

INCLUSIVE | MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY AND PLAN

DOCUMENT DETAIL

Approving Body	Trust Board
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Summary

This policy was developed in partnership with Diverse Educators. It formalises current practices and sets out a comprehensive framework for promoting equality across the Trust's schools.

The policy outlines the Trust's commitment to creating an inclusive environment where all individuals feel welcomed and valued, regardless of protected characteristics. It includes specific responsibilities for all stakeholders, from the Trust Board to pupils, and details procedures for handling discrimination, recruitment, and workplace adjustments.

The accompanying 2024/25 Equity Plan focuses on four key objectives:

- Creating a culture of courageous conversations
- Ensuring equity through systematic changes
- Celebrating diversity across the school community
- Developing robust anti-discrimination mechanisms

The policy emphasises both legal compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and practical steps to foster an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

For the purpose of this policy, the term school and schools refer to schools that are part of the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust

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Statement of intent

The Inclusive Multi Academy Trust believes that:

- happy children learn
- happy staff thrive
- happy people build a community

We promise that people in our Trust will:

- experience a sense of belonging, dignity and equity
- feel safe, socially, emotionally and physically
- develop outstanding academic and life skills
- foster an intrinsic love of learning whilst having fun
- build lasting, healthy relationships and support networks
- engage with and contribute substantially to their local and global community

We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics).

This policy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or devalue any individuals within our community.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times. The principles of non-discrimination and equity of opportunity also apply to how staff treat pupils, parents, trustees, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

The following statement summarises our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

“We strive for equity and equality through encouraging and respecting diversity, challenging discrimination and holding courageous conversations.”

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Appraisal Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects these characteristics:

- Age (for employees but not with regard to the treatment of pupils or prospective pupils)
- Gender Reassignment
- Disability
- Race
- Sex (including issues of transgender)
- Sex Reassignment
- Maternity and Pregnancy
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

We welcome and actively embrace our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups. This involves:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics
 - Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in activities where their participation is low
3. Foster good relations between people from different groups by:
 - Tackling prejudice
 - Promoting understanding between people from different groups
 - Creating an environment of positive attitudes and relationships

Principles underlying this policy

The Trust commits to

1. Create a culture where staff and students feel empowered to have courageous conversations about equality and diversity
2. Foster an inclusive environment where all individuals feel welcomed, valued and able to be their authentic selves
3. Actively seek diversity and equitable representation across our workforce, leadership and governance that reflects our communities
4. Embed practices that eliminate discrimination and remove barriers to equal access, opportunity and advancement
5. Regularly assess our progress through:
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Data analysis and monitoring
 - Review of policies and practices
 - Annual reporting on objectives

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. We recognise that discrimination may be direct or indirect and can occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more protected characteristics. For example, rejecting an applicant because of their ethnicity would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, requiring all staff to work full time without considering flexible working options could indirectly discriminate against those with caring responsibilities.

Harassment related to protected characteristics is prohibited. This includes unwanted conduct that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This means treating someone unfavourably because they have complained about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

Roles and responsibilities

Whilst individual responsibilities have been ascribed to specific roles, everyone involved with the Trust at any level will adhere to the principles of this policy.

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure the effective operation of this policy
- Ensure compliance with discrimination law
- Assess how this policy and supporting action plans work in practice
- Review annually and take action to address issues
- Monitor workforce composition regarding protected characteristics
- Ensure equality objectives are integrated into strategic planning

The School Governing Committees will:

- Monitor policy effectiveness at school level
- Ensure compliance with discrimination law
- Review supporting action plans
- Monitor school workforce composition
- Support the Headteacher in implementation

The Headteacher will:

- Implement and champion this policy
- Ensure fair application in all situations
- Review procedures considering new legislation and guidance
- Ensure appropriate support for pupils requiring interventions
- Lead by example in fostering an inclusive culture

The SLT will:

- Set appropriate standards of behaviour
- Ensure their teams adhere to this policy
- Take steps to accommodate different needs and circumstances
- Make progression decisions based on merit
- Review and update employment practices
- Support staff to develop their full potential

All staff will:

- Conduct themselves to help provide equal opportunities
- Treat colleagues with dignity
- Challenge discrimination and harassment
- Act as role models for equality, diversity and inclusion
- Be alert to issues requiring intervention
- Carry out their duties with due regard to equality

Pupils will:

- Be expected to treat all members of the school community with respect and dignity
- Support and celebrate diversity within the school
- Challenge discrimination, prejudice and disrespectful behaviour
- Participate in activities that promote understanding of different groups
- Report any incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination
- Contribute to creating an inclusive school environment where everyone feels welcome
- Take part in learning opportunities about equality and diversity

Recruitment and selection

The Trust aims to ensure that no job applicant experiences discrimination because of protected characteristics. Our recruitment procedures, managed through an automated and anonymised recruitment platform, ensure a truly fair and unbiased selection process. This platform removes identifying information before applications reach the hiring panel, allowing decisions to be made solely on merit and relevant abilities. Our recruitment procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to promote equality and fairness.

We will take steps to ensure that:

- Advertisement wording avoids stereotyping or discouraging any particular group from applying
- Shortlisting is conducted through our anonymous platform, removing unconscious bias from initial selection
- Multiple people review applications to ensure balanced decision-making
- Job advertisements encourage applications from all qualified candidates

Health and Disability: Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the limited circumstances allowed by law:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job
- Questions to establish if any reasonable adjustments are needed for the assessment process
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons
- Equal opportunities monitoring

Right to Work: The Trust is required by law to ensure all staff are entitled to work in the UK. We will:

- Not make assumptions about immigration status based on appearance or nationality
- Treat all applicants fairly regardless of nationality
- Request original documents before employment starts
- Follow current immigration legislation

Monitoring: Our anonymous recruitment platform helps ensure this policy operates effectively by:

- Automatically collecting and anonymising monitoring data on ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age
- Separating monitoring information from applications before they reach hiring panels

- Providing anonymised data analysis to help identify any patterns or barriers
- Allowing us to take evidence-based steps to improve diversity and inclusion

Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The school will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff. Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff appraisals, in line with the Trust's Appraisal Policy.

Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

The school's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they equal opportunities for all.

Data Collection and Analysis for Equality Monitoring

The Trust takes a systematic approach to gathering equality, diversity and inclusion information to inform our decision-making and measure our progress. This data collection forms a key part of our people strategy.

Staff Data We collect information through:

- Annual dedicated DEI staff survey through Edurio
- Regular staff satisfaction surveys which include DEI monitoring questions
- Recruitment and retention monitoring
- Training needs analysis
- Exit interviews

All data collection is voluntary, anonymous where possible, and handled in accordance with data protection regulations.

Pupil Data We monitor pupil data across protected characteristics to:

- Track educational outcomes
- Identify any gaps in achievement
- Monitor behaviour and attendance patterns
- Evaluate participation in school activities
- Inform intervention strategies

Parent Voice All parent surveys include DEI monitoring questions, allowing us to:

- Understand the needs of different community groups
- Identify any barriers to engagement
- Monitor satisfaction levels across different groups
- Target support and communication effectively

Governance Trustees and governors are asked to provide DEI monitoring information to:

- Ensure diverse representation at leadership level
- Identify gaps in representation
- Inform recruitment/succession strategies
- Monitor progress against our objectives

Using the Data This comprehensive data collection enables us to:

- Make evidence-based decisions about training needs
- Target recruitment to increase diversity
- Identify areas requiring intervention
- Measure the impact of our DEI initiatives
- Report progress to stakeholders
- Set meaningful objectives for improvement

Termination of employment

The Trust will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and not directly or indirectly discriminatory. We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, in line with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Disability discrimination

The Trust encourages staff who are disabled or become disabled to inform their line manager or the headteacher about their condition so appropriate support can be provided.

Staff experiencing difficulties at work because of their disability (physical or otherwise) may:

- Contact their line manager to discuss reasonable adjustments
- Request a meeting to explore what support could help overcome or minimise difficulties
- Have their line manager consult with medical advisers about possible adjustments

The School Governing Committee will:

- Monitor the physical environment of school premises
- Consider whether any features place disabled staff, job applicants, or stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage
- Take reasonable steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users
- Ensure workplace adaptations are made wherever reasonable to support staff with disabilities

Part-time, zero hours, and fixed-term employees and agency workers

The Trust will:

- Monitor conditions of service for part-time employees
- Ensure appropriate access to benefits and training opportunities
- Handle requests to alter working hours fairly under our Flexible Working Policy
- Monitor use of fixed-term employees and agency workers
- Ensure fair access to benefits, training, and permanent employment opportunities
- Track progress towards permanent vacancies where relevant

Breaches of this policy

If a member of staff believes they have experienced discrimination, they are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Policy. If they believe they have been subject to harassment, they should first raise the matter with their line manager.

We will:

- Treat allegations regarding policy breaches in confidence

- Investigate in accordance with relevant procedures
- Protect staff who make allegations in good faith from victimisation
- Deal with false allegations made in bad faith through our Disciplinary Policy
- Take strict approach to serious breaches of this policy

Any member of staff found to have committed discrimination or harassment will face disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal without notice.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix A: Inclusive Multi Academy Trust Equity Plan 2024/25

Our Trust aim is for all children, staff and parents to identify with the statement: **"We strive for equity and equality through encouraging and respecting diversity, challenging discrimination and holding courageous conversations."**

Objective	Action	Evidence/outcomes
Create a culture of courageous conversations and authentic inclusion	Establish regular "Brave Space" forums for staff and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting minutes and attendance records • Feedback surveys showing increased confidence in discussing equality matters • Evidence of topics discussed and actions taken
	Develop a Trust wide training programme for the delivery of DEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training materials developed with Diverse Educators • Staff completion rates • Pre/post training confidence measures • Evidence of implementation in classrooms Responsibility:
	Create mechanisms for sharing diverse perspectives and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community voice events • Shared Trust wide assembly • Newsletter features • Parent/staff/student feedback
Ensure equity and equality through systematic changes and monitoring	Develop targeted recruitment strategies to increase workforce diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established partnerships with specialist diversity recruiters • Targeted advertising and outreach to attract underrepresented groups • Recruitment materials and processes promote inclusion • Monitor recruitment data to measure impact
	Monitor educational outcomes by protected characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement gap analysis • Intervention impact data • Attendance patterns • Behaviour patterns
	Audit accessibility of facilities, curriculum, and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit reports • Action plans • Evidence of adjustments made • Stakeholder feedback
Celebrate and respect diversity across our school community	Develop a comprehensive cultural calendar celebrating diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar of events • Participation rates • Student/staff/parent feedback • Evidence of learning impact
	Review and enhance curriculum representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum audit results • Updated schemes of work • Resource purchases • Student voice feedback
	Create partnerships with diverse community organisations and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership agreements • Host Watford wide event – Menopause • Increased participation at local events • Community feedback
Further develop robust mechanisms for challenging discrimination	Evaluate and standardise clear reporting and response procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written procedures • Staff training records • Incident logs and resolution data • Stakeholder feedback • Report to all levels of governance
	Develop pupil leadership programme focused on equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme outline • Student participation • Student voice feedback • Attendance records • Impact surveys
	Develop strategies to address and challenge prejudice within our parent community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver parent workshops on cultural understanding • Create safe forums for discussing cultural differences • Develop clear protocols for addressing prejudiced behaviour • Monitor impact through parent feedback