



# **Nexus Education Schools Trust**

## **Equality & Diversity Policy**

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## 1. Purpose

This Equality and Diversity Policy represents NEST's commitment to advancing equality and promoting respect for difference and diversity through each schools' vision, ethos and values. In addition, NEST commits to a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring the policy.

## 2. Aims

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, and they are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is published under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who have a shared characteristic and those who do not

In addition we will:

- Embed equality and diversity within the school's curriculum as part of the school's focus on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

All of our schools are committed to advancing and achieving equality of opportunity for all pupils, parents and carers, staff, local committee members and visitors. We believe that all people are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity and that our diversity enriches our community.

Nexus Education Schools Trust is steadfast in its commitment to standing up against all forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, religious intolerance and social injustice. Our school curricula and expectations help children to make sense of issues and inequalities in the world and we do not accept any behaviour that makes anyone else feel unsafe, unequal or unimportant.

School staff and communities help to shape the views and develop the knowledge and understanding of the next generation and we believe that our schools and settings are key to tackling all forms of discrimination. We are fully committed to ensuring our pupils are inclusive, respectful and active global citizens and will continue to review and reshape our curriculum to reflect our diverse and multicultural 21<sup>st</sup> century by tackling bigotry, inequality and bias.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [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

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

## 4. Scope

This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics:

- age (age is a relevant characteristic in considering the Trust's duty as an employer, but not in relation to pupils)
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief

- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership (this is a relevant characteristic in considering the Trust's duty as an employer, but not in relation to pupils)

This policy applies to all employees, potential employees, support staff, agency staff, volunteers, contracted staff and members of the local committee as well as pupils, parents and carers.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful for the Trust to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

## **5. Commitments**

Equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is therefore underpinned by the following values, principles and standards:

- Equality and social justice
- Acknowledging and valuing diversity
- Respect for others
- Compliance with equality legislation
- Elimination of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination
- Active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behaviour
- Commitment to inclusive education which enables and supports all children to develop their full potential, with an understanding that equality is not the same as equity
- Commitment to the positive development of all staff and local committee members
- Commitment to fair and open recruitment processes
- Accountability for compliance with this policy by all members of the Trust, school communities and others engaged in school-linked activities.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Nexus Education Schools Trust seeks to be an equal opportunities employer and is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We are determined to ensure that:

- Everyone working in or coming into contact with NEST is treated fairly and not discriminated against on any of the above grounds.
- Our employment practices comply fully with current equalities legislation and associated codes of conduct. Decisions on recruitment and selection, promotions, training and any other benefit is made objectively and transparently, without unlawful discrimination and based upon objective criteria.
- We will aim for our workforce, including volunteers, to reflect the diverse society which we serve and provide a working environment free from any form of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying or victimisation.

We recognise that the provision of equality of opportunity in all our activities will benefit NEST. Our policy will help all staff to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of staff will be utilised fully to maximise the effectiveness of the work of NEST.

All employees are expected to co-operate fully with this policy and any member of staff found to have committed an act or acts of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary procedure. Proven discrimination or harassment will lead to summary dismissal.

## 6. Equality Objectives

We aim to provide the highest possible quality of education for all of our pupils. The ethos of our schools clearly reflects our commitment to fully including and respecting all members of our school communities.

We have set ourselves the following objectives:

1. Ensure that staff and the local committee are aware of current legislation surrounding equality and diversity and understand the school's responsibility to set and monitor equality objectives and review their Equality Information Statement annually
2. Promote cultural understanding and awareness and tolerance of different beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school communities
3. Promote mental health awareness and develop appropriate interventions where necessary
4. Actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between pupils for all groups; especially pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, those with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and pupils from minority ethnic groups.
5. Challenge stereotypes and any use of derogatory language by any stakeholders in the schools.
6. Review and revise the curriculum so that it represents and celebrates a diverse culture that demonstrates respect for all.

## 7. Communication of Equality and Diversity Policy

We will take active steps to communicate this Equality and Diversity Policy to all pupils, parents and carers, staff, local committee members, partners, stakeholders, contractors and visitors to our schools.

## 8. Responsibilities and accountabilities

The **Trust Board** are responsible for:

- making sure schools follow equality and diversity policies and objectives, and meet their legal responsibilities with respect to equality
- Making sure that the fundamental belief in the value of each person regardless of background or circumstances permeates the trust's ethos

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- giving a consistent and high-profile lead on equality and diversity
- advancing equality and diversity inside and outside the school
- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with all equality legislation
- ensuring that the school implements its equality and diversity policies
- promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment, victimisation or discrimination

**Senior Leaders** (for example senior, subject and pastoral leaders) are responsible for:

- putting the school equality and diversity policies and objectives into practice
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation

**All staff** (teaching and non-teaching) are responsible for:

- Treating each other and all learners with respect
- promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination related to protected characteristics perpetrated by students, other staff or visitors
- keeping up-to-date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training

**Pupils** are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions
- following the school's equality and diversity policies and practices

Parents, carers, visitors and contractors are important to each of our Trust schools, and their views are welcomed and valued. We ask that parents, carers, visitors and contractors support the implementation of this policy. If any parent, carer, visitor or contractor becomes aware of discrimination, abuse, bullying or harassment they should report this to the school.

The school will ensure that all learners receive the information that they need to stay safe and make informed choices, especially those groups with protected characteristics.

## **9. Equality Commitments**

### **Recruitment and Selection**

All recruitment will be carried out in accordance with Nexus Education Schools Trust's Recruitment and Selection procedures which are aimed at ensuring that the most suitable candidate is appointed fairly to the job.

All advertisements will state that Nexus Education Schools Trust values equality and diversity. Selection will be based on objective and job-related criteria and the successful candidate will be chosen on merits and abilities.

Applicants will be asked to complete an equalities monitoring form as part of their application. This information will be used for monitoring purposes only and will play no part in the selection process.

Our recruitment and selection practices comply with all appropriate employment law legislation and will be amended to reflect any subsequent legislative changes.

### **Nationality and Immigration Act 2006**

In order to comply with the provisions of this Act, we will take steps to ensure all staff are eligible to work in the United Kingdom. Successful candidates will be asked to produce original and specified documents before a confirmed offer of employment is provided.

### **The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

In order to safeguard and protect the welfare of all the pupils in our care, we will ensure safe recruitment practices are followed. As such, all employees, agency workers, contractors, volunteers, casual and supply staff will be required to provide relevant information for each NEST schools' Single Central Register to confirm their suitability to work with children.

### **Conditions of Services**

The Trust's terms and conditions of employment will be monitored to ensure that they are consistent with the equality and diversity statement.

### **HR Policies and Procedures**

HR policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, amend or adapt current practices to promote equality of opportunities at Nexus Education Schools Trust. HR policies will be applied consistently and fairly to all staff. In addition, employees of NEST have access to a range of policies which are designed to support and encourage flexibility and diversity in the workplace.

### **Staff Training and Development**

All employees will have access to development opportunities, promotion and training at the Trust.

All new employees will be provided with an induction pack which will include a reference to the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **10. Other Policies that link to this policy**

- School improvement plans
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Trust HR policies
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

This Policy requires a review every three years, unless there are updates to legislation in advance of this that would require a review sooner. The policy will be consulted where review leads to a change to this policy. The Trust will analyse the profile of its current workforce, job applicants and appointments to assist the effectiveness of this policy. Progress towards Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives will be reviewed annually.

## **12. Complaints**

Any breaches of the policy should be reported in the first instance to the Headteacher at school level and to the CEO at Nexus Education Schools Trust who will carry out a full investigation or delegate this to another designated member of staff.

## NEST EQUALITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION OBJECTIVES 2024-27

Equality Objectives	How will this objective be achieved?
1. To ensure School Improvement Plans include clear objectives and actions to advance equality, diversity and inclusion in their schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each school will include actions in their School Improvement Plans to advance equality, diversity and inclusion during the forthcoming academic year.</li> <li>• Schools will keep the impact of their equality objectives under review as they would with elements of any school improvement plan.</li> </ul>
2. All subject leaders ensure there is a focus on Equality and Diversity and Inclusion in schemes of work and displays around the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject leaders will monitor plans / schemes of work / displays / resources / pupils' work, etc, to ensure they are reflective of the lifestyles and achievements of a range of ethnicities / genders/sexualities and disabilities</li> </ul>
3. Schools will embed equality, diversity and inclusion through the curriculum and ensure that pupils are provided with experiences that challenge bias, proactively eliminate discrimination, and promote equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will ensure that topics are culturally relevant and inclusive and will relate these to real world scenarios, depending on the age and stage of the pupils.</li> <li>• Curriculum topic content will include contributions by people from a range of cultures, backgrounds, experiences.</li> <li>• The themes of equality, diversity and inclusivity will be integrated into books, reading materials, resources and activities.</li> <li>• Strategies in place to assess pupils' learning outcomes to ensure that they reflect a development of equality and diversity understanding.</li> </ul>
4. The Trust will continue to work with schools to close gaps in attainment and achievement between pupils and all groups of pupils; especially boys and girls, pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding, pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Looked After Children and pupils from different heritage groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closely monitor the data for all these groups to ensure good progress is being made in schools across the Trust.</li> <li>• The use of Pupil Premium funding is closely monitored in order to ensure that it impacts on the groups for which is it received.</li> <li>• Collect attainment data each term showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing</li> <li>• Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in monitor impact.</li> <li>• Collect further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our pupils.</li> </ul>



<p>5. The Trust will work with schools to review their curriculum to ensure that every opportunity is maximised to develop the understanding of equality and diversity in the full range of subjects and enrichment activities.</p>	<p><b>Gaining an overview of the culture of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in schools through activities such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and Website Reviews.</li> <li>• School reviews and learning walks</li> <li>• Learning environment checks</li> <li>• Links with partnership organisations and staff CPD</li> <li>• Review of enrichment activities.</li> <li>• Pupil and Parent surveys</li> <li>• Ensure that there are opportunities for schools to work together to share good practice in EDI and learn from each other.</li> </ul>
<p>6. All new staff in schools and in the Trust Central Team will receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff will receive refresher training on an annual basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction processes will include training on the Equality Act for all new staff to the Trust.</li> <li>• Staff will receive annual refresher training on the Equality Act and any relevant updates – this will either be Trust or school based.</li> <li>• All staff will have an awareness of the Trust equality statement, information and policy.</li> </ul>
<p>7. The Trust will ensure that there is equality of professional opportunity and development within the Trust’s employed staff, with representation of staff in support staff, teaching staff and leadership roles reflecting groups with protected characteristics where possible. The Trust will ensure that this is reflected in our recruitment processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an analysis of recruitment data at Trust level and trends with regard to race, gender and disability and report on this to the Board of Trustees.</li> <li>• Ensure that the recruitment shortlisting process does not reference the candidate’s age, gender or ethnicity.</li> </ul>
<p>8. The Inclusion and Achievement Hats will be responsible for overseeing the school’s priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned LCM Hats meet with the designated member of staff on a termly basis, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed</li> <li>• The Trust will ensure that LCMs are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of the MAT Single Equality Statement and Policy and the Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives.</li> </ul>
<p>9. The Trust Board will oversee the Trust’s priorities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustees are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of MAT Single Equality Scheme and Statement and the Trust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives.</li> </ul>
<p>10. The Trust will work with partners to improve accessibility throughout all the Trust’s schools for pupils, staff and visitors with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trust keeps under review the condition of its buildings.</li> <li>• All schools will have their accessibility plans and review their curriculum to ensure accessibility for all groups.</li> <li>• Schools will ensure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed</li> </ul>