



# Equality Policy

Spring 2024

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## 1 Overarching statement

1.1 This single equality scheme for Empowering Futures brings together policies for Race, Gender and Disability equality, meeting the statutory duties in these areas. However, it goes beyond these strands to include sexuality, religion & faith, age, socio-economic status, pregnant women and new mothers and every aspect which has the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community, such as against those with special educational needs or potential language barriers. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments.

- In accordance with our schools' values, we pledge to respect the equal human rights of all our pupils and to educate them about equality.
- We will also respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of our school communities.
- We will comply with relevant legislation and implement in relation to equality.

## 2 Legal Framework

2.1 'The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023' came into force on 1 January 2024, bringing together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined, they create the Equality Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the previous legislation to provide Britain with a single discrimination law, which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

2.2 Other legislation that we as a Trust use for guidance when preparing this policy include:

- The Human Rights Act (2000)
- The Children's Act (2004)
- The European Directives
- The respective Codes of Practice associated with the legislation.

## 3 Aims

3.1 This policy has been developed in response to 'The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023' and replaces previous policies relating to Race Equality, Gender and Disability Equality. It has been designed to help staff meet the duty to:

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

## 4 Principles

- 4.1 All students within Empowering Futures schools, their parents and carers and all staff are of equal value. Staff and Governors are aware of the **protected characteristics** applicable to their school:
- Disability
  - Ethnicity, culture, national origin and national status
  - Gender and gender identity
  - Religion, religious affiliation, faith background
  - Sexual orientation
  - Pregnancy
  - Age
  - Marriage/civil partnership
- 4.2 In common with most public bodies, Empowering Futures accepts the Stephen Lawrence definition of a racist incident to cover all forms of prejudice:
- 4.3 “A **hate incident** is any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by the offender’s prejudice against people because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or other reason.”

## 5 Our approach

- 5.1 Empowering Futures seeks to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our community, within all aspects of school life.

### **We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:**

- Shared Humanity. Underlying our diversity lies commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our schools and within our local communities
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our communities, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

## **6 Promoting Equality through the curriculum**

### **6.1 Learning and Teaching**

6.1.1 Empowering Futures aims to provide all of our students with the opportunity to succeed, to reach the highest level of personal achievement and to be aspirational. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions.
- Develop students' advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality.
- All curriculum areas, where appropriate, promote and celebrate the contribution of different ethnic groups to the subject matter.
- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education including monitoring our hard to reach parents.
- Provide educational visits and provision of extra-curricular activities that involve all student groupings.
- Take account of the performance of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.

### **6.2 Learning Environment**

There is a consistently high expectation of all students regardless of their ability, social background or any protected characteristic. All students are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents/carers are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.

### **6.3 Curriculum**

We aim to ensure that our:

- Planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross-curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity.
- Students will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality.

### **6.4 Resources and Materials**

The provision of good quality resources and materials is a high priority. These resources should:

- Reflect the principles of all the protected characteristics.
- Reflect 'the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexually diverse society'.
- Show positive images of males and females in society including images where protected characteristics can easily be seen.
- Reflect non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context.
- Include materials to raise awareness of equal opportunity issues.

## 7 Responding to equality-related incidents

- 7.1 We recognise that prejudice-driven harassment or bullying behaviour is underpinned by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, ageism or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.
- 7.2 Through our schools' ethos and curriculum, our pupils will understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.
- 7.3 Each school records information about all race-related incidents and reports as required to the local authority and external agencies in line with the county-wide reporting process. We use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

## 8 Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1 The governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that their school complies with current legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- 8.2 The Head teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff, governors and visitors are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.
- 8.3 A senior member of staff in each school has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.
- 8.4 All staff are expected to:
- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their work and within classrooms
  - challenge and deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
  - identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
  - support students in their class for whom English is an additional language
  - keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work
  - ensure that students have the opportunity to have their voices heard with regards to equality issues

## 9 Staff Development and Training

- 9.1 We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. Equalities policies and practices are covered in all staff inductions.

## 10 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 10.1 We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. In particular, we collect, analyse and use data relative to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin, socio-economic circumstances, gender and age.
- 10.2 We ensure that the commitments embodied in this policy permeate the full range of our policies and practices.

## 11 Accessibility plans

- 11.1 Access plans are developed at school level, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and reviewed regularly by local governing bodies.