

Equality Policy Guidance

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Rationale

Mulberry Schools Trust is a vibrant, high-achieving inner city learning community where each individual can flourish. It is a community which believes that education is a life-chance and that every pupil is entitled by right to the fullest and richest educational experience. We aim to enable all pupils to aspire, to lead and to excel as young people who will make a positive, successful contribution to our community now and in their future lives.

Every pupil and staff member is valued and respected equally, enjoying the highest standard of educational and professional opportunities and experience. The Trust is committed to enabling all members of its community to feel secure and confident, and to succeed to the best of their abilities. The Trust aims to promote equality, tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

Trust schools are welcoming and tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect are modelled and encouraged. The Trust is committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion or disability. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with parents, governors and members of the wider community.

The Trust places the promotion of equality and diversity at the centre of every aspect of its work. Trust schools implement all legal and local requirements regarding racial, disability, sexual orientation, gender and age equality in an inclusive way in every aspect of school life, including classroom practice, the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, performance and celebration events, employment and staff management and policy development and implementation.

Each Trust school has its own Equalities Policy, reviewed and approved bi-annually by the Local Governing Body. Trust schools must follow this guidance when reviewing and amending their policies. Any new school seeking to join the Trust must also adhere to this guidance.

The Public Sector Equality Duty included in the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have due regard to equality considerations when significant decisions are being made or policies developed. Schools must consider how their activities affect the people who share the protected characteristics¹ and publish information to show how the activities:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. improve equality of opportunity between people with protected characteristics and those who do not;
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

¹ Age (adults only), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation

In order to discharge this duty, the Trust has evaluated its work in relation to equalities and community cohesion. On the basis of this audit, we have set the following objectives:

MST Equality Objectives 2018-2022:

Raising standards of educational achievement:

Equality objective: to identify and address any gaps between the overall performance of pupils in each Trust school and, in each school, between all pupils in a year group and those in specific groups such as different ethnic groups or with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.

Developing through the Mulberry College of Teaching and Leadership

Equality objective: to ensure that all Trust staff are supported to develop and progress, building strategies for advancing equality for the pupil and staff bodies through learning, teaching, personal growth, pastoral care and training, ensuring there are pathways for all that enable them to maximise their potential and achieve their ambitions.

Enriching the Mulberry Learning Community

Equality objective: to foster a culture of mutual respect and to provide an environment for learning and working that celebrates, welcomes and respects the diversity of the Trust schools, their local communities and our wider society, and sets the highest expectations of standards that are equitable for all.

Each Trust school includes specific objectives and actions to meet these over-arching objectives in their annual School Improvement Plan and publishes details of this on their website.

Guidance

To achieve the ethos and aims set out above, and to achieve its Equality Objectives, the Trust has established the following principles to underpin Equalities Policy in each school:

- All pupils, staff and members of the Trust community are of equal value; we are proud of and celebrate our diversity.
- Inclusive practice, care and sensitivity are intrinsic to all our interactions.
- We foster and promote positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and community.
- We recognise and respect difference and challenge prejudice and discrimination.
- We uphold high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect towards all, inside and outside our community.
- We use all available information to set suitable learning and professional challenges for all, respond to diverse needs and overcome potential barriers to learning and progression.
- We collect and analyse data to ensure all groups of pupils and staff are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage through inequality.
- We recognise there is always more to learn and plan wider engagement and training to increase our understanding of equality and diversity.
- We are consultative in our practices, appropriately involving and engaging members of the Trust community in the development, review and evaluation of improvement plans, policies and procedures and when change is proposed.

- We publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community.
- We ensure we comply with equality legislation.

The policy should specify:

- how the school contributes to meeting the Trust's aims and supports all pupils and staff in meeting their potential academically, professionally and personally;
- how curriculum, enrichment opportunities, displays, celebration and performance promote equality and diversity and remove barriers;
- how other policies reflect equality considerations and objectives;
- procedures which support the implementation of the policy;
- roles and responsibilities of school staff with respect to equality;
- expectations of pupils' and parents' commitment and contribution to equality;
- arrangements for monitoring the implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy.

Each school's Equality Policy should be:

- agreed with the school community within the requirements above;
- published on the school's website;
- highlighted to staff at the start of each academic year;
- explained to pupils at least once a year;
- introduced to new parents at induction meetings and made available to parents on request.