Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Owner	Director of HR
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Connect Multi-Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that individuals are valued for themselves and everyone has the same opportunities. Through this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy the Trust sets out how it will promote diversity, encourage inclusion and ensure performance of the statutory duties contained within the Equality Act 2010.

1.2 The policy sets out how the Trust will, having due regard for the additional public sector equality duties:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- to advance equality of opportunity
- to foster good relations through tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

1.3 While this policy demonstrates the Trust's compliance with legislative requirements, the individual schools within the Trust have long recognised the importance of ensuring that their policies, procedures and practices are effective in promoting equality, tackling discrimination and embedding inclusion.

1.4 This policy requires that due consideration is given to equality, diversity and inclusion during policy development and decision making processes at all levels within the Trust. Decision makers are required to understand how different people will be affected by the Trust's activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

2. Scope

2.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion are core principles which underpin all the services delivered by the Trust in pursuance of its strategic vision and aims. As such they apply in the following areas:

- Provision of education services / delivery of the curriculum to pupils and students
- Employment and engagement of staff and workers by the Trust
- Provision of services to the community and partner organisations

2.2 This policy applies to all those within the Trust community including students, parents and carers, employees, leaders, contractors, Governors and Trustees. It should be used alongside other Trust and school policies covering areas including behaviour and anti-bullying, special educational needs and disability and admissions.

2.3 All other individuals will be encouraged to observe the principles and aims of the policy when interacting with members of the Trust community. The Trust will encourage everyone to be treated with respect and not tolerate inappropriate or abusive behaviour towards its staff.

3. Policy aims

3.1 It is the Trust's aim to:

- live up to the responsibility to strive for a just and fair society free from prejudice, discrimination and harassment in whichever form they take. All members of the school community are responsible for promoting this commitment and to respect and act in accordance with this policy.

- ensure no employee, job applicant, student, pupil or other member of the school community should face any form of harassment or unlawful or unjust discrimination relating to a protected characteristic, including as a result of unconscious bias or prejudice. Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or demean an individual will not be tolerated.

- seek to identify where inequality of opportunity exists and take actions to promote inclusion by removing or minimising the disadvantage suffered. To recognise that different needs are met in different ways as not all people are the same and take steps to actively encourage participation where it is disproportionately low

- promote good relations between groups who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and work to eliminate stereotyping and prejudice.

- ensure that staff and students are empowered to make informed choices and are able to appropriately challenge behaviour and attitudes which are at variance with the aims of this Policy.

4. Legislative background

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides the legislative framework around diversity and inclusion and details the additional duties for public sector organisations. Through the development and application of this policy, the Trust complies with the requirements of the Act.

4.2 The Equality Act includes the following protected characteristics:

- Age*
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

* The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership do not apply in relation to the delivery of education services but do apply in relation to employment.

4.3 The Trust will seek to eliminate harassment or discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic in line with the legislation. In addition, it will challenge behaviour and attitudes which aim to undermine or demean an individual on the basis of a characteristic or difference whether or not this is protected by the legislation.

5. Types of discrimination

5.1 Discrimination can take different forms and the behaviours prohibited under the legislation are:

Direct discrimination

5.2 Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

5.3 Indirect discrimination can occur when a condition, rule, policy or even a practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment

5.4 Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Protection includes harassment because of perception and association.

Victimisation

5.5 Victimisation occurs when a person is treated unfavourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance relating to a protected characteristic or because they are suspected of doing so.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The responsibilities of all members of the Connect Multi-Academy Trust and individual school communities are to:

- be aware of this policy and understand how it relates to them and act accordingly
- engage positively with training and education around equality, diversity and inclusion
- treat all members of the community, visitors and all others with respect and not to behave in a way that could be considered offensive
- use appropriate language and correct terminology which does not offend or transmit stereotypes
- report incidents, either involving themselves or directly witnessed, to ensure that the Trust can react promptly and proactively

6.2 The additional responsibilities of the Trust leadership are to:

- ensure that all members of the Connect Multi-Academy Trust community for whom they are responsible have knowledge and understanding of the aims of this policy
- ensure equality is a fundamental value in the delivery and development of all the Trust's services, and is given due consideration in policy development and decision making
- consider how equality issues can be incorporated within the curriculum including as part of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students
- take appropriate corrective action when they become aware of incidents which contravene this policy
- ensure appropriate support is provided to individuals who have been the victim of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- take reasonable steps to address or prevent inappropriate behaviour by third parties towards employees of the Trust
- ensure there are a range of opportunities to discuss and celebrate diversity
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and ensure it is reviewed regularly

7. Publication of information

7.1 The Trust has due regard for the legislative requirements, including the additional duties placed on public sector organisations, which apply to all aspects of school life. The Trust has set equality objectives which it will apply for four years with progress against them being monitored and reported annually.

7.2 The equality objectives, the progress made and monitoring information will be published annually on the Trust website.

7.3 Gender pay gap information will be produced in line with legislative requirements and updated annually. When published, this information will be available on the Trust website.