

Equality Policy

Ratified/Reviewed by...	Date	Date to be reviewed
Trust Board	May 2025	May 2026

Equality Policy

The Character Education Trust strongly promotes equality of opportunity under all circumstances and in all contexts. We actively seek to ensure that all members of our community and all visitors to the Trust are treated equally.

This includes actively ensuring that discrimination or inequality of any kind does not occur on the basis of the following:

- Race
- Nationality
- Gender (including transgender).
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Mental Health
- Marital Status

Discrimination and inequality can be experienced in the following ways, not exclusively:

- Inappropriate or offensive language and terminology.
- Cultural misrepresentation
- Violence/ physical harm.
- Bullying
- Online Abuse
- Disadvantage in all aspects of progress, care and opportunity.

When inequality or discrimination is seen or reported the Trust will strongly challenge and will work to resolve the issue. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fully and without prejudice.

The Trust will promote and teach the recognised British values of tolerance and respect throughout our Trust community.

The Trust will monitor, evaluate and develop strategy in response to all incidents of discrimination or inequality.

The Trust community and its leaders will maintain a current awareness of how discrimination and prejudice is experienced and will adjust its approach appropriately.

Introduction

Our Trust is an inclusive Trust where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

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.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

2. We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our Trust community to feel a sense of belonging within the Trust and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development

6. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school development plans, self evaluation reviews, the prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references in the behaviour, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of meetings involving governors.

The Equality Act also applies to Trusts in their role as an employer, and the way we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day today life of the schools in the Trust.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

School policies on Behaviour, Character and Inclusion take full account of the duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from schools for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

The Trust challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia,
- prejudices around Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

We know the needs of our populations very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age- appropriate literacy and number skills.

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future pupils – we will for example, be sufficiently prepared if a Visually Impaired, Hearing impaired or Gypsy Roma Traveller pupil joins one of our schools.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.

We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving.

We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing

barriers to participation where necessary.

Positive Action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the Trust's Equality Objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the Trust community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Trustees

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. The Education and Standards Sub committee of the Trust Board has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Trust Board and its sub-committees, and the Local Governing Bodies keep aspects of the Trust's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environments. Trustees annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the Trust's Equalities Work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

Leadership

The Headteachers and the Director of HR are responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination. Headteachers and Director of HR staff have day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. They will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
 - plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the Trust's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
 - support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated

planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult

- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the Trust as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

Visitors

All visitors to the Trusts' schools, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in Trust newsletters to enable them to do this.

Equal Opportunities for staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.

We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the Trust reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and Reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available on the Trust website

- in the staff handbook
- as part of induction for new staff

We ensure that the whole Trust community knows about the policy, objectives and data. We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the schools and issues such as language barriers are considered. The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information.

Racial Equality Policy

Overview

The Character Education Trust is committed to an inclusive ethos based on respect for, and celebration of ethnic diversity. The Trust strives to prepare all pupils for living in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. The Trust will strive to promote race equality in all dimensions of the schools life and community.

Cultural and ethnic diversity will be valued in the curriculum, in the Trust workforce, the governing bodies and the parental and student body. We will ensure that the culture and ethos of the school places equal value on the diverse racial faith and ethnic groups, cultural and linguistic heritage represented in our society.

We acknowledge and value all ethnic and national groups represented in the Trust community including people of mixed race/ heritage, asylum seekers, refugees, gypsy and other traveller groups.

The Trust recognises, and provides for, its responsibility to continue to learn about ways that the diversity and circumstance of the community has, can and will change.

We recognise that we live and work in a multi-cultural and multi-faith community and we will strive to recruit a workforce that reflects this. We understand that through recruitment of a diverse workforce that the Trust community is enriched and that the student's experiences are enhanced.

We endorse, and actively aim to respond to, the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

We accept and understand the definition of Racism and Institutional Racism included in the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry Report.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

The Trust supports and works actively to develop a curriculum that gives all students the opportunity to learn about a broad range of cultures, traditions and religions.

It is the policy of Trust to ensure that all curriculum and pastoral teaching are not taught with deliberate or accidental use of stereotypes, potentially offensive language, incorrect or historically inaccurate information which suggest or implies derogatory understandings or meanings.

It is also the policy of the Trust to ensure that all subjects are taught in a way that does not reflect teachers or staff members personal political or moral views and is taught in a neutral non-bias way. However, all topics that relevant to modern culture and society, including current news and affairs are discussed openly without judgment in a way that allows students to express their views and beliefs in a learning, educational environment.

Extreme views, as considered to be extreme by law or in the general and wide view of society will be addressed accordingly and will not be tolerated when they are clearly considered racist, homophobic, misogynistic or clearly offensive to others.

Freedom of speech is important but not when it is unlawful and will be managed accordingly by the Trust. Strong views which breach the law or cause serious offence will be challenged by the Trust.

The Trust is committed to providing and publicising the opportunity for staff to train in the implementation of a multi culturally reflective curriculum.

At every opportunity the Trust has and will continue to provide EAL students with the opportunity to extend their multi-lingual ability and to obtain relevant qualifications. We will ensure that methods of assessment are culturally neutral and do not disadvantage pupils for whom English is a second language.

We will ensure that setting and grouping arrangements raise achievement of all pupils and do not reinforce negative stereotypes or lower the self-esteem of students. Teachers will seek opportunities to introduce activities that demonstrate the value of other cultures and encourage children to discuss race equality.

Reporting and Dealing with Racial Incidents.

The Trust will not tolerate any form of racial harassment or abuse to any member of the Trust community.

We accept and understand the legal and moral definition of a Racial Incident, institutionalised racism and its manifestations.

The Trust has a clear racial incidents report procedure.

- All suspected and actual racial incidents must be recorded as a racial incident.
- Once the incident has been recorded the matter should be dealt with in the standard way as described in the school's Behaviour, Character and Inclusion Policies through normal channels.
- Racial Incident Logs are checked and reviewed regularly.

Monitoring and Review

- We are committed to the constant review and refinement of our Racial Equality Policy and understand why this is vital to its success and effectiveness

In addition to this, schools also monitors by racial/ ethnic/ nationality group:

- Admissions
- Attainment in all curriculum areas
- Attendance
- Racist incidents and action taken
- Selection and recruitment of staff
- Exclusions
- Awards and rewards
- Disciplinary sanctions
- Participation in extra- curricular activities

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