



Central Region
Schools Trust

Founded by the RSA

EQUALITY POLICY

Recommended by: HR & People Manager

Ratified by: HR Committee

Signed:

Position on the Board: Chair of the HR Committee

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Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School): Central

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Central Regional Schools Trust is a trust where all are valued and where tolerance, honesty, respect and co-operation are fostered and encouraged in all aspects of trust life.

A varied and broad curriculum provides advancement and opportunity for all our students to maximise their potential regardless of disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation.

Our staff work in an environment that allows for advancement and the ability for them to reach their aspirations regardless of disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity or shared parental leave, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and marital status.

We work hard to ensure we promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, attainment and achievement for our students and remove any barriers to access, participation, achievement, promotion & continuous professional development for our staff.

We will provide a secure environment in which all our students can flourish and achieve all five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and enjoy economic well-being);

- provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- prepare students for life in a diverse society in which children are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age;
- plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity; actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities.

2. SCOPE

This Policy lays out the intentions and action that will be taken in respect of the Equality Act 2010 and our students. Our aims and aspirations for the implementation of the Act and our action in respect of those aims and aspirations.

The stakeholders of this Policy include:

Students: whom the Policy applies to whilst receiving education at one of the Trust's establishments

Parents: of the above-mentioned students whilst receiving education at one of the Trust's establishments

Community: in that we encourage and actively participate in community projects, so that our Academies develop a sense of belonging in their communities, but also look outwards and understand the national and international picture

Staff: to be vigilant, to be a role model, to identify and challenge bias; to ensure they develop their understanding and participate in CPD programmes to better raise their awareness

Governing Body: to ensure that each Academy considers all its stakeholders and is compliant with legislation.

Trust: seeks to do as it indicates above through this Policy, ensures the Academies within the Trust are compliant and challenges behaviour from any stakeholders that identifies bias.

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE EQUALITY ACT

The Equality Act tackles and prevents inequality and discrimination against our students on the basis of a number of protected characteristics:

1. AGE;
2. DISABILITY;
3. RACE;
4. SEX;
5. PREGNANCY, MATERNITY AND BREASTFEEDING;
6. GENDER /REASSIGNMENT;
7. RELIGION OR BELIEF;
8. SEXUAL ORIENTATION
9. MARRIAGE

A person can experience direct discrimination because of a protected characteristic, even if the person does not have the characteristic himself/herself:

- Discrimination because of perception takes place where someone is treated worse than others because they have been perceived to have a characteristic.
- Discrimination because of association takes place when a person is treated worse than another person because they associate with a person with a protected characteristic.

4. EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE

There are some limited exceptions to the general requirement not to treat anyone worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic.

Exceptions that apply to all protected characteristics:

- Positive action – encouraging people with a protected characteristic from groups with different needs or a past record of disadvantage or low participation to access education e.g. if a school council is made up mainly of girls, despite there being a fairly even balance of boys and girls in the school, the school can encourage boys to stand as class reps (but the pupils still vote to decide who is elected).
- Statutory provisions – this only applies where there is no other choice but to discriminate or break another law (but does not apply to race discrimination).
- National security.
- Charities – there are specific exceptions permitting charities in some circumstances to restrict benefits to persons who share a particular protected characteristic.

There are also some exceptions that relate to particular protected characteristics:

- Disability – it is not discrimination against a non-disabled person to treat a disabled person more favourably or make reasonable adjustments for the disabled person.
- Age & Marriage – not relevant to schools from a student perspective

5. OUR DUTIES

We must not:

- Discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil because of their disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief, or sexual orientation;
- harass or victimise a pupil or prospective pupil.

We will not discriminate against a person in relation to the following activities:

- admission to school;
- the provision of education to pupils;
- access to any benefit, facility or service;
- exclusion from school;
- by subjecting a pupil to any other detriment.

6. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

We have a continuing obligation and duty to make any necessary or “reasonable” adjustments. This may involve treating students with a disability “more favourably” than non-disabled students depending on the needs of a specific student covered by the Act. The duty contains three main elements:

1. Changing our provision, criteria or practice where necessary
2. Make any necessary changes to overcome physical barriers presented by the makeup of our building
3. Providing auxiliary aids and services (this is new and unique to the Act)

7. ADMISSIONS POLICY

Local school or hub Admissions Policies cover the specific detail, but in relation to the Act we will not:

- discriminate in the arrangements that we make for deciding who is offered a place;
- place any terms on a person’s admission which are discriminatory;
- refuse a place for discriminatory reasons;
- harass a person who has applied for a place at our schools;
- victimise a person in relation to admission to school.

8. PROVIDING EDUCATION, BENEFITS, SERVICES AND/OR FACILITIES TO OUR STUDENTS/STAFF

In doing so we will not:

- discriminate in the way our Trust provides education for a pupil;
- discriminate in the way our Trust provides CPD to staff;
- discriminate in the way our Trust gives a pupil access to any benefit, facility or service;
- discriminate in the way our Trust gives staff access to any benefit, facility or service;
- refuse to provide education for a pupil for discriminatory reasons;
- refuse to give a pupil access to a benefit, facility or service;
- refuse to give staff access to a benefit, facility or service;
- harass a pupil;
- harrass a member of staff;
- victimise a pupil;
- vistimise a member of staff.

9. EXCLUSIONS POLICY

We will not discriminate against students when making exclusion decisions (please see local school or hub Exclusions Policy). Reasons for exclusion must not be the protected characteristic. Any exclusions based on behaviour, should be consistently applied to those with or without a protected characteristic.

The procedures used for deciding what punishment a student will receive and for investigating incidents must not discriminate against pupils with a particular protected characteristic.

10. POLICIES

There are other policies across the trust, hub and local that are impacted by the Equality Act 2010 and any action we take regarding the enforcement of those policies will be in line with our duty as employer and educator.

11. OUR PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY

We are required by the single public sector Equality Duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- foster good relations.

We will do the above by adopting a plan that aligns with the Trust's overall school improvement plans and ensures we meet our duty.

12. OBJECTIVES

12.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination

- We do so through our school improvement targets specifically, narrowing the gap for our most vulnerable students and we monitor the progress and attainment of those students to ensure the desired outcomes.
- Our policies and data confirming our action towards elimination of unlawful discrimination.

12.2 Advance Equality of Opportunity

- We offer CPD to our staff and individual recognition, reward high levels of performance.
- We ensure that each Academy offers best value for money in supporting and driving the key priorities and in doing so procurement means that all students and staff have advancement of opportunity within the resources available to us.

12.3 Foster Good Relations

- We regularly undertake to gain student, parent & staff feedback to gain a measure of the culture of our organization and feeling.
- We use our student demographics as well as our attainment and progress data to take positive action in respect of students'/academy aspirations.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES

It will be the responsibility of the Executive Principal/CEO of the CRST to ensure that the trust makes public the targets and any impact, progress made (as is suggested every 3 years a review will take place to ensure they are fit for purpose). Each Principal/Headteacher will be responsible for their Academy contribution to the Trust wide objectives; these will be reported both to the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body on an annual/bi-annual basis.

14. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed in line with the schedule for review of Trust policies – annually. If there are changes to regulation/law then changes may be made to incorporate these requirements as is needed before a review date.