Equalities Policy

Including Equality information and objectives

	Position/Committee	Date
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1. Aims and rationale

Our Trust aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

This is important because eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations are essential to achieving our wider aims of educational excellence and transformational personal development.

These aims are in full alignment with the vision, ethos and values of Moorlands Learning Trust

2. Our underlying principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by 10 principles which will help us to achieve our aims (above):

1. All learners, staff and members of our communities are of equal value
2. We respect, value and celebrate difference
3. We are committed to maintaining positive relationships and developing a shared sense of belonging with all stakeholders
4. We observe best-practice in relation to staff recruitment, retention and professional development
5. We aim to actively reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
6. We engage with all stakeholders and make sure we consult on decision-making and significant changes to practices or policies
7. Our policies and activities should benefit wider society in the immediate and longer term
8. Our approaches and practices are evidence-informed
9. Our aims and objectives are specific and measurable and evidence and stakeholder informed
10. We review and formulate curricula which develop and promote equality, diversity and community cohesion

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination. Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone by treating them less favorably because of their:

  - Sex
  - Race
  - Disability
  - Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender reassignment
  - Pregnancy or maternity

  These are known as the 'Protected Characteristics'. The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

  It is also unlawful to discriminate against anyone by treating them less favourably because of:

  - Age
  - Marriage or civil partnership (in the context of employment)

  Although not specifically covered by the Act we also consider socio-economic factors as part of our focus on equality, diversity and community cohesion.

- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives
- The duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. By 'community cohesion' we mean working towards a society in which

  - There is a shared vision and sense of belonging
  - The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is valued, respected and celebrated
  - Similar life opportunities are available to all

- This document is also based on the Department for Education (DfE) advice for schools on the Equality Act, the technical guidance for schools from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and guidance from the Government Equalities Office on meeting the specific duties that support the public sector equality duty.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this Policy is published and communicated throughout the Trust, including to local governors, staff, pupils and parents via the Trust website
- Ensure that the published equality information, i.e. how the Trust complies with its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty is reviewed / updated at least every year, and that the Trust's objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives operationally to the CEO, headteachers and local governing bodies of Trust schools.

The Local Governing Body in each school will:

- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this Policy including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Trust's equality objectives
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training as required
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any equality issues and ensure that the Trust Board are informed

The Headteacher in each school will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the PSED and Trust's equality objectives among governors, staff and pupils and support the fulfilment of these through school specific actions / objectives as appropriate
- Ensure that the Trust policy is understood and implemented
- Take appropriate action in cases of unlawful discrimination and ensure that the Trust Board are aware of any such cases
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors

The designated member of staff with responsibility for equality in each school will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the PSED and Trust equality objectives among staff and pupils
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

All staff across the Trust will

- Have regard to this document and work to achieve the Trust's equality objectives wherever possible
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos across school and in the classroom
- Follow up and report any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the aims and principles outlined in this policy (Teaching staff)
- Support vulnerable individuals and groups within lessons and/or around school in order to eliminate barriers to learning and to support personal development

5. Eliminating discrimination

The trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Trustees, local governors, and all staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings.

New staff are required to read this Policy as part of their induction, and schools routinely provide refresher training for all staff

Each school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues. They make senior leaders and local governors aware of any issues as appropriate.

6. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the Trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people who share a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the specific needs of people who share a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who share a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school extra-curricular activities)

6.1 Publishing information about pupils

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, Trust schools will:

- Publish attainment data for each school each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics (where this data is held) are performing (gender, SEN, ethnicity).
- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement and implement actions in response
- Use an evidence-based approach to driving improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)

Relevant information about each school will be published on their individual websites.

We will make sure that with any data we publish to show how we meet our equality duties, individual pupils will not be identifiable. This means we may suppress some data if it relates to a very small number of pupils to preserve their confidentiality.

6.2 Publishing information about staff

In addition to the information about pupils, we will consider how our activities as an employer affect staff with protected characteristics. As a Trust, we will collate, analyse and act upon information (where it is held) regarding:

- The make-up of our workforce, with breakdowns of staff with different protected characteristics
- Gender pay-gap reporting and other pay equality issues
- Recruitment and retention rates for staff with different protected characteristics
- Applications for flexible working and their outcomes for staff with different protected characteristics
- Applications for learning and development opportunities and their outcomes for staff with different protected characteristics
- Grievances and disciplinary issues for staff with different protected characteristics
- Policies and programmes in place to address equality concerns from staff
- Information from staff surveys

We will make sure that with any data we publish to show how we meet our equality duties, individual staff will not be identifiable. This means we may suppress some data if it relates to a very small number of staff to preserve their confidentiality.

7. Fostering good relations

The trust aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of the curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies, and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Making sure schools work with their local community. This includes each school inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within each school. For example, school councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in their schools' activities, such as sports clubs. Schools also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures

- Developing links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop how they implement their approach

8. Equality considerations in decision-making

The Trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

In all of our schools, we will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for all pupils irrespective of their gender

The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

9. Trust Equality objectives 2024-28

1. **To strengthen the use of internal data to enhance our equality monitoring and identify any actions required to ensure fair employment policies and practices**
    a. Making use of available data from recruitment monitoring forms to inform future recruitment strategies
    b. Using information available to us on our Management Information System (Arbor) about our staff and student profile in terms of the protected characteristics
    c. Introducing an internal equality monitoring questionnaire for staff
2. **To promote students' Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) and Personal Development (PD), including their knowledge, understanding and tolerance of those who are different from them, to help foster good relations and eliminate discrimination and bullying in relation to the protected characteristics**
    a. Having clear and consistent behaviour systems across all schools to deal with instances of bullying or harassment
    b. Ensuring that the values and principles underpinning our Behaviour approaches incorporate these aims
    c. Enhancing SMSC, PD and equality provision and understanding through our curriculum delivery
3. **To ensure that ALL students have access to high quality education and that the gaps in achievement between students in vulnerable groups (particularly students with SEND and disadvantaged students) continue to narrow**
    a. Ensure that the learning needs of all students are met through an inclusive, personalised curriculum and effective staff professional learning programme which focus on the development of evidence informed practice.
    b. Ensure effective QA processes are in place which verify that staff know their students, respect their individual needs and know how to remove barriers to learning.
    c. Further enhance the transition process with primary schools in terms of early information gathering about students identified as having additional needs.
4. **To ensure that our core systems, structures, policies and practices foster the emergence of a vibrant, accepting, cohesive and safe Trust community which celebrates kindness and actively promotes respect, equality and diversity**
    a. Ensure this key strategic goal sits within the remit of a senior leader at each school

b. Update our Trust and school systems, structures, policies & procedures to reflect the threads of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to ensure that this ethos is embedded into key documents and statements.

c. Analyse the information available to us on our Management Information System (Arbor) about the profile of our staff and student bodies as regards the protected characteristics to ensure we understand the groups which comprise our community and identify appropriate and thoughtful ways of engaging with them to ensure they are appropriately and effectively supported and represented

10. Monitoring arrangements

Trust responsibilities

- The Trust will review and update the equality information we publish at least every year.
- This document will be reviewed by the board of Trustees at least every 4 years.

School responsibilities

- Schools will monitor the impact of this policy quantitatively on an ongoing basis through the analysis of
    - Attainment and progress data relating to vulnerable groups
    - Attendance data
    - Sanctions and rewards
    - Incidents of bullying and harassment over time
    - Participation rates in trips, visits and extra-curricular activities
    - Staffing profile
- Schools will monitor the qualitative impact of this policy through student voice activities and focus groups
- Any school-specific equality objectives will be reviewed by the designated member of staff for equality every 4 years.
- Any school-specific equality objectives will be approved by the local governing body
- The school will ensure that breaches of the policy are fully investigated in accordance with any other relevant school policies

11. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Trust Communications Policy
- Trust Complaints Policy
- Trust Relationships and Sex Education Policy (Secondary only)
- Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Trust SEND Policy
- Trust Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Trust Preventing Sexual Harassment Policy

Other related policies / documents that each Trust school has are:

- School Improvement Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour Policy (Relationships Policy)
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- SEND Information Report