



West Norfolk  
Academies Trust

# **Equality and Diversity Policy and Objectives**

**Reviewed by: Trustees**  
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**Equal opportunity is the right of everyone to equal chances,**  
**and each individual is respected for who they are.**

## **1. Introduction**

West Norfolk Academies Trust (WNAT) is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning for our students. The Trust recognizes that diversity within schools is valuable in fostering school cohesion and most importantly, in supporting pupils to grow and develop in an environment of visible, diverse role models.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will put our commitment into action and comply with the law, to ensure that equality and diversity is promoted in our Trust. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and will tackle any discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.

We aim to create an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment and is one in which individuals are valued and respected. We highly value diversity and the variety of skills, knowledge and experience that diversity brings to our Trust.

The principles of non-discrimination apply to how we expect our stakeholders to treat each other. This includes students, employees, parents and carers, students on placement, governors and trustees, visitors and suppliers.

This policy describes how West Norfolk Academies Trust (WNAT) intends to fulfill its responsibilities reflecting on the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 describes the protected characteristics; it is unlawful to discriminate against or treat someone less favourably on the basis of the protected characteristics. They are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

## 2. Aims

We will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This document complies with our funding agreement and articles of association and meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives.
- This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Discrimination is defined as:

**Direct discrimination** – this occurs where one person treats another person less favourably because of one of more protected characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination** – this occurs where a provision criterion or practice applies to everyone, but adversely affects someone with a protected characteristic more than others and is not justified.

**Harassment** – related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. It is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

**Victimisation** – includes less favourable treatment of, or retaliation against, someone who has complained or supported someone else’s complaint about discrimination or harassment. In addition, a child must not be victimized because of something done by their parents or sibling in relation to the Act.

**Associative discrimination** – where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

**Perceptive discrimination** – where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that a person has a particular protected characteristic, irrespective of whether they do have that protected characteristic.

**Third-party harassment** – occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as parents and carers, clients or customers.

#### 4. Roles and responsibilities

##### **The Trustees will:**

- Ensure that the policy and objectives as set are published and communicated throughout the trust schools, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives to the Headteacher of each trust school.

##### **The CEO will:**

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the policy and objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to Trustees.

##### **All Staff:**

- Are expected to have regard to this policy and to work to achieve the objectives.

Students, parents and carers, governors and trustees, volunteers and visitors:

- Are expected to have regard to this policy and to work to achieve the objectives.

#### 5. Equality considerations in decision-making

Each trust school will ensure it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. We will collect and use equality information to help us to:

##### **Identify key issues**

- Understand the impact of our policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics, and thereby plan them more effectively.
- Assess whether we are discriminating unlawfully when carrying out any of our functions.
- Identify what the key equality issues are for our organisation.
- Assess performance
- Benchmark our performance and processes against those of similar organisations, nationally or locally.

##### **Take action**

- Consider taking steps to meet the needs of staff and pupils who share relevant protected characteristics.

- Identify if there are any actions we can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of our activities on equality.
- Develop equality objectives to meet the specific duties.
- Have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty by ensuring that staff have appropriate information for decision-making.

Trust Schools will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school will consider whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for all students

We will work towards developing an equality profile of staff to help us to understand key equality issues in our workforce, including any evidence of pay gaps or 'occupational segregation' i.e. staff with certain protected characteristics being over-represented in particular roles, for example, women as cleaners, or at certain grades. In addition, we note that it is likely to be useful to collect and consider information, appropriately disaggregated, about:

- recruitment and promotion
- numbers of part-time and full-time staff
- pay and remuneration
- training
- return to work of women on maternity leave
- return to work of disabled employees following sick leave relating to their disability
- appraisals
- grievances (including about harassment)
- disciplinary action (including for harassment)
- Dismissals and other reasons for leaving.

## **6. Fostering good relations**

The Trust is aware that those involved in the leadership of the school communities are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community.

Trust Schools will aim to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:-

- Helping pupils and young people to understand others and value diversity so there is an 'openness' of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school.
- Encouraging pupils to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect.
- Promoting positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display.

- Supporting disabled pupils in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings
- Wherever possible access to all areas of the school (buildings and grounds) will be for all persons.
- Developing skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new ‘Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK’ strand of citizenship education.

## 7. Publication of Equality Information

We will publish relevant, proportionate information which is broad enough to give a full picture of performance across our schools. We will demonstrate how we have used this information to have due regard to all three aims of the duty, for all relevant protected characteristics. Our information will usually fall into two main categories:

- 1) **Information to identify equality issues.** Examples of this include equality monitoring information about employees, information about the effect of our activities on people with different protected characteristics or any engagement we may have carried out.
- 2) **Information about steps taken to have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty.** For example, any records we have about how we had due regard in making certain decisions, information that was considered in that decision-making (including engagement), consideration of steps to mitigate adverse impacts, or details of policies to address equality concerns.

We will publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing. Pupil achievement is monitored by race, gender, socio-economic status, and disability and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed

We note that the Equalities and Human Rights Commission would normally expect to see the following information:

- the race, disability, gender and age distribution of our workforce at different grades, and whether they are full or part time
- an indication of the likely representation on sexual orientation and religion and belief, provided that no-one can be identified as a result
- gender pay gap information
- information about occupational segregation
- grievance and dismissal information for people with relevant protected characteristics
- complaints about discrimination and other prohibited conduct from staff
- details and feedback of engagement with staff and trade unions
- quantitative and qualitative research with employees e.g. staff surveys
- records of how we have had due regard to the aims of the duty in decision-making with regard to our employment, including any assessments of impact on equality and any evidence used
- details of policies and programmes that have been put into place to address equality concerns raised by staff and trade unions.

## **8. Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on each trust school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any inconsistencies are identified and dealt with.

## **9. British Values**

The Trust will aim to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all students 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 students 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.

## **10. Religious Observance**

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

## **11. Objectives**

To make West Norfolk Academies Trust an inclusive and supportive environment where we can be valued for our personal qualities and contributions we will:-

- Ensure all Trustees, governors and staff are aware of current legislation relating to Equality and Diversity and understand The Trust's responsibility
- Value and celebrate the differences between us and promote equality
- Promote positive relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Promote tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures, ensuring pupils are prepared for life in diverse 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain
- Provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities
- Talk to people who are affected by what we do e.g. students, employees, parents and carers and others in the community, about equality and diversity, and use this information to inform our decision making
- Remove obstacles and barriers that those who share a protected characteristic may be affected by. In doing so will examine both the impact on individuals and on groups

- Have a zero tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination and will tackle this wherever it is identified
- Challenge stereotypical views and personal prejudices
- Think about the language that we use, including informal communications

**Whole Trust objectives:**

- Publish and share our policy with all stakeholders to show compliance with the Equality Duty
- Train our students, employees, governors and trustees in equality and diversity.
- Reduce the levels of homophobic, sexist and racist language used by students

**12. Breaches of this policy:**

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in line with the Trust policies and procedures.

**13. Monitoring arrangements**

The CEO will update the equality information we publish, at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by the Trustees at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by the Trustees.