysis.	Annual
2	Continue to make our academies inclusive environments, where all learners and employees are welcomed and valued irrespective of gender, race, religion, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, or background (ensure reasonable adjustment agreements are in place for all staff with disabilities)	Staff and learner surveys.	Annual
3	Periodically review how well the Trust ensures equality of opportunities for all its stakeholders		Biennial
4	Seek to increase the representation of employees/trustees/governors from black and minority ethnic communities as well as those with disabilities.		Quadrennial
5	Train all employees involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination		Annual
6	Offer priority interviews for candidates with disabilities who meet the selection criteria, and ask if they require any reasonable adjustments for the interview		Annual
7.	Arrange awareness training for EDI for all staff periodically	Training records	Quadrennial