



Model Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Adopted By: Board of Trustees

Date: April 2024

Review Date: April 2025

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date of Issue:	April 2024
Policy applies to:	All staff employed by the Wessex Multi-School Trust.
Policy Version Number:	2
Purpose of the document:	To provide an understanding of policy and best practice in building a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion across the trust.
Summary of the main points:	<p>The document provides:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Context and vision for EDI across the trust 2. Our EDI objectives 3. Detail of individual/group responsibilities 4. Support to develop an action plan to support progress towards our EDI objectives
Approved by:	This policy has been approved by the Wessex MAT Board of Trustees
Reviewer:	Saira Sawtell / Karen Weir
Summary of amendments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Academies changed to Schools 2) Changes to Protected Characteristics list: sex reassignment corrected to gender reassignment and a reference to mental health included with disability 3) Schools can add their own Equality Objectives alongside the Trust Objectives if desired
Next review due:	April 2025

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Legislative background - the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces all of the previous pieces of anti-discrimination law that have been introduced over the last forty years in Great Britain (for example, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005). The purpose of this new act is to consolidate and streamline the requirements whilst ensuring the protection of individuals from unfair treatment and promoting a fair and more equal society.

Previous equality duties involved schools producing separate policies and action plans for race, disability and sex. The new Equality Act introduces a single equality duty for all public sector organisations including schools, this is known as the 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (PSED). This duty requires all schools to show how they are meeting the aims of the Equality Act 2010 by giving 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The Equality Act protects the same groups of people that were covered by previous equality legislation, but these groups are now referred to as 'protected characteristics'.

What do schools have to do?

Schools and other public sector organisations have two sets of specific duties which they must achieve to show that they are meeting their duty, they must:

- publish information which demonstrates their compliance with the duty to have due regard for the three aims of the general duty
- prepare and publish specific and measurable equality objectives which they will pursue over the coming years to achieve the three aims

Schools should:

- Evaluate how well the school is already achieving the three aims of the general duty across all of the 'protected characteristics'; Identify where there are gaps and prioritise these for actions identifying at least 3 measurable 'equality objectives' to focus on over the next 3 years;
- Implement the Trust's Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which details all protected characteristics, making clear the school's responsibilities under the Act, its commitment and what it will do to achieve 'equality of opportunity' for the whole school community.

Local Governing Bodies should:

- Monitor the implementation of the Trust's Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Receive a report from school leaders reviewing the 'equality objectives' at least annually and hold school leaders to account for progress against them.
- Receive, discuss and approve updated 'equality objectives' every 4 years.

Schools will have to publish their initial information and objectives, and then will need to update the information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years. Accessibility planning is a statutory duty and can be incorporated into a school's Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

WESSEX MULTI-SCHOOL TRUST SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

Equity in education aims to create a level playing field for all staff and pupils by supporting those who need it most. Equity is achieved when each individual receives what they need to be on an equal footing with others in the same environment.

This Equality Policy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. 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 to devalue any individuals within our community.

1. Wessex MAT - Our vision for equality, equity, diversity and inclusion *Shaping a culture of hope and optimism for now and for future generations. Celebrating and embracing difference, where belonging is key* (Wessex MAT DEI Group)

1.1. The Trust welcomes a diverse community of staff and pupils. We seek to develop a community whose members value each other and contribute to our mission statement '*learning is everything*'. Our aim is for an open, supportive environment where pupils and staff are given the support needed to realise their goals and aspirations. We seek to remove the barriers that prevent historically disadvantaged groups from realising their potential. We will treat all staff, pupils, visitors and applicants for employment equitably. No one will be accorded less favourable treatment because of age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, family circumstances, marital/civil partnership status, race, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation.

2. Our Public Sector Equality Duty

- 2.1. We welcome and actively embrace our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to pay due regard to the following:
- 2.2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups. This involves considering the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
 - Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in activities where their participation is low.
- 2.4. Foster good relations between people from different groups. This involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.
- 2.5. We understand the principal of the Equality Act 2010 and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

3. Protected characteristics

- 3.1. A protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 covers the groups listed below:
 - age (for employees but not with regard to the treatment of pupils or prospective pupils),
 - disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health
 - race
 - sex (including issues of transgender)
 - gender reassignment
 - maternity and pregnancy
 - religion and belief,
 - sexual orientation
 - marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment)

4. Meeting the general duties

- 4.1. The law requires us to demonstrate how we meet the general duties by:
- Publishing equality information – to demonstrate compliance with the general duty across its functions (We will not publish any equality information that can specifically identify any child)
 - Preparing and publishing equality objectives
 - Preparing and publishing planning activities
- 4.2. To do this we will collect data related to the protected characteristics and analyse the data to determine the focus of our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across the core provisions of our schools:
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation
 - Admissions
 - Teaching and learning
 - Learner support and guidance
 - Staff recruitment, employment and development
 - Accessible documentation
 - Accessible site
- 4.3. Our equality objectives will detail how we will ensure equality is applied to the core provisions listed above. However, where we find evidence that other functions have a significant impact on any particular group we will include work in this area.
- 4.4. We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion is generally defined as 'Working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and the wider community.'
- 4.5. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 4.6. In fulfilling our legal obligations we will:
- Recognise and respect diversity
 - Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
 - Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
 - Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
 - Consult and involve widely
 - Strive to ensure that society will benefit

5. The roles and responsibilities within our Trust community

5.1. We believe that promoting Equality is a Trust community responsibility:

School Community	Responsibility
Our Trustees will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that the objectives detailed in this policy support the trust’s strategic plan ■ support the trust’s SLT to implement the actions arising from this policy ■ ensure a member of the central team SLT evaluates and reviews the policy annually at Trust level ■ ensure EDI information respecting Trustees is published annually
Our Local Governing Bodies will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ designate a link governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy; this could be in conjunction with another link role (e.g. Stakeholder Engagement, Safeguarding. etc. ■ ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the Trust’s Strategic Intent ■ support the Head of school / Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary ■ engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy ■ review the reported progress against the objectives annually, hold school leaders to account for progress and impact and receive, discuss and approve updated objectives every 4 years
The Head of school / headteacher will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy ■ oversee the effective implementation of the policy ■ ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy ■ develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school’s actions are in line with the best advice available ■ monitor the policy and report to the Local Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ensure that the Leadership Team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
Each Leadership Team will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy ■ provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy ■ Work with the Head of school / headteacher to provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues ■ assist in implementing reviews of this policy ■ ensure EDI information respecting the LGB is published annually
Each school's staff will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them ■ understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Policy ■ make known any queries or training requirements

School Community	Responsibility
Parents/ Carers will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy ■ have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements ■ be encouraged to actively support the Policy ■ be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child
Pupils will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ be expected to act in accordance with the Policy■ be encouraged to actively support the Policy
Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ be involved in the development of the Policy■ be encouraged to support the Policy■ be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

6. Stakeholder consultation and involvement

6.1. We are committed to further develop our consultation to ensure annual involvement of staff, pupils and other relevant stakeholders in reviewing the progress of the Scheme and Action Plan. We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the school website and other mediums as identified by the Local Governing Body.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1. Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of the trust's Leadership Team and Trustees who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives. Implementation in our schools is the responsibility of the Heads of School / Headteachers and the LGBs.

7.2. We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

8. Equality objectives

8.1. We have developed 6 equality objectives:

Objective 1	The Trust's commitment to equality in its strategic and development planning.
Objective 2	Barriers to participation are removed to enable all our staff and pupils to play a full part in the life of the school.
Objective 3	All our staff and pupils are aware of their own and their school's responsibilities for advancing a culture of equality.
Objective 4	Equality is reflected in our learning, teaching and assessment activities leading to an excellent pupil experience at the school.
Objective 5	Our commitment to equality is reflected in behaviour and practices throughout each school.
Objective 6	Our awareness and understanding of equality is increased through the analysis of data relating to staff and pupils and the findings used to improve our policies and practices

Annex A: EQUALITY OBJECTIVES PROFORMA

Objective 1:				
The school's commitment to equality is evident in its strategic and development planning.				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Ensure that the school's commitment to equality is evident in its key strategies, policies and documents	Commitment to be included in documents for 2024-25.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's commitment to equality is evident in the following key documents: WMAT & School's Improvement Plans School's Prospectus / Website 	Head	Annually by LT and LGB
b) Ensure that the school's commitment to community cohesion is evident in its key strategies and policies	Commitment to be included in 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's commitment to equality is evident in the following key document: WMAT and School's Improvement Plans 	Head	Annually by LT and LGB

Objective 2:				
Barriers to participation are removed to enable all our staff and pupils to play a full part in the life of the school.				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Ensure that the school's commitment to equality is evident in its admission procedures	Admission procedures for admission in 2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission procedures (including in-year applicants)Diverse, non-stereotypical images in all marketing materials, including resources shown at school/ feeder school information events 	Trustees Head	Annually by MAT Board of Trustees Annually by LGB
b) Develop further the school's employment policies and procedures in order to provide a barrier-free environment for recruitment and employment	Recruitment procedures reviewed annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All applicants receive full and fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job All applicants for employment who have a disability and who meet the essential criteria are invited for interview Availability of information about vacancies in alternative formats (large print, audio) 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
c) Ensure that where practicable, all new and existing school buildings are accessible to all staff and pupils	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning documentation Wheelchair access wherever possible to all areas of the school Provision of study / social space for pupils with disabilities Contractors employed by the school are aware of the school's expectations regarding equality 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

Objective 3:				
All our staff and pupils are aware of their own and the school's responsibilities for advancing a culture of equality.				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Provide a clear and coherent learning experience for all pupils which enable them to understand others, value diversity and human rights, and participate responsibly in their communities	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum provision/documentation 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
b) Provide opportunities for pupils and their families to interact positively with people from different backgrounds and communities and provide extended services which make a positive contribution to the community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum provision/documentation Provision of activities Assemblies involving members of different communities 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

c) Integrate appropriate forms of on-going training on equality and community cohesion issues into the school's staff development programme	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for new teachers in providing reasonable adjustments (e.g. handouts, board work, use of voice) and in how to approach the possible differences in learning needs • Raised awareness of new staff of the range of disabilities and associated technical terms 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
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Objective 4:

Equality is reflected in our learning, teaching and assessment activities leading to an excellent pupil experience at the school.

Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets all pupils' needs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the quality of the curriculum – its match to pupils' needs – and improvement over time 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
b) Evaluate the quality teaching and its impact on the learning of all protected characteristic groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's own evaluations of the quality of teaching • External evaluations of the quality of teaching • The views of pupils, parents and staff of the quality of teaching • Analysis of pupil progress by subject, cohort, pupil group and teaching group • The effective strategies for improving teaching: identifying and using best practice; monitoring and acting on the findings; coherent CPD (including coaching, training (inc Child Protection), mentoring, curriculum development, and tackling underperformance) • systematic performance management 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

Objective 5:				
Our commitment to equality is reflected in behaviour and practices throughout the school.				
Actions	Target Date	Evidence	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Ensure the systematic and consistent management of behaviour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and systems for managing behaviour, exclusions and attendance • Views expressed by pupils, parents, staff and governors about behaviour, bullying, safety, respect and courtesy • Behaviour evidence from lesson observations, 'learning walks' and off-site provision • Overall and persistent absence and attendance rates for different groups of pupils • Punctuality tracking • Rates of permanent and fixed term exclusion • Tracking of behavioural sanctions/rewards and evaluations of impact • Tracking of incidents of bullying and their resolution 📄 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking and evaluation of racist incidents 📄 • Evidence of pupils' risk awareness from lesson observations and pupil feedback; • Evidence of the impact of teaching about risk. • Analysis and evaluation of incidents and breaches of IT protocols 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

b) Ensure that all pupils are safe.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of safeguarding arrangements, including safe recruitment and identifying pupils at risk or in need • Appropriate arrangements for child protection • Following up absence • Promoting safety through the curriculum. • Engagement with parents and carers in supporting pupils' achievement, behaviour and SMSC 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB
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Objective 6:

Our awareness and understanding of equality are increased through the analysis of data relating to staff and pupils and the findings used to improve our policies and practices.

Actions	Target Date	Evidence/Outcomes	Responsibility	Monitoring and Review
a) Use performance data to monitor learner achievement and respond to variations between groups of pupils, subjects, courses and key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment and progress from historic exam/test results and comparisons with national standards and floor targets • Attainment and progress of current pupils • Attainment and progress of sub-groups of pupils, including by SEND, Disadvantaged, LAC, intake ability • Attainment and progress in different subjects 	Leadership Team	Annually by LT and LGB

Annex B: Preventing and tackling discrimination in primary schools

Helpful guidance on how your school can support children and families, make them feel included, and work towards preventing - and tackling – discrimination.

Offer support

- Those who have experienced any type of discrimination – or are at risk – should be offered extra support to minimise long-term risks. This could be through pastoral care or school counselling, school nurses or through referral to community based support.
- All school staff should normalise conversations about wellbeing and seeking help. It is also important for staff to build trusting relationships with children.

Prevent and challenge discrimination

- Children who act in a discriminatory or racist manner in school should have their assumptions and attitudes challenged. Support should be offered so that they understand about different races, cultures and faiths.
- Help all children to feel good about their race, ethnicity, culture and faith.
- Be aware that children from ethnic and religious groups may experience negative stereotypes which can undermine their wellbeing and sense of self.
- Celebrate diversity and address prejudice early in an age-appropriate way from EYFS upwards schools can include work about acceptance and about avoiding stereotypes and prejudice.
- Challenge gender stereotypes, for example that there is a “typical boy” or “typical girl”. This will help children feel happier in themselves and help create a sense of belonging at school.

Speak up

- Encourage pupils to speak out against unfairness or any kind of discrimination.

- Be alert early on for the different ways in which children might be communicating that something is wrong. Think creatively about adjustments that might help them thrive and achieve.

Make sure curriculum and lesson plans are inclusive

- School and classroom posters, pictures, books, music, toys, dolls and other materials should be diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, faith, gender, age, family situations, disabilities, etc.
- Develop the curriculum to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ pupils by reviewing the content of books and resources, and making sure staff do not make assumptions about children's families.
- Sex and relationship education should be relevant to all children and sensitive to their age and needs.
- Acknowledge key festivals across different faiths, particularly representing the school's student cohort.

Implement policies and offer staff training

- Discrimination can be unconscious and difficult to spot. It requires all school staff to be self-aware and think about their own day-to-day responses, strategies and practices. There also needs to be a culture of reflection and of challenging behaviour, language and attitudes. Training is important along with good links with neighbourhood organisations to support children from all types of communities.
- Make sure that effective anti-bullying policies are implemented and that school staff are not passive bystanders to discrimination.
- Set clear ground rules for appropriate language, and challenge anything written or said in a discriminatory way.
- Recognise the potential needs of LGBTQ+ children as one of the priorities in your school's health and wellbeing strategies and policies.
- Teaching around sexual health and safe relationships should be discussed with governing boards, where appropriate.

Engage families and communities

- Engage families and communities in ways that are meaningful, recognising cultural sensitivities.
- Be sensitive to LGBTQ+ children and families and ensure they are supported in the context of a wider [whole-school ethos](#) about respect for others, celebrating difference, inclusivity, equality, diversity, fairness and justice.