



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Effective Date

December 2019

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Document Reference	Equality and Diversity Policy	
Version	01	
Status	Awaiting Approval	
Publication Date	December 2019	
Related Policies	Accessibility Plan and Disability Statement	
Review Date	December 2021	
Approved/Ratified by	Resources Committee	Date: TBC
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1. INTRODUCTION

Future Schools Trust recognises the diversity of the community it serves and its responsibilities. It is committed to equal opportunities for all members of the school community and recognizes its duty to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations between those of different races, religions and nationalities. In support of that commitment, the Trust has specific policies to prevent unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment and to meet its statutory obligations. It has adopted a race equality statement, a disability equality scheme, a gender equality scheme and an employment equality policy. These form part of this Equality and Diversity Policy.

Where appropriate, this Policy will be drawn to the attention of outside contractors, agencies, and other third parties who will be expected to abide by it. All policies adopted by the Trust will be interpreted and applied in accordance with this principle.

The Trust will not discriminate unlawfully in respect of: -

- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership status
- Pregnancy and maternity

Or any other ground that cannot be shown to be justified, for example trade union membership.

1.1 WHY DO WE HAVE THIS POLICY?

Public authorities have a statutory general duty to promote race equality. The aim of the general duty is to make promoting race equality central to the way public authorities work; and this includes schools.

The general duty says that the body must have 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and
- promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups

There is a duty for the Trust to:

- have a written race equality policy which should identify the action to be taken to tackle racial discrimination and to promote racial equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity
- assess the impact of policies on minority ethnic pupils, staff and parents to identify whether such policies help to achieve racial equality
- monitor the implementation of the race equality policy and its impact on pupils, staff and parents and monitor the levels of pupil attainment by ethnicity

2. THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

A new Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Equality Act brings together several key separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined, they make up a new Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a new

discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
 - the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - the Race Relations Act 1976
 - the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
 - the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 - the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
 - the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
 - the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- The Trust will:
- treat all members of the school community with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a learning environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation
 - not tolerate any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour against members of the school community
 - promote personalised learning which takes students' aspirations, experience and needs into account
 - ensure that students acquire the skills which enable them to be proactive in their learning and to become responsible citizens
 - create an environment which is accessible, stimulating, encouraging and supportive of working, learning and achieving
 - ensure all students have their achievements recognised and, where relevant, accredited
 - provide or work with others to ensure that the appropriate support is available for each student
 - work to create a safe environment, which is accessible to all for working and studying
 - promote the equal opportunities policy in our contact with external organisations
 - implement reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access for all members of our learning community
 - adopt and apply policies and practices in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff that do not discriminate unless there is a genuine occupational reason or objective justification for doing so

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 RESPONSIBILITY

The ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Headteacher. All Trust employees are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of this policy and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their jobs or representing the Trust.

All our employees have a responsibility to:

- act in line with the policy and its related procedures;
- promote equal opportunities;
- treat colleagues and service users with dignity and respect;
- not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate;
- not harass or victimise others;
- challenge discrimination or inappropriate behaviour;

Acts of unlawful discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds will result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated in a similar fashion. The policy applies to all who are employed in the Trust.

3.2 COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION

The Trust will treat seriously, all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds made by employees, students or other third parties and will act where appropriate.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Trust's grievance, complaints, or harassment procedures as appropriate, and the complainant will be informed of the outcome. We will also monitor the number and outcome of complaints of discrimination made by staff, students, and other third parties.

3.3 MONITORING

The Trust has systems in place to monitor the impact of its anti-discrimination policies and to report appropriately on that impact.

The Trust will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used for exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and have no bearing on access to opportunities or benefits.

The Trust will have due regard to the statutory Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3.4 IMPROVEMENTS IN RACE RELATIONS

The Trust will be proactive in ensuring that in all members of the learning community are valued and this will be expressed in all aspects of Trust life through providing good role models and accurate information on the positive achievements of all ethnic groups and cultures. All racist incidents will be monitored and reported and systems will be developed so there should be no under-reporting. The Trust does not subscribe to the view that an incident is necessarily to be treated as a racist incident solely because the complainant claims that there is a racial element but all such claims will be investigated fully in order to determine whether or not the incident in question does have a racial element. The Trust will maintain records of all such claims and will monitor the extent to which such claims prove to be justified.

The Trust will have due regard to the statutory Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3.5 A DIVERSE AND REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

Staff will be recruited paying due regard to the ethnic makeup of the community and the need to provide positive role models for students although the Trust will work on the principle of employing the right person for the job irrespective of the ethnicity of the applicants. Subject to this, the Trust will endeavour to recruit staff locally so that the staffing of the Trust represents the community which the Trust serves. All staff will be eligible for job-sharing, career breaks and maternity, adoption or paternity leave.

4. GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

4.1 DEFINITION

Gender refers to the social construction of female and male identity, rather than biological differences between men and women. It includes the ways in which those differences, whether real or perceived, have been valued and used to classify women and men and to assign roles and expectations to them. Gender identity is not always fixed and the Gender Equality Duty urges us to have due regard to the needs of transgender people.

4.2 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This Scheme incorporates our duties under the Equalities Act 2006 relating to gender equality.

Our duties fall into two parts, a General Duty and a Specific Duty. The General Duty applies equally to all schools and other organisations that provide employment, services and goods. For a Specific Duty we have to show what we are planning to do to meet the General Duty.

The General Duty for gender equality requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men, women and transgendered people. The Specific Duty requires us to publish a Gender Equality Scheme which includes:
 - Steps to address the causes of any gender paygap
 - Collect and use information on gender equality in the school
 - Consult with stakeholders on priorities for gender equality
 - Carry out Equality Impact Assessments
 - Identify priority areas for gender equality
 - Publish a three-year action plan and report on it yearly

The Gender Equality Duty promotes equality for men, women and transgendered people. The Trust will have due regard to the statutory Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission

5. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME & ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

5.1 SUMMARY AND LEGAL CONTEXT

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, placed a general duty on academies to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. These Acts have now been superseded by the Equality Act 2010.

The Trust will have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

The Trust is committed to meeting the needs of all disabled people in our learning community. All of the Trust buildings have been designed to facilitate access and the needs of disabled users. For members of our learning community which includes prospective and existing students, their parents/carers, volunteers and staff of Future Schools Trust, this will mean:

- All disabled members of the learning community will feel equal and accommodated
- An inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of all disabled students
- An inclusive working environment that meets the needs of all disabled staff and volunteers

5.2 DEFINITION

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as having a disability if:

That person has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

This definition of a disability now also includes those who have a progressive illness such as multiple sclerosis, cancer or HIV. The Trust recognises the Social Model of disability, namely that it is the often the social barriers within society that disable people, not their impairments.

The barriers can be:

- prejudicial and stereotypical attitudes
- lack of consideration in organisation and implementation
- inadequate access to information and facilities

It is the policy of the Trust to work to avoid those barriers operating against its students and staff.

5.3 THE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

The Disability Equality Scheme demonstrates how the Trust intends to fulfil its general and specific duties and involve disabled people in the development of the scheme. The main purpose is to identify and address any

issues identified for disabled staff and students while at work or study.

5.4 THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Scheme includes the three-year Accessibility Plan which sets out specific steps to be taken by the Trust in ensuring that services are accessible to all. This ensures that specific adjustments and improvements are put in place in response to improving access. It includes specific responsibilities and time frames for actions. It covers the needs of all members of the learning community and not just students.

The Accessibility Plan will include an action plan that will identify the factors that can potentially deny access to facilities and services and will seek to implement practices that correct these such as:

- Access to the curriculum and training opportunities
- Physical access to the building and equipment
- Communication and information sharing
- Participation and engagement in all aspects of Trust life including Governors, parent forums and any student councils
- employment including recruitment and training of disabled staff and future prospects for disabled students

5.5 MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Trust will monitor the implementation of the Scheme and the Accessibility Plan and every three years will publish on the Trust website a report summarising the steps taken in the Accessibility Plan, the results of the information gathering and the use to which it has put the information. For the purposes of cohesion both the scheme and accessibility plan will follow the same three-year cycle of reporting and review.

5.6 METHODS FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust will keep a record of the numbers of disabled people in the learning community so as to monitor the effectiveness of its provision in attracting and retaining staff and students.

Staff provision will be monitored by the ICT & Facilities Manager and HR. Individual staff will be able to discuss the impact of any present or future adjustments with their line manager and may request

that any issues be placed on the agenda of the Central Services Meetings for discussion. The aims of such discussions will be to assess the effect of Trust policies and practices on the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees and current provisions.

5.7 GATHERING OF INFORMATION

Staff with disabilities will be enabled to identify their needs through:

- Stages of the recruitment process
- Declaring on acceptance of a post any additional needs
- Their line manager
- Trade Union representation

Members of the Trust learning community will be encouraged to disclose their needs at any point in time paying due consideration to issues of confidentiality and the time constraints on providing reasonable individual adjustments. This information will be collated and updated as part of the continuous review of the Accessibility Plan.

6. ROLES OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

6.1 THE GOVERNING BODY

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the Disability Equality Scheme, the Accessibility Plan and all reports relating to their implementation. It also has a responsibility to promote positive attitudes towards disabled students, staff and the Trust's wider learning community.

6.2 SCHOOL LEADERS

Each school's senior leadership team and subject leaders are responsible for creating an inclusive climate that encourages disabled staff and students to disclose that they are disabled and to request appropriate support to meet their individual requirements. This includes taking steps to eliminate harassment on grounds of disability wherever it exists.

Those leading the writing or reviewing of policies, procedures or plans and introducing new practice are responsible for ensuring that the needs of disabled people are considered. The school's senior leadership team and subject leaders are responsible for releasing staff to attend relevant training aimed at challenging disability discrimination.

6.3 STAFF AND STUDENTS

All staff are responsible for contributing to an inclusive environment for disabled students, colleagues and the wider community and following Trust policies regarding disability access in every aspect of their professional duties. This includes attending any necessary training identified by the Trust. All students have a responsibility to abide by Future Schools Trust policies and procedures, which includes practicing and promoting respect and equality for all students and staff regardless of disability.

7. ELIMINATING UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

The Trust will be able to identify areas where there is existing and potential unlawful disability discrimination and to take step steps to remedy the effects of such discrimination where it exists.

7.1 ELIMINATION OF HARASSMENT

The Trust has appropriate measures to combat harassment in its studentAnti-bullying policy and will ensure that that the needs of its disabled students and staff are considered as part of that process.

7.2 PROMOTION OF POSITIVE ATTITUDES

The Trust will organise a programme of training for staff which will focus on attitudes of disabled staff and students. The Trust, through its PHSE programme and daily pastoral support programme will educate students on positive attitudes towards disabled people.

7.3 ENCOURAGEMENT OF PARTICIPATION

The Trust will ensure that clear lines of communication are kept, where necessary providing individualised systems that ensure those with disabilities have equal access to information and activities. Through the governing body, student council and community activities it is envisaged that people with disabilities will participate actively in all aspects of Trust life.

7.4 ACCOUNTABILITY OF DISABLED PERSONS'

The Trust will make every effort to ensure reasonable adjustments are put in place at the earliest opportunity following disclosure and individual discussion. The Trust has endeavoured to ensure that the school buildings are fully compliant and that the needs of disabled people have been considered as part of the planning process.

7.5 PROTECTION ON GROUNDS OF DISABILITY

People who currently have a disability are protected because of this characteristic against harassment and discrimination – including discrimination arising from disability and a failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. People who have had a disability in the past are also protected against harassment and discrimination.

Non-disabled people are protected against direct disability discrimination only where they are perceived to have a disability or are associated with a disabled person. In some circumstances, a non-disabled person may be protected where they experience harassment or some other unlawful act such as victimisation.

8. EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY POLICY

8.1 GENERAL STATEMENT

As an employer, the Trust will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This applies equally to voluntary positions and anyone undertaking work experience with us. This will include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, bonus schemes, work allocation and any other employment related activities.

8.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Trust recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- (i) we endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidate practicable;
- (ii) employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit;
- (iii) where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are underrepresented in the workforce;
- (iv) selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of sex (including, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity and paternity), sexual orientation, marital status (including civil partnership status), race, religion or belief, age or disability; other than in those instances where the Trust is exercising permitted positive action or a permitted exemption;
- (v) wherever appropriate and necessary, lawful exemptions (genuine occupational requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups;
- (vi) all recruitment agencies acting for the Trust are aware of requirements not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

8.3 CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The Trust will treat all employees equally and create a working environment which is free from unlawful discrimination and which respects the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of employees. Terms and conditions of service for employees will comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The provision of benefits such as flexible working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress code, bonus schemes and any other conditions of employment will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee on any of the prohibited grounds.

Where appropriate and necessary, we will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which consider the specific needs of employees which arise from their ethnic or cultural background; gender; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief or sexual orientation, or other justifiable criteria.

8.4 PROMOTION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Promotion within the Trust (including to senior posts) will be made without reference to any of the prohibited grounds and will be based solely on merit. The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no unjustifiably discriminatory impact on any particular group.

While positive action measures may be taken in accordance with relevant anti-discrimination legislation to encourage applicants from under-represented groups, appointments to all jobs will be based solely on merit. All employees will have equal access to training and other career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities. However, where appropriate we will take relevant positive action measures (as permitted by the anti-discrimination legislation) to provide special training and support for groups which are underrepresented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career development opportunities.