EQUA Mead
Learning Trust
Every Child, Every Chance

Policy name	**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
Policy Lead	**CEO**
Adopted by Trust Board	**October 2023**
Date last amended	**June 2026**
Date of last review	**June 2026**
Next review date	**July 2027**

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1. Legal framework

1.1 We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual identity.

1.2 We recognise that the Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and academies, and extends to certain protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

1.3 This combined equality duty has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- 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.

1.4 Where schools are concerned, age will be a relevant characteristic in considering their duties in their role as an employer but not in relation to pupils or students.

1.5 Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

1.6 Additionally, specific guidance for schools is set out in the DfE publication "The Equality Act 2010 and Schools. Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies, and local authorities" issued in May 2014.

2. School Responsibilities

2.1 Specifically, in order to help our schools meet the general equality duty, there are two specific duties that they are required to carry out. These are:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objective.

2.2 Each of our schools will therefore identify and publish on their website at least one Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) objective directly related to national or local evidence of any issues relating to the performance of individuals with protected characteristics.

2.3 These objectives may relate to periods of up to four years and will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and their senior leaders within the context of the school's overall performance planning, monitoring, and evaluation cycle.

2.4 Each of our schools will also prepare an annual report of activities carried out in the year towards the achievement of those objectives and other activities carried out to comply with the requirements of the equality duty (e.g., this might include staff, governor, pupil/student training and awareness, specific local projects, or educational interventions, etc).

3. Guiding principles

3.1 In fulfilling these legal obligations, EQUA Mead Learning Trust is guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value,
we see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled.
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin, or national status.
- whatever their gender and gender identity.
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background.
- whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference,
treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook, and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made.
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised.
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised.
- religion, belief, or faith background.
- sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures, and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people.
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents.
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual, homophobic, and transphobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention, and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled.
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, or national status.
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to marriage, civil partnerships, pregnancy, and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist, in addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies

We take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people.
- people of different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.
- girls and boys, women, and men, those who self-identify as other.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

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.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and cultural tolerance and understanding.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence
We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality.

Principle 9: Objectives
We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (Principle 8) and the engagement in which we have been involved (Principle 6).

4. Implementation

4.1 We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

4.2 Every four years, accordingly, we establish equality objectives and an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

4.3 We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

5. The curriculum

5.1 We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect our nine principles.

6. Ethos and organisation

6.1 We ensure our principles apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment, and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being of teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention, performance management and professional development
- behaviour, discipline, and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers, and guardians
- working with the wider community.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Headteacher of each school is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

7.2 The Headteacher, with the support of their senior leaders, is responsible for

- implementing the policy
- for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support
- and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

7.3 All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive, collaborative, and tolerant ethos in their classroom
- promote an ethos of mutual respect
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles in paragraph 3 above
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- to keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

7.4 We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff, trustees, and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

7.5 All staff, trustees and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity, and inclusion in appropriate detail.

8. Religious observance

8.1 We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils, and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

9. Staff development and training

9.1 We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

10. Breaches of the policy

10.1 Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other Trust policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and/or the Trust Board.

11. Monitoring and evaluation

11.1 We collect, evaluate and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy and make adjustments as appropriate.

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

12. Who is responsible for compliance?

12.1 The Local Governing Body and school Headteacher is responsible to the Trust Board for compliance with this policy.