



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

2023-2024

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Approval By: DMAT Board of Trustees	Date: October 2023	

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Policy and Objectives

Introduction

Durrington Multi Academy Trust (DMAT) respects and embraces the diversity within our communities. We are committed to an environment which ensures that all pupils and adults are treated with dignity and respect. We seek to provide a positive learning and working environment in all our schools, which is free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

Durrington Multi Academy Trust is an Equal Opportunities Employer and welcomes applicants from all groups.

For us **'equality'** is about opportunity, access, participation, and contribution on a fair and equal footing and providing a framework for this to happen. The term **'diversity'** acknowledges there are differences between people and the trust values and respects the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values, and beliefs of each individual.

This is regardless of:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Nationality
- Cultural background
- Disabilities
- Physical ability/neurodiversity
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic factors
- Age

We promote positive action to ensure equity that all pupils and staff are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities.

Compliance

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which is sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty', that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics:

- Race
- Disability
- Sex
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment

This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out its functions, DMAT will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Where schools are concerned, age will be a relevant characteristic in considering their duties in their role as an employer but not in relation to pupils.

Staff, Trustees, and local governors will:

- Actively promote equality of opportunity in all areas of school life.
- Ensure that members of each academy community know their rights and respect the rights of others.
- Aim to ensure that prejudice or discrimination in all its forms is actively rejected.
- Raise awareness of equality issues for all members of each academy community, and through our links with the local community.
- Establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum and enable everyone to fulfil his/her potential regardless of ability, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Equality and diversity principles based on the above aims will be embedded in our daily practices, policies, and the processes of decision-making, including:

- Admissions, induction, and attendance
- Pupils' progress and achievement

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing, particularly in relation to safeguarding
- Parental involvement
- Working with the wider communities
- Behaviour management
- Staff recruitment and professional development
- Curriculum access and participation
- Teaching styles and strategies

Publication on information

The Trust acknowledges its legal duties to publish information on compliance with the three elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and, in addition, to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

The purpose of our Equality and Diversity information is to ensure that, in everything we do, the Trust promotes diversity and equality of opportunity, eliminates discrimination, and brings about positive change for those experiencing disadvantage. It provides a framework for good practice in developing equality of opportunity and access both within the schools, school workforce and the wider communities.

At Durrington Multi Academy Trust we have developed strategies and policies to ensure that:

- We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all members of our school community
- We do not discriminate against any members of our community on the grounds of their ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, social economic factors or cultural traditions
- We ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to all the school resources and provisions we can offer
- We ensure that recruitment, training and promotion systems are fair to all staff members
- We will always challenge any form of direct or indirect discrimination or prejudice levied at any members of our school community
- We positively celebrate our differences, as represented in our school community and beyond, and will challenge stereotyping wherever it occurs
- We show mutual respect for one another, and for all minority groups

Roles and Responsibilities

DMAT Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy and for ensuring compliance. The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at each school is the headteacher/ co-headteacher.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Treat colleagues, pupils and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities
- Report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy

All leaders must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives regarding equal opportunities. Senior leaders will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness, and recruitment and selection best practice.

All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and not to discriminate against or harass other employees, treating them with dignity at all times. They should also apply this to how they treat members of the public in the provision of services and should support the Trust, and its schools in meeting their commitment to provide equal opportunities for all and promoting diversity in the workplace.

The **general aims** of the Trust and all schools within the Trust are to:

- Promote good practice in equality of opportunity in the organisation's activities
- Ensure that the organisation's commitment to equality is widely known, understood, and communicated.

The **specific** aims of the Trust and all schools within the Trust are to work with our pupils, employees, parents/carers, contractors, and key stakeholders:

- **as a Trust:** to provide an outstanding education which meets the needs of all our pupils and enables all to achieve success
- **as an employer:** to have a workforce which is representative of the communities we serve; to value and use the diversity of our staff; to strive to be places where people want to work; to be leaders in good practice in our localities; to ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all, and to recruit the best person for the job based on careful analysis of job requirements and performance.
- **as community leaders:** to champion equality of opportunity, challenge racism and all forms of discrimination and contribute to making the local communities places where people live together safely in peace, respect and friendship;
- **as a major procurer and commissioner of services** to use our spending power wherever possible to influence other organisations in promoting equality of opportunity.

Durrington Multi Academy Trust undertakes to:

- meet its legal obligations under relevant legislation

- treat everyone fairly and with respect for their culture, values and beliefs
- operate in an open and accountable fashion
- encourage and enable the involvement of people in decisions which affect them

Equality Objectives 2023-2027

Our objectives are to:

- Raise standards in education, helping to advance equality of opportunity for children with protected characteristics in our schools, as well as those who are socio-economically disadvantaged
- Be a welcoming and inclusive employer attracting talent from wherever it comes.
- Celebrate diversity, create opportunities for all and specifically advance equality of opportunity for those who share protected characteristics.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in all its forms across the trust and our schools.
- Foster good relations between people who have a shared characteristic and those who do not

Within our schools (enacted at an individual school level) we will:

- Ensure that staff and governors are aware of current equalities and diversity-related legislation alongside the overarching trust aims and responsibilities in these areas
- Promote the awareness, understanding and acceptance of different cultures, different religious beliefs and different ethnic groups within our academy communities
- Promote mental health awareness and develop appropriate interventions where necessary
- Prioritise, through high quality, evidence- informed practice the closing of the attainment & achievement gaps between all groups of pupils identified as underachieving, including:
 - Disadvantaged (eligible for pupil premium)
 - Special educational needs and disabilities
 - Looked after, and previously looked after
 - Minority ethnic backgrounds
- Work proactively to improve the access to our sites for all users and especially for those with disabilities
- Monitor the incidence of the homophobic, sexist and racist language by pupils, taking appropriate actions to eliminate these
- Continuously review and revise the curriculums so that they represent a diverse culture and society and encourage understanding, acceptance and respect

Employer Duties

DMAT recognises that by valuing and promoting equality and diversity for all employees and job applicants and avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and delivery of services, we will be able to deliver a first-class education. As an employer we will ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

We aim to ensure that:

- no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics.
- Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant skills and abilities.
- Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job. Short listing of applicants should be done by more than one person wherever possible.
- Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying.
- We will take reasonable steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.
- Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, other than where it is necessary to:
 - establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
 - establish if any reasonable adjustments need to be made to enable an applicant to have a fair interview or assessment.
 - carry out equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).
- Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants will not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance, name or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original specified documents before employment starts to satisfy current immigration legislation.

During Employment

Employees are required to disclose any convictions received during their employment, where it is relevant to the job or may impact on their ability to undertake their roles. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis by taking into consideration the role and responsibilities of the post holder, the nature of the conviction and the potential impact on the ability to undertake the role and impact on the school.

Discrimination Against People with Dependents/Caring Responsibilities

We will ensure that our employment practices prohibit unfair discrimination against people with dependents/ caring responsibilities in promotion or career progression; recruitment and selection; redundancy; retirement; support systems; training and development. To facilitate the above the school offers, where practicable and manageable within the requirements and duties of the school/business, a number of 'work-life balance' initiatives open to all employees: details are set out in the leave policies/guidance.

Training

We are committed to valuing and supporting our employees to realise their full potential and creating a diverse workforce that broadly reflects the community in which we operate. Our commitment to families and employees is one of continuous development through training and awareness raising helping to make this policy fully effective.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continuing professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all;
- Equality data relating to staff is available on an annual basis and available on request due to small numbers potentially identifying individuals.

Procurement & Commissioning of Services

DMAT will, where possible, require all contractors, consultants and suppliers to comply with relevant equality and diversity legislation and school's policy.

Partnership

We will work collaboratively and proactive in partnerships, and with organisations in the community, both statutory and voluntary, in delivering common race equality objectives and appropriate services to the communities we serve This ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted through both good employment practices and in the delivery of services.

Admissions, Suspensions and Exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and arrangements do not discriminate according to race, gender, disability, or socio-economic factors. Suspensions and exclusions will always be based on the trust's behaviour principles and schools' behaviour policy. We will closely monitor suspensions and exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact, and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

Consultation and Involvement

For our equality, diversity and inclusion plans to evolve the school requests the views of stakeholders on changes and developments.

This is done by:

- Feedback from parents' and/or governors' meetings
- Input from staff
- Feedback from pupils
- Issues raised in annual reviews, PEPs or reviews of progress

Tackling Discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability, social economic factors or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances. Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to senior staff through school systems. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteachers.

What is a Discriminatory Incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of Discriminatory Incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, social economic factors or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, social economic factors or sexual orientation;

- Discriminatory comments during discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g., food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to cooperate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability, social economic factors or sexual orientation.
- Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

This list is not exhaustive.

Responding to, and Reporting Incidents

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

Breaches of the Policy

Anyone who believes that they may have been discriminated against is encouraged to raise the matter through the DMAT Grievance Procedure. Anyone uncertain on how to proceed should speak to the headteacher/ co-headteachers.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Publicity and Communication

Copies of this Equality and Diversity Information will be made available to all staff. This document will also be published on the school website.

Supplementary Guidance:

- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- The Equality Act 2010
- Department for Education Guidance

Reviewed October 2023