

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Two Counties Trust recognises that a culture which promotes equality and diversity stimulates a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our academies. The Trust is committed to equality, reflecting on and valuing diversity. The strength of the Trust is built on the understanding of individual strengths and differences and seeking to respect these differences.

We aim to:

- Respect the equal human rights of all our students and employees;
- Value everyone's individuality and deepen our understanding of others' points of view;
- Educate others about the rich diversity of a multi-cultural world;
- Promote equality and address barriers which could lead to disparate outcomes for identified groups of students or which prevent equal access to social, educational or professional opportunities;
- Ensure that students develop an understanding of how they fit in to a diverse national and international community;
- Identify and reduce barriers to learning and participation for vulnerable groups;
- Identify and oppose all forms of discrimination, educating others about discrimination & prejudice and promoting a harmonious environment;
- Strive for all students, regardless of characteristic, to achieve the highest possible standards in their studies and make good progress;
- Ensure that the Trust is a safe and fair place to work which respects the dignity of all
- Respect the equal rights of all members of the Trust's community.

Achieving these aims will help The Trust to:

- Meet the needs of all students, encouraging them to achieve their full potential and raise educational standards;
- Take specific action to tackle any differences between identified groups for example admissions, assessment or attainment for students or recruitment, promotion and training for staff;
- Create a positive and inclusive approach, based on respect for difference and a commitment to challenge discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- Prepare students to be citizens in diverse society;
- Provide equal access, opportunities and a culture of fair treatment for prospective candidates and existing employees;
- Make the workforce as representative as possible of the community;
- Make good use of the skills and knowledge from different groups in the community

The Trust seeks to create an inclusive culture and one in which no-one receives less favourable treatment. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, The Trust has a specific duty in respect of the following Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race, language, ethnic or national origins
- Religion or belief
- Sexual Orientation

The Trust recognises that there may be other areas where people experience discrimination and will work towards achieving an anti-discriminatory environment. We will do this by ensuring that our practices reflect relevant legislation and good practice and, where appropriate, through challenge and training.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the requirements and responsibilities of The Trust for ensuring and advancing equality in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The Trust promotes positive attitudes to inclusivity and diversity in order to create an environment where everyone is able to participate and fulfil their potential and that no person is treated less favourably on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics.
- 2.2 Every member of the Trust community has a responsibility to uphold this policy, advance equality and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 2.3 The Trust will make reasonable adjustments for students and employees in accordance with identified needs wherever possible.
- 2.4 The Trust may take lawful positive action to advance equality. This may be in the provision of facilities or services to meet the needs of people from particular under-represented groups, such positive action strategies are intended to be temporary measures only and will not be used once the special needs have been met or if under-representation no longer exists.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers all aspects of School / Academy life and applies to all members of The Trust community, including students, employees, governors and trustees, visitors, parents/carers and contractors.

4. Core values

The Trust promotes Equality and Diversity through the core values of:

Respect for individuals.

We work together to create a culture based on trust, respect and dignity.

Integrity.

We are open, honest and direct in our dealings.

Collaboration.

We know that there is strength in working together, communicating, sharing ideas and best practice and finding more efficient and effective ways to deliver our objectives.

Continual improvement.

We are a learning organisation that strives always to 'make our best better.'

Accountability.

We hold ourselves accountable and take ownership.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The Board of Trustees

Trustees will ensure that:

- Equality and diversity is promoted through the educational character of The Trust;
- Effective Trust policies and procedures are established, implemented and monitored;
- Local Governing Bodies are charged to deliver their responsibilities (see below);
- Equality and diversity policies, procedures and legal responsibilities are followed.

5.2 The Local Governing Body:

The Local Governing Body at each School / Academy is responsible for:

- Compliance with equality legislation, upholding policy, related procedures and ensuring strategies are devised, implemented and monitored.
- Promoting and supporting education and training to increase awareness of equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination.
- Ensuring that services and resources are appropriate to the students and members of the community.

Local Governing Bodies have been charged by the Board of Trustees to ensure that:

- Each School / Academy has an equality action plan which is reviewed annually;
- School policies and procedures promote equality and diversity;
- Monitoring of staff and student data takes place annually with outcomes informing future developments;
- Changes to services and/or provision which impact on service users are subject to an Equality Analysis as a means of identifying any adverse impact;
- Relevant equality objectives are published at least every 4 years with performance and progress monitored annually;
- Staff training is relevant, timely and regularly updated.

5.3 Head teachers

Head teachers are responsible for:

- Implementing policy
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support
- Taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination
- Dealing with inappropriate behaviour which is not in accordance with this policy
- Overseeing accessibility arrangements
- Establishing relevant equality objectives for the School / Academy and reporting to the Local Governing Body.

5.4 Senior Leadership Teams

Members of the Senior Leadership Teams have day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy, supporting the Headteacher and monitoring outcomes.

5.5 All employees

All employees will, as appropriate:

- Ensure their behaviour models the letter and spirit of this policy and accompanying statement;
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos both in the classroom and wider context;
- Be vigilant for any type of harassment and bullying and take appropriate action where incidents arise;
- Deal effectively with all incidents from overt name calling to the more subtle forms of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation;
- Support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for whom English is not their first language;
- Understand that learners have different styles of learning and multiple intelligences and need different styles of teaching and learning;
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum and in the School / Academy's culture;
- Ensure the materials and content of lessons cover a wide diversity of different cultures and people;
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation, development and issues relevant to work by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources;
- Plan and deliver lessons which reflect diversity for example materials which provide positive images or challenge stereotypes;
- Participate in training and put the skills and knowledge gained into practice.

6. Monitoring and reporting

- 6.1 Head teachers will report to the Local Governing Body annually on employee data in respect of the protected characteristics and student data in relation to at least attainment, attendance and exclusions taking account the performance of different groups within the relevant protected characteristics of sex, race, religion or belief and disability.

7. Breaches of this policy and complaints

- 7.1 The Trust takes non-adherence to this policy seriously and reports of non-compliance will be investigated with the intent of resolving matters. The Trust strongly encourages informal and local resolution of complaints however, in some circumstances it reserves the right to use disciplinary procedures.
- 7.2 No member of the Trust community will be victimised as a result of giving truthful information about an act by a person who contravenes this policy.
- 7.3 Persons making allegations, which are proved to be false, will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures, as will any person who bullies or harasses another person who they believe has made an accusation against them.

8. General Data Protection Regulation

- 8.1 All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.

Document Management

Review cycle:	Every 2 years
Next review due:	1 May 2022
Policy owner	Head of Human Resources
Approving body:	Board of Trustees
Equality Analysis completed:	8.8.17

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

As a public sector organisation the Trust has an additional duty under the **Public Sector Equality Duty, 2011**. This is made up of a General Equality Duty which is supported by specific duties.

The General Equality Duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Specific Duty requires public sector organisations to show functional transparency by:

- Preparing and publishing one or more equality objectives which can be achieved to do any of the things mentioned in the aims of the General Equality Duty, by 6 April 2012, and at least every four years thereafter.
- Ensuring that those equality objectives are specific and measurable.
- Publishing those equality objectives in such a manner that they are accessible to the public.

Equality Act 2010. The Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine 'protected characteristics'

Age

The Act protects people of all ages, however under 18s are only protected against age discrimination in relation to work, not in the 'provision of goods and services'. Different treatment because of age is not unlawful discrimination if an organisation can justify it as a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim".

Disability

Under the Act a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. HIV, Cancer and MS are included from the point of diagnosis.

Sex

Both men and women are protected under the Act.

Gender Reassignment

The Act provides protection for transsexual people. Gender reassignment is a personal, social, and sometimes medical process by which an individual proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change their gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected, so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered.

Marriage & Civil Partnership

The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership. Single people are not protected.

Pregnancy & Maternity

A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled after she has given birth.

Race

For the purposes of the Act race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief

In the Act religion includes any religion and it includes a lack of religion. A religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief (e.g. humanism) or a lack of such belief. To be protected a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sexual Orientation

The Act protects bisexual, heterosexual/straight, gay and lesbian people.

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination) such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Harassment based on association. It is unlawful to discriminate against or harass any individual for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Harassment based on a perception. It is unlawful to discriminate against or harass any individual based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have the protected characteristic.

Victimisation is defined as where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. A claim of victimisation cannot be made if the employee acted maliciously, in making or supporting a complaint which was found to be false or unjustified.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.