



Equality & Diversity Policy 2024

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Panel Responsible:	MAT Board
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Policy Management:	CEO

Equality Statement

St Christopher's Multi Academy Trust (Trust) are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all children, staff, parents, and guardians irrespective of their background or personal characteristics. Our Trust has a firm belief that diversity is a strength that must be respected and celebrated by all of those who learn with us and visit us.

Our aim is to develop a culture of diversity and inclusion in which everyone within our Trust and school communities can celebrate their identity and participate fully in experiences and learning. We want to enable all children to take part as fully as possible, in every part of school life, by developing their self-confidence, recognising their strengths, and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

We challenge discrimination through the positive promotion of equality through learning, tackling bullying, racism, and stereotyping, and by creating a safe welcoming environment that champions respect for all.

Scope and Purpose

This Policy covers all individuals working at all levels, including staff, consultants, contractors, trainees, home-workers, part-time and fixed-term staff, volunteers, the governing board, casual workers, and agency staff. It also applies to the wider community such as children, job applicants, ambassadors, and parents/guardians.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to promoting equality and diversity and how we will tackle discrimination and challenge social exclusion. It explains how we will put our commitment into action and comply with the law to ensure that equality and diversity are promoted in our schools and that our staff, children, and community are not subject to, and do not commit, unlawful acts of discrimination.

Guiding Principles

This policy is a single policy that harmonises our aims to ensure equality for all those with protected characteristics, and the education and awareness for our school communities.

This unites our policies on;

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Relational Approaches/Behaviour
- Accessibility
- Anti-bullying
- Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) / Personal, Social, Health & Economic Ed (PSHE)
- Pupil Premium
- Safeguarding & Child Protection

We are committed to developing cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national, and global environments. The Trust embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's outcomes, both educational and well-being, with the rights of the child in mind.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice & policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity and,
- foster good relations between groups

It explains how we will listen to and involve children, staff, parents/guardians, and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children.

Legislation and our Duties

The [Equality Act 2010](#) protects people from discrimination and harassment. If someone thinks they have been discriminated against they may take their complaint to a court or Employment Tribunal (if they are an employee). The act also places duties on public authorities to be pro-active about addressing inequalities. The Public Sector General Duty (Section 149) states that a public authority must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people.

'Advance equality of opportunity' means to remove or minimise disadvantage, meet people's needs, take account of disabilities, and encourage participation in public life.

Failure to observe these public sector duties could result in a judicial review, but also put schools at risk of discriminatory practice.

These duties apply to eight **protected characteristics which are:**

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The legal duties to eliminate harassment and foster good relations make it clear that schools must address bullying and prejudice-related incidents, based on a protected characteristic, such as

racism or homophobic bullying. The expectation in law is not only for schools to respond when an incident occurs, but to also take steps to prevent those incidents from occurring or escalating.

Because of its relevance to the duty to eliminate harassment and foster good relations, this means that schools/Trusts should report incidents to the local authority, publish information on performance, and set objectives about bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

We will take care not to publish any details that could identify specific individuals.

The Trust will ensure that it follows its legal obligations in respect of the Equality Act 2010 and associated statutory duties including;

- having measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst children. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour or relational policy which must be communicated to all children, staff and parents/guardians.
- Determining the measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the school and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school. These incidents may be reported to the local authority.

The DfE's [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) guidance reiterates the expectations and obligations of schools:

- All staff should be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding and these should be explained as part of staff induction. This should include a behaviour policy that should outline measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- To focus on key issues of concern and how to improve children's outcomes. Some children may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, bi-phobic, or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. Such concerns will differ between schools, but it is important all schools are conscious of disproportionate vulnerabilities and integrate this into their safeguarding policies and procedures.
- It is important that schools consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

It also reminds us to recognise, by providing suitable CPD, the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation, and are confident they have the capability to support children.

Criminal Law - Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications, could be a criminal offence. If staff consider that a criminal offence may have been committed, then consideration should be given to seeking advice or otherwise reporting the matter to the Police.

Responsibilities

Governing Board

- Ensure that the schools complies with equality-related legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the headteacher.
- Ensure all other schools policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

Headteacher

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities (this may include training as appropriate)
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.

- Ensure staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work.
- Ensure that all staff and children are aware of the process for reporting and following up on bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

All staff

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

Children

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or behaviour that contravenes this policy.

Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)

- To be aware of, and comply with, the Trust Equality Policy.
- To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (e.g. racist language) on school premises.

Equality Objectives

The Trust has two specific duties to assist us in meeting our general duty set out by the Equality Act 2010. They are:

- To publish information to show how we are complying with the Equality Duty. This must be updated at least annually.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

St Christopher's aims to build an inclusive culture trust wide, which values and respects diversity, where everyone can achieve their potential. Our Equality Objectives are aligned to our Trust Priorities as follows;

Equality Objectives – Champion Diversity	Priorities and indicators
<p>1) Inclusive provision enables all pupils to flourish and families to feel they belong.</p> <p>2) 'People like me' are flourishing in my workplace/school.</p> <p>3) A bespoke, inspiring curriculum widens horizons and broadens perspectives.</p>	<p>1.1) An upward data trajectory for all pupils in all schools.</p> <p>1.2) Attendance is high, and suspensions and exclusions are rare.</p> <p>2.1) pupil and staff surveys and recruitment/retention indicate a healthy culture.</p> <p>2.2) increasing alignment of staff and pupil demographic data with 'people like me' in the best jobs.</p> <p>3.1) Pupils see the curriculum as relevant to them and their locality.</p> <p>3.2) The curriculum consistently enriches pupils' experience beyond the national curriculum.</p>

Further details on our rationale, evidence and action plan can be viewed in our Equality Duty Review document (please see Trust website)

Our Commitments

Our primary aim is to enable all children and young people to take part as fully as possible in every part of the school's daily life. Within our schools we will take steps to promote and celebrate equality of opportunity, foster good relations, and eliminate discrimination/harassment across all the protected characteristics within the schools community.

Some of the ways in which this may be achieved include;

Culture and Ethos

- Each school's ethos will clearly celebrate equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards children and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- Staff will model respect and healthy relationships for the children, through their professional approach.
- Each school will encourage Cultural Exchange through visitors, workshops, visits, trips and celebrating key cultural dates.
- Our schools will take the approach of a Growth Mindset.
- Content on our websites will be accessible (where possible), by embedding a translation app, or translating/adjusting correspondence to families.
- Our publications, website, and graphics will reflect all of our school communities.
- We will help children to develop an understanding of emotional literacy and how to manage conflict.

Relational Approaches

- Our schools will have a zero-tolerance approach to any racism, bullying and prejudice.
- We expect that all staff will be role models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, schools may plan events to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, anti-homophobia/gay pride, gender equality, developing community cohesion, and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- We will regularly seek the views of children, parents/guardians, advisory staff and visitors to the schools, to ensure that the schools environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all users.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice and the different forms of discrimination.
- All allegations of discrimination and prejudice against staff and other adults that meet the harm threshold, as outlined in the [Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance](#), will be dealt with appropriately, by contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer ([LADO](#)) and reporting a Bullying, Prejudice & Racist Incident to the local authority once an investigation is completed.

Reasonable Adjustments

- We will ensure that the following is clearly outlined in our accessibility plan:
- Reasonable and necessary steps to meet children's needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs and disabilities. Enabling all children to take as full a part as possible in all activities.
- Auxiliary aids/services will be provided for children, where required.
- Reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for children, staff, and visitors.
- Ensuring staff with additional needs or a disability have equality of opportunity.
- Children in our schools will not be disadvantaged in assessments and examinations due to their disability, additional need, or language barrier. We will ensure that appropriate access arrangements are in place.

Curriculum

- We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- We expect all staff to have high standards of attainment and aspirations for our children, promote common values, help children understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

- We will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those for whom English is not their first language.
- Through proactive planning, we will ensure that all children are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and we will monitor the uptake of these to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic or socioeconomics.
- When planning the curriculum and resources, we will take every opportunity to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- The curriculum should reflect each school community. Subject lead will outline the steps they are taking to meet this commitment.
- Assemblies, literary programmes, and PSHE will explore topics such as Racism, Discrimination and prejudice, Gender identity, Sexual orientation, Healthy relationships, Disability (including ‘invisible’ disabilities), Mental health, Religion and belief.
- We will ensure all our curriculum content is empathetic to children and staff of different backgrounds.

Monitoring

- We will monitor the progress and achievement of some children with relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information will help the school to ensure that individual children are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified.
- We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities, and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the work they do.
- We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our staff with disabilities or additional needs.
- Bullying, prejudice, and racism related incidents will be carefully monitored. Common themes may be addressed in the curriculum, assemblies, and through workshops or intervention.