BATH & WELLS
Multi Academy Trust

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Equality Objectives

Updated December 2022

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust ("the Trust") is committed to equality and valuing diversity and actively supports practices that promote genuine equality of opportunity and inclusivity for all staff and pupils. Our Education Strategy characteristic for Diversity and Difference illustrates expectations for an inclusive school culture including non negotiables as co-produced with our schools.

1.2 The Trust is committed to promoting a positive and diverse culture in which all staff and pupils are valued and supported to fulfil their potential irrespective of any protected characteristic.

1.3 The Trust recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to promoting the equality and diversity of all those we work with especially our employees, our children and volunteers. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent provisions.

1.4 The following groups have been identified as key recipients in terms of the implementation of this policy:

- Pupils who are looked after or identified as in need by the Local Authority
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils at risk of exclusion
- Pupils missing education
- Pupils with medical conditions affecting attendance at school
- Pupils who are Young Carers
- Pupils, parents, carers, staff and volunteers whose ethnic and or cultural background is not Whit British, including those from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller background
- Pupils, parents, carers, staff and volunteers for whom English is not their first language
- Pupils with mental health issues
- Pupils in receipt of free school meals and their parents and carers
- Pupils living in areas of deprivation and their parents and carers
- Pupils who are Gifted and Talented
- Pupils who are suffering from Gender Dysphoria, are gender questioning or going through transition
- Staff, parents, carers and volunteers who are LGBTQI
- Pupils whose parent(s) and carers are LGBTQI
- Pupils who are questioning or considering their own sexual orientation or who identify as LGBTQI

NB Pupils as terminology references any child in a BWMAT school

1.5 This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including volunteers and students on placement), young people and visitors at our schools and has been prepared in conjunction with the following policies: Workforce Equal Opportunities policy– SEND and Inclusion, Transgender Pupils, Admissions, Behaviour (school policy), Exclusions and Fixed-Term Suspensions, Complaints, Employment policies, Uniform policy (school policy), Accessibility Plan (school policy). Policies are available at Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Policies (bwmat.org) or on each school website.

1.6 Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action for staff volunteers and children.

1.7 Discriminatory treatment, bullying or harassment of staff (including volunteers), children or visitors will also not be tolerated. School staff may require a visitor to leave the premises immediately where such behaviour is reasonably believed to have taken place.

2 Compliance

2.1 This policy has been developed in response to the Equality Act 2010 and replaces previous policies relating to race, gender and disability equality. It has been designed to help the Trust and each of our schools meet the public sector equality duty to:

2.1.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct.

2.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.1.3 Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines nine protected characteristics:

- Age*
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership**
- Race
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

* Age is a protected characteristic, but the difference in treatment of pupils according to age is a proportionate means to the legitimate aim of providing appropriate education and setting. This does not prevent a Gifted and

Talented pupil having access to a more challenging curriculum which might normally be provided to an older age group.

The age of staff and volunteers (including parents and carers) should not impact on the opportunities available to them save where there is a legitimate reason, for example an age related health condition (subject to reasonable adjustments) or insurance requirements which prevent an opportunity being available to a person.

** Marriage or Civil Partnership is a protected characteristic only in respect of employment according to the Act, however as a Trust we expect that everyone is treated equally, including parents, carers, volunteers and other visitors, regardless of marriage or civil partnership.

Race/ Ethnicity / Sex and Sexual Orientation

No person may be denied any opportunity because of their ethnicity, sex (whether assigned or self-identified) or sexual orientation, or because their parent(s) or carer(s) have one or more of those characteristics. Discrimination on such grounds is never justified by a "legitimate purpose" within our organisation (as is possible with Religious Belief, Age and Disability (where adjustments are not reasonably practicable). The Trust and all of our schools will actively seek to identify and remove barriers experienced by particular groups in accessing opportunities

2.3 All Staff, Trustees, Members and local governors will:

- actively promote equality of opportunity in all areas of school life
- ensure that members of our central team and our school communities 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 school community and through our links with the local community
- establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum and enable each individual to fulfil their potential regardless of ability, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

2.4 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
- children's progress and achievement
- children's personal development and wellbeing, particularly in relation to safeguarding
- parental and carer involvement
- working with the wider community and partner agencies

- behaviour management
- recruitment and professional development
- curriculum access and participation
- teaching styles and strategies.

3 Publication of Information and Equality Objectives

3.1 The Trust acknowledges its legal duties to publish information on compliance with the three strands of the public sector equality duty outlined in Section 2 above and, in addition, to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

3.2 The Trust will work across our schools to analyse data and existing practices to set out the actions taken in compliance of the equality duty and to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives to support the development of the Trust and its wider community.

3.3 The information on the equality duty will be updated annually and the objectives every 4 years. Our Equality Action Plan is published on the Trust website. Each school will also set out and publish (on their local school website) their own Equality Objectives and an Action Plan according to local context.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy and for ensuring compliance. One Trustee holds the portfolio responsibility for EDI and is responsible for:

- Ensuring EDI matters have a high profile with Trustees and Governors;

- Reviewing progress reports on equality objectives and the completion of staff training in relation to EDI;

- Championing the Trust as an open and inclusive organisation.

4.2 All staff are responsible for acting in accordance with the Equalities Act, and those who govern are responsible for ensuring these responsibilities are met by their school and the wider Trust.

4.3 It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to:

- treat colleagues, children and volunteers 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
- actively challenge stereotyping and bias, including challenging the use of language which underpins such stereotyping and bias
- report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.

5 Duty to make reasonable adjustments

5.1 We will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments, where there is a need to ensure that a person with a disability has the same access to everything as a person without a disability, as far as is practical. We will take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by people with disabilities more generally, as far as is reasonably practical.

5.2 The duty to make reasonable adjustments covers all aspects of school life, including the curriculum, classroom organisation and timetabling, access to facilities, clubs and visits, sports and policies.

5.3 In making reasonable adjustments, the Trust is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for pupils with disabilities. Staff will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.

5.4 The Trust will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether users of the premises who have a disability are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the Trust will take steps to improve access for those users of the premises. Please see the Accessibility Plan for further information, which can be found on the respective school website.

5.5 Parents and carers should notify the Headteacher in writing if they are aware or suspect that their child has a disability and provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information about their child's disability upon request. Providing such information will enable the school to support the child as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. Every school will have due regard to any request made by a parent, carer or child (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the child's disability as confidential.

6 Uniform policy

6.1 Each school's uniform policy must be consistent with this policy. The same uniform policy applies equally to all children, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, all schools will consider reasonable requests to alter the uniform, for example for genuine religious requirements and in making reasonable adjustments for a pupil with a disability to avoid substantial disadvantage.

6.2 Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is based on manifest religious or racial beliefs or identity. This exception does not include the wearing of items intended only to *signify* the beliefs of a child, for example wearing a cross or crucifix, but rather it may apply where there is a genuine belief that not wearing the item whilst in school would significantly detract from the child's freedom to comply with the established practices of their religious belief. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred to the Headteacher whose decision will be final, subject to the complaints procedure.

6.3 In accordance with the BWMAT Transgender Pupils Policy, no uniform item should be gender specific, including any exceptions under 6.2.

7 Admissions policy

7.1 Our admissions criteria are defined under the admissions policies and are applied consistently to every child, irrespective of any protected characteristic. The Admissions Policies for the Trust are available at Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Admissions (bwmat.org) and for each school is available on their own website.

7.2 Some of our schools are Church of England Schools and some, which were formerly Voluntary Aided Schools, are permitted to include faith based considerations in their over-subscription criteria. Such criteria do not amount to unlawful discrimination on grounds of religious belief because they are a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. However, such criteria are only relevant where places are over-subscribed.

8 Religious Beliefs

8.1 The Trust respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, children, parents and carers, and each school will comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice wherever possible. This includes:

- requests relating to uniform as set out in clause 6 above;
- requests that a pupil be excluded from collective worship, referred to below
- requests that a pupil be allowed time out of school to observe religious practice.

8.2 An example where a request may be refused is if the religious observance takes place during lesson time. Whilst the school will explore other ways to accommodate the request, such as amended timetabling, this may not always be possible.

8.3 A number of our schools are Church of England Schools, and hold a daily act of collective worship. Non church schools in our Trust will have a daily assembly.

8.4 Parents and carers who do not want their child to attend collective worship may request their withdrawal, in writing, to the school.

8.5 Church of England schools are committed to the provision of education for pupils of all faiths and of none. The distinctive Christian character of our Church schools neither amounts to discrimination, nor detracts from our obligation to respect and celebrate diversity including diversity of religious belief.

9 Curriculum delivery

9.1 Our vision for inclusion is based upon being the best version of ourselves and applies to everyone who works and learns within the Trust. We want everyone to value each other with kindness and respect.

9.2 All our children including those identified as having SEND, have the same common entitlement to a high-quality curriculum as described in the Education Strategy.

9.3 The curriculum addresses inequalities for children including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for certain protective groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded each schools' curriculum.

9.4 The Trust recognises and promotes awareness of the possibility of bias including unconscious bias, and works to eliminate such bias in all aspects of our Education provision.

NB Unconscious Bias The term 'unconscious bias' describes how we are all shaped by our prior experiences and the social and cultural values that we absorb throughout our life. We all hold deeply ingrained assumptions and beliefs and create our own internal stereotypes. Most people feel more

comfortable around people like themselves (similar age, background or culture) and unconscious bias is a natural result of this, but it can cause unintentional prejudice. Unconscious bias can affect our behaviour in many ways, but if the bias is against a protected characteristic it could lead to illegal discrimination. It can affect recruitment, progression, recognition and much more.

10 Exclusion policy

10.1 The decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently is a last resort. Our exclusion criteria are defined under the Exclusions Policy and are applied consistently to every child, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

10.2 If and to the extent that children with a particular protected characteristic are disproportionately subject to fixed or permanent exclusion, the Trust and our schools will explore ways of reducing that disproportionate impact. In accordance with the Trust Exclusions Policy, all schools within our trust should review, at least annually, whether any group with a Protected Characteristic is disproportionately affected by exclusion (suspension or permanent), including 'managed moved' and consider what positive action might be taken to address that any imbalance.

11 Gender Identity

11.1 The Trust is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 towards staff (including volunteers), parents, carers, children identifying as transgender or non-binary. In respect of people identifying as trans-gender or non-binary, the Trust will be sensitive to their individual needs whilst also recognising the needs and sensitivities of others.

11.2 Children who have confirmed that they have commenced the process of transitioning, and therefore fall under the protected characteristic of gender-reassignment will be provided with appropriate pastoral care and support.

The Trust Transgender Children policy is under review in line with new guidelines.

12 Recruitment and selection

12.1 All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent will be treated fairly and equally. We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Selections will be made on the basis of aptitude, ability and/or merit, where appropriate.

12.2 Certain roles require, in accordance with the Schools Standards and Framework Act, that candidates are able to demonstrate a commitment to, and the ability to lead in, the Christian characteristic and Ethos of our Church of England Schools. Details are included when such roles are advertised.

12.3 Certain Trustee and Local Governor roles at our Church schools require candidates able to demonstrate a commitment similar to that outlined at 12.2 above. These "Foundation" roles require that the candidate is approved by the nominating church body. Details of the criteria for approval available on the application form.

12.4 Where appropriate, the Trust will endeavour to make all reasonable and effective adjustments to accommodate a disability during the recruitment and selection process. Where recruitment and selection is carried out by a third party, on behalf of the Trust, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure they adhere to the principles of this policy. Please refer to the Equal Opportunities Workforce policy Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Policies (bwmat.org).

13 Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

The Trust's SEND and Inclusion Policy sets our approach to provision for children with SEND: Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Policies (bwmat.org) Each school will also publish on their local website details of their SEND strategy and provision.

14 Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged children

The Trust's Pupil Premium Strategy sets out our approach to support children in receipt of pupil premium funding Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Policies (bwmat.org). Each school will also publish on their local website details of their Pupil Premium Strategy.

15 Accessibility

Schools are required publish an Accessibility Plan which aims to increase the extent to which disabled children can participate in the curriculum, improve the physical environment of the school, and improve the accessibility of information to disabled children.

16 Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination and harassment

16.1 All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment against children must be reported to Headteacher or senior member of staff on site and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident). Where appropriate for children CPOMS can be used as the platform for recording. All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise) will be addressed in accordance with each school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Discrimination, bullying and harassment against staff will be managed in accordance with the Trust's Bullying and Harassment Policy and will also be reported (with names removed) as set out below.

16.2 Schools are required to report to Governors all incidents of pupil bullying, discrimination and harassment related to equality, diversity and inclusion as part of monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and school equality objectives. The number of such incidences will not, in itself, indicate ineffectiveness of this Policy and Objectives Plan. The Trust expects that as our communities become better at identifying such incidences, the number reported may increase. The information contained in reports will enable schools to learn, identify training requirements, adjust behaviour policies and home school agreements so as to continue to improve the equality of opportunity for all children.

16.3 Staff and volunteers incidents of bullying, discrimination and harassment in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion will be managed in conjunction with the Trust Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Grievance Policy. Incidents which are not resolved at the informal stage will be reported to Trustees via the Resources Committee as part of the process of monitoring the effectiveness of this Policy and the Trust's equality objectives.

17 Complaints and grievances

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow our complaints procedure, except staff who should follow the Bullying and Harassment Policy The Trust will monitor the number of complaints reaching Stage 3 which include allegations of discrimination and formal staff bullying or harassment cases which including allegations of discrimination which have been investigated . The monitoring will include the nature of the alleged discrimination and the outcome.

18 Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

18.1 Headteachers hold responsibility for the implementation of this policy within their schools, and the Senior Leadership team for Central Team practice. Local Governing Committees are responsible for school level monitoring of the policy and the agreement of each school's Equality Objectives and subsequent Action Plan. The Trust policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board at least every 4 years.

18.2 Additional support would also be provided to any parent or significant person, wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on the premises during office hours and an electronic copy is posted on our website: Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust - Policies (bwmat.org)

18.3 The effectiveness of this policy will be assessed using progress against targets identified in the action plan together with stakeholder views, at a local level and Trust wide.

Appendix 1 Trust-wide Equality Objectives

Appendix 2 BWMAT school Equality Objectives/Action Plan template

Strategic Plan – Priorities that deliver Equality objectives 2024 - 2028

- The specifics.....

1	2	3	4	5
'Our Trust family places children instinctively at the heart of decision making and leadership thinking at all levels.'	'Our Trust will remove barriers, challenge injustice and celebrate diversity to improve Education in every community we serve.'	'We will maximise the financial resources provided and employed for the benefit of our children through leveraging economies of scale and expertise.'	'We recognise our workforce as our most precious resource; their wellbeing is secure, empowering them to be the best version of themselves.'	'We will develop and sustain a unique vision for each individual school in our Trust.'
(E1) High quality and inclusive education that ensures excellent outcomes for all children	(SI2) As a system Leader continue to sponsor underperforming schools, transforming life chances for all children	(P1) Recruit and retain a diverse, inclusive and well-equipped workforce	(GC1) Recruit to and diversify governance structures so we have skilled people who are representative of their communities, able to support, challenge, monitor performance at all levels	(RL3) Continue to develop equal opportunities for our children to develop as Leaders, enabling their voice to reach and influence communities
(E2) To ensure our schools are delivering an ambitious, broad, well sequenced, knowledge rich curriculum enhanced by enrichment opportunities for all children		(P3) Ensure inclusive working environments promoting equality and diversity		
(E3) Ensure our children have the knowledge and skills to succeed in life so they are able to flourish with their peers regardless of background or context				

Appendix 2 – School Equality Objectives

In completing these objectives, schools should have reference to the 2020 Equality Act Guidance for Schools

Objectives should be relevant to the local school setting, development plan and the Trust Equality Policy

Objective	Action to the taken	Timeframe	Success indicator	Responsibility	Review
Eg. increase training opportunities for all staff					
Eg. Monitoring of incidents of prejudice and bullying					
Eg. develop curriculum to provide more content on x					