

# Equality Policy

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Version	Reviewed	Changes since last version
1		Existing
2	November 2022	No updates, part of annual review
3	November 2023	No updates, part of annual review

# Equality Policy

## 1 Purpose of the policy

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch is an inclusive school in a diverse and thriving community. We are proud to celebrate this diversity and champion equality.

Every student, staff member, parent/carer, and all other members of the school's community, are valued and respected. We aim to embed the values and ethos that will develop individuals to become positive, respectful and successful citizens within the community and throughout their lives. We are committed to overcoming disadvantage, tackling discrimination and fostering positive relationships.

This policy sets out how the school meets these aims and supports all students and staff in achieving their potential, academically, professionally and personally. It also confirms how the school is meeting its Public Sector Duty to promote equality as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

The policy also confirms the expectation that all members of the school community, including students, staff, parents, visitors, volunteers, uphold our Equality aims above.

## 2 Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty is made up of a general equality duty and two specific duties. The general duty requires us to have due regard for the need to:

- a) **eliminate discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- c) **foster good relations** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Act defines protected characteristics as:

- age<sup>1</sup>
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race

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<sup>1</sup> A person's age is a protected characteristic for adults in relation to employment. It does not apply to school students.

- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

It is unlawful for the school to discriminate against a student or prospective student, staff member or prospective staff member, by treating them less favourably because of one or more of these characteristics.

The Act's two specific duties require us to:

- a) publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty;
- b) publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

### **3 School principles**

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch fully embraces the Equality Duty both in law and in spirit. In order to fulfil its obligations in this area, the school is guided by the following principles.

- All students, staff and members of the wider school community are of equal value regardless of their background or whether they share one or more of the 'protected characteristics'.
- We recognise and respect difference and challenge prejudice and discrimination. Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating people the same, and our policies, procedures and practices take account of differences in background, culture, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender assignment.
- We foster and promote positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and community. Our policies, procedures and practices promote inclusion, positive interaction and mutual respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind is never tolerated.
- We are consultative in our practices; appropriately involving and engaging members of the school community when change is proposed.
- Our staff are specifically trained in Equality and Diversity Awareness.

### **4 Implementation**

- School staff consider equality implications before they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they keep all policy under review on a continuing basis. The Equality Duty is integrated into all the school's functions, and the monitoring and analysis necessary to comply with the duty is carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.
- Our admissions and recruitment arrangements are fair, transparent and informed by clear guidance so that there is no risk of discrimination. We maintain an accurate record, when possible and appropriate, of the protected characteristics of our students, employees, Local Governing Body members, Trustees and applicants for jobs. This data ensures we know the needs of our school population well and informs our Equality Objectives, planning and monitoring focuses. Appendices A and B give the current school context in relation to students and employees.
- We strive to narrow all gaps in achievement affecting students from particular cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who belong to lower-income households, have a disability or have special educational needs. We aim to provide appropriate and varied learning, teaching and support to ensure all students make excellent progress, regardless of their needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students as set out in our Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, which prompts action to close any

achievement gaps that become evident. We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage.

- We closely monitor data on absence from school and exclusions for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum, particularly through a broad and challenging Personal Social and Health Education programme. We endeavour to present diversity through our displays, resources, events, contributors and role models. We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions, empathise with different experiences and to engage in social action. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.
- Our focus extends beyond academic success. Our students participate in an unrivalled series of innovative challenges and projects throughout their time with us and, whatever their interest, passion or talent, we strive to ensure all students take part in initiatives involving esteemed national and global partners, universities and businesses. Monitoring allows us to target under-participating groups.
- The school's annual plan for the use of Pupil Premium funding enables us to counter the effects of disadvantage on progress and participation and, in particular, creates opportunities for students to broaden their experience.
- Our Behaviour Policy outlines our expectations of both students and staff in their interactions with each other and this includes our approach to challenging and tackling bullying, prejudice and discrimination, wherever and whenever it occurs. Prejudice-related incidents are identified, recorded and dealt with, and reported to the LGB. Through the Student Pledge, drawn up by the students and staff, students are encouraged to model the positive values of the school, at home and within their local community.
- We recognise that people with disabilities may have different needs from those of who do not have a disability. This is always taken into account when developing and implementing decisions, policies and services and may lead to reasonable adjustments. A bi-annual Accessibility Audit helps us ensure the accessibility of our provision and facilities to students, staff and visitors.
- Our Special Educational Needs Policy aims to meet the needs of students with a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision. Our Examinations Policy sets out procedures relating to access arrangements that ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Our professional development programme for staff has a strong focus on equalities issues. It is also designed to ensure equality of access and a profile of participation that reflects the full staff community. We are attentive to the need to ensure that all staff gain from professional development and do not experience blocks to employment or promotion opportunities.
- As an employer we are committed to equal opportunities principles and we monitor and actively promote equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. We strive to eliminate discrimination and harassment. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment and retention and all appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability. We also aim to increase the extent to which staffing, in all roles and at all levels, reflects the diversity of our community. We have specific policies to address staff conduct, discipline, grievances and dignity at work.
- The school's Complaints Policy sets out the procedures through which we handle complaints, including those that relate to any experience or perception of inequality or discrimination, with the specific aim of prompt and, where possible, informal resolution that precludes the need for escalation.
- We regularly gather feedback and responses from students, staff and parents on their experience of the school's provision, practice and policy and endeavour to involve a wide-cross-section of our community in the school's development and improvement.

## 5 Responsibilities

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

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. The Trust's Committees keep relevant aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review. The Trust Board biennially reviews this Policy and its impact.

The school's Executive Principal is responsible for maintaining an ethos in the school that upholds this policy and the Equality Duty. She is also responsible for ensuring this policy is understood and implemented by all staff and for making students and staff aware of its commitments and expectations.

Leadership Team members are responsible for addressing the policy actively within their areas of responsibility and for collating and analysing relevant monitoring evidence.

The Senior Equalities Lead is responsible for ensuring that equality remains a high priority for us all. She leads the Equality Working Party Groups, develops, plans, supports and monitors initiatives to further equality across the school; and proactively engages staff, pupils and parents with the aims and principles of this policy. She collates monitoring evidence and analysis into the termly reports for SLT/LGB.

The Equality Working Groups (pupils and staff) support an inclusive school culture where the whole community feels equally visible, valued and has a voice. The groups are responsible for ensuring that issues of concern raised by pupils and staff are addressed.

All staff are responsible for acting on this policy consistently in their day-to-day professional responsibilities and for supporting students and their families to share the school's commitment to equality.

## 6 Equality Objectives

The school has committed to the following over-arching objectives for equality. In line with the specific duty of the Equality Act 2010, these are translated into specific and measurable objectives relevant to current school improvement priorities at each review of this policy. These are included in Appendix C and feed forward into the School Improvement Plan.

The school commits to:

- **giving active consideration to equality issues**, including the potential effects on different people when developing and implementing strategies, policies and procedures. This will include for example consulting appropriate groups within the school community to ensure due consideration is given to equality issues when developing policies and procedures.
- **ensuring appropriate training** for those responsible for developing strategies, policies and procedures and putting them into practice, and ensuring such people are made aware of their obligations in relation to the Equality Duty. This school will ensure that all those with line management responsibilities receive an appropriate level of training to raise awareness of equality issues and all staff receive diversity awareness training.
- **empowering managers, workers and other relevant parties** by providing appropriate and necessary information. For example, this school will ensure external job vacancies are accessible to all sectors of the community through transparent and open recruitment and

selection processes, and through the provision of appropriate information to ensure all those with suitable skills feel able to apply.

- **monitoring and reviewing** the impact of our policies and procedures, and taking appropriate corrective action where concerns are identified. Part of the purpose of monitoring and reviewing will be to ensure that policies and procedures are consistently and fairly applied. We will, for example, monitor continuing professional development for staff within the school to ensure it is accessible to all, based on professional needs that are consistent with the school's aims, as well as monitoring student progress to ensure students are on track and receive the required level of support.
- **Improving attendance of students from particular groups** to ensure accessibility to an education, even if this means phasing a return to the school or spending time in the Inclusion section of the school before returning to the classroom. It will also involve working in partnership with the students, parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate.
- **improving knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable students to appreciate and value difference and diversity**, for example increasing understanding between students from different faith communities. An example is the school's 'Interfaith Week' event, which is part of the school's year-round work celebration of the way in which students and staff respect similarities and difference across the school and within our communities. The week of activities aims to build positive interfaith relations and explores how people of different faiths and beliefs work together for the common good of our society.
- **acting to prevent prejudice-related bullying or the use of derogatory language** in order to ensure the safety of all students and to encourage students to become citizens who demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of equality and diversity.
- **engagement** with our students, parents and the wider community to ensure that we demonstrate our commitment to sharing the responsibility for raising well-educated and civic-minded students, as we feel this responsibility cannot rest solely with schools.

## 7 Disseminating the policy

We ensure the whole school community knows about our commitment to equality through all relevant communications, interactions, practice and policy.

This policy, including the Equality Objectives and data, is available on the school website and in the staff handbook. Its principles, expectations and commitments are built into curriculum and extra-curricular activities for students and professional development for staff throughout the year.

## 8 Monitoring the policy's impact

### *On students*

As part of the school's Self Evaluation, we collect the following information on our students:

- attainment and progress data,
- attendance data,
- exclusions,
- sanctions and rewards,
- involvement with extended learning opportunities including careers education
- involvement in intervention,

- option choices,
- parental engagement
- progression from Y11/Y13

Senior Leaders with responsibility for the above areas analyse this data routinely from an equality perspective in terms of:

- eligibility for Pupil Premium – a measure of disadvantage
- ethnicity
- prior attainment
- SEN and disability,
- sex
- with English as an additional language
- looked after status

Analysis after each attainment/progress data collection leads to short term action to adjust learning and teaching plans or to target support and intervention. Analysis of end of year outcomes leads to specific areas for school-wide development built into the School Improvement Plan.

Analysis of the wider data sets above enable us to identify differences between groups, and over/under-represented groups. This leads to a review of possible causes and agreed action to address the issues. This may be short term action or school-wide action built into the School Improvement Plan.

The school monitors incidents of prejudice-related bullying or harassment amongst students through the procedures set out in the Anti-bullying Policy.

The school also invites focussed discussion, with students, parents and staff, on the students' school experience in terms of their religion and belief, their sexual orientation and their gender identity.

#### *On staff*

In accordance with Employment Duty legislation, we collect equality information on:

- applicants for employment
- staff in post and on different pay scales/grades/points/levels of leadership
- participation in training
- pay progression
- internal promotion
- accessing flexible working

The HR department analyses this data routinely with respect to:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity
- marriage/civil partnership
- religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This analysis enables us to remove any blocks to, and/or target, under-represented groups and to identify and remove potentially discriminatory practice.

The school also invites feedback from, and focussed discussion with, staff on their school experience in terms of their sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy/maternity.

The school monitors incidents of prejudice-related bullying or harassment of staff through the procedures set out in the Dignity at Work and Grievance policies.

### *Equality objectives*

The specific Equality Objectives for this year (see Appendix A) are built into the School Improvement Plan. Monitoring and evaluation processes are detailed there.

### *Reporting*

An annual summary of all Equality monitoring and the actions that followed/will follow is presented to the Performance and Standards Committee.

## **9 Review of the Policy**

This Equality Policy will be reviewed by the MAS Local Governing Body after a year in the first instance and thereafter biennially. The monitoring report outlined above will inform the review.

We have a rolling programme for reviewing all school policies and use the questions below to assess their potential impact on equality and diversity, so that we can ensure appropriate focus is given.

- To what extent does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community – and what is the significance of the impact?
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Does the policy relate to functions that have been identified through engagement as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the policy relate to the school's equality objectives?

## APPENDIX A: Equality objectives 2022 - 2023

Public Sector Equality Duty	Objective
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	(a) To ensure our Personal Development programme celebrates the full range of protected characteristics and educates students about allyship and being 'anti-discrimination' (b) To ensure that the visibility of equality and anti-discrimination issues (awareness-raising initiatives, assemblies, events and campaigns) are increasingly led by students and shaped by student voice
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups	(a) To increase the progress and attainment of student groups where there are achievement gaps (b) To deliver a professional development programme which supports all staff to proactively develop and prepare for the next steps in their career (and to use staff voice to support the evaluation of this provision) (c) To monitor the uptake of entitlement and enrichment activities and implement necessary interventions to ensure equality of opportunity for all
Foster good relations between different groups	(a) To develop the curriculum further to uphold our equality aims and principles, including a focus on resources, visible role models, the positive representation of protected characteristics and challenging stereotypical thinking

The success criteria, action points and monitoring arrangements for these objectives are included in the School Improvement Plan.