



Matrix
Academy Trust
EDUCATION WITHOUT EXCEPTION

Equality and Diversity Policy

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Last review date:	May 2023		
Next Review date:	May 2025		
Statutory Policy:	Yes		
Date	Version	Reason for change	Source
19.05.23	V2	Reviewed and updated	D Lowbridge- Ellis / M Thomason

To be read alongside all relevant Matrix Academy Trust policies and procedures

1. Purpose of Document

1.1 The objective of this policy is to provide a framework for the Trust to ensure it more than meets its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under The Equality Act (2010). The duty extends to all protected characteristics as well as any other vulnerable groups.

1.2 Protected characteristics are: race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), disability, sex, age, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

1.3 You're also protected from discrimination if you're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example a family member or friend or you've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

1.4 We are required to have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; foster good relations across all characteristics as well as between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

1.5 Discrimination can come in one of the following forms*:

- direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
- indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

**Information taken from Gov.uk (discrimination: your rights)*

1.6 The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all members of the extended Trust community including employees, whether part time or full time on a substantive or fixed term contract, and also associated persons such as secondees, agency staff, contractors and all other employed under a contract of service.

1.7 This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and therefore Matrix Academy Trust may vary any part of this policy following consultation.

2. Policy Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events, and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on Matrix Academy Trust's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media), contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to Matrix Academy Trust.

2.2 Employees have a personal responsibility for the application of this policy.

3. Equality and Diversity Statement

3.1 We will not tolerate less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. In addition, we will not tolerate less favourable treatment of those for whom English is an additional language, minority ethnic pupils, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, young carers or any other vulnerable groups.

3.2 Equality and Diversity goes beyond meeting legal obligations or targets. It is about making a difference to the lives of the communities we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. This means an ongoing commitment to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of all members of the Trust community.

3.3 To that end, through our Trust ethos, curriculum and community links, we will work towards:

- a common vision;
- a sense of belonging for all;
- similar life opportunities for all.

4. Guiding Principles

4.1 At Matrix Academy Trust we fully endorse and accept the following principles:

4.2 **All learners are of equal value - “Education without exception”**

4.2.1 All learners and potential learners are of equal value and benefit equally from Trust policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, background or identity.

4.3 **Relevant differences are recognised**

4.3.1 Treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background.

4.4 **We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging**

4.5 The Trust promotes

- positive attitudes and interactions;
- mutual respect and good relations;
- an absence of harassment or prejudice-related bullying between people of different ability, special educational need, sex, race, religion and belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or anyone else belonging to a vulnerable group.

4.6 **Staff recruitment, retention and development**

4.6.1 Matrix Academy Trust is an Equal Opportunities Employer and is committed to positively promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity among the workforce.

4.7 Society as a whole benefits

4.7.1 Programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life of people with protected characteristics.

5. Equalities Legislation

5.1 Our commitment is reinforced through our legal duty both as an employer and service provider. The legal duties come from a range of relevant equality legislation and associated codes of practice, many of which have subsequently been merged into the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under The Equality Act (2010). Through this policy we are committed to complying with the general and specific duties, as well as codes of practice.

5.2 Future Legislation

5.2.1 We will also welcome the contribution of future equalities legislation to provide equal opportunities for everyone.

5.3 Matrix Academy Trust is committed to ensuring all regulations are followed.

6. Implementation

6.1 We will ensure implementation through action in the following areas:

6.2 **Relationships and ethos** - to foster behaviour based on rights, responsibilities and mutual respect between all members of the Trust community; to support pupils' and employees' personal development and well-being; to address and record all forms of prejudice-related bullying; to promote each Matrix Academy Trust school as a 'Telling School', expecting all pupils and employees to pass on information that threatens equality, diversity and community cohesion.

6.3 **Equity and excellence** - to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities, and minimising variations in outcomes for different groups.

6.4 **Curriculum** - to teach pupils to understand others, promote common values and value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop skills of participation and responsible action. The curriculum of each school will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is appropriately diverse, incorporating the experiences of people with the full range of protected characteristics.

6.5 **Engagement and extended services** - to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different school communities locally, across the country and internationally.

6.6 **Equality objectives** — Each year, we will set equality objectives to ensure we are paying due regard to the 2010 Equality Act. These will be published on our website and the work we are doing to achieve them publicised. They will be reviewed at the end of the year.

6.7 Recruitment – Selection for employment at Matrix Academy Trust will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Robust recruitment and selection procedures in place will be regularly reviewed to eliminate discrimination with the recruitment process. A Person Specification and Job Description is required for each vacancy, the content of which must be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the role.

6.8 Training and Promotion – Employees are required to sign to say they have read and understood this policy annually. Employees may also be required to participate in training and development activities to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy. All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities at Matrix Academy Trust. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit, and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.

6.9 During Employment— The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to Matrix Academy Trust employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and under represented groups.

6.10 Pay and Reward - Opportunities to undertake additional responsibilities that merit (or may merit) additional remuneration will be open to all employees. The principles of equal pay for work of equal value will be applied. Employees will not be the subject of unfair discrimination in decisions on pay, promotion and remuneration; pay levels, enhancements and promotions will be determined within an equal opportunities context, having regard to the Equality Act, 2010 and relevant legislation.

6.11 Redundancy – The Trust’s Redundancy and Reorganisation Policy is adhered to if there is an identification of a potential redundancy situation. Redundancy procedures must not be initiated for any reason falling outside of the definition within the policy. An employee who has been nominated for redundancy and who feels that this decision has been reached unfairly or improperly has the right of appeal.

6.12 Dismissal – The Trust’s Disciplinary Policy is adhered to for any areas of formal action including dismissal. Dismissal is an outcome of a disciplinary hearing and this decision is taken if an allegation is proven where there has been a further act of misconduct while an existing warning is in effect or where it is reasonable believed that an act of gross misconduct has been committed. All employees have the right of appeal against dismissal for unlawful discrimination in the handling of the disciplinary.

7. Monitoring, Reviewing and Assessing Impact

7.1 This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by employees and governors to ensure that it is effective.

7.2 Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessments is used to inform future planning and decision-making.

7.3 A named member of each school’s Leadership team monitors progress against equality objectives annually.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 All who are associated with Matrix Academy Trust have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion and avoiding unfair discrimination.

8.2 The Trust Board is responsible for:

- The overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with equality legislation.
- Providing diversity data for the Trust to publish so it is widely accessible to members of the Trust community and the public.
- Approving the publication of this policy.

The operational responsibility for this policy is delegated to the CEO.

8.3 The CEO is responsible for:

- Making sure the Trust and individual schools comply with all current equality legislation.
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed.
- Making sure that the Trust and individual schools have up to date equality schemes and action plans.
- Collecting and publish governing board diversity data.

8.4 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.
- Reporting racist incidents to the local authority.
- Appointing a member of the Leadership team to be responsible for coordinating and monitoring work on equality and diversity issues.

8.5 The member of Leadership responsible for Equality and Diversity is responsible for:

- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the Trust Board, employees, pupils and their parents/carers know about it.
- Making sure its procedures are followed.
- Producing regular information for employees and the Trust Board about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary.
- Making sure all employees know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
- Monitoring exclusions, analysing any possible patterns and acting on the findings.

8.6 All employees are responsible for:

- Proactively following this policy and any associated guidelines.
- Providing role models for pupils through their own actions.
- Dealing with racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents, and recognising and tackling other forms of bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination towards anyone because of their protected characteristics or because they belong to a vulnerable group.
- Maintaining high expectations for all pupils.

- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities available to them.

8.7 All our pupils are responsible for:

- Treating others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment.
- Attending and engaging in their own learning as well as allowing and helping other pupils to learn.
- Telling staff about any discrimination-related incidents that occur.

8.8 All our parents/carers are responsible for:

- Supporting our schools in its implementation of this policy.
- Following the Trust policy through their own behaviour.

8.8 Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the Trust lies with the CEO, who reports to the Trust Board.

9. Breaches of the Policy

9.1 Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other Trust policies are dealt with, as determined by the CEO, Headteacher or the Trust Board.

9.2 Where an employee feels they have been discriminated against, they may raise a complaint informally with the Chief Executive/Headteacher or Line Manager. Complaints which are not resolved informally will be managed through the Matrix Academy Trust's Grievance Policy.

9.3 Complaints by external person(s) should be referred via the Matrix Academy Trust's Complaints Policy.

9.4 A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under Matrix Academy Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure which could, in serious cases, lead to dismissal with or without notice.