

# Chorus Education Trust

## Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure

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<b>Name and job title of author:</b>	A Allen, Chief Operating Officer
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## Policy Statement

Chorus Education Trust (the Trust) has a vision based on seeking excellence through inspirational leadership, teamwork, innovation and challenge and we work to ensure that all of us achieve our best.

The Trust is fully committed to eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings. The Trust will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

The Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy represents a commitment to a common set of values and objectives. All Schools within the Trust are committed to advancing and achieving equality of opportunity for all students, parents/carers/associated persons, staff, members, trustees, governors 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. All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

### 1. Purpose and Scope

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 students to develop their full potential
- commitment to the positive development of all staff and governors
- 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 activities.

The policy is applicable to all employees, students, parents/ carers/ associated persons, officers, visitors, communities, suppliers and contractors, whether permanent or temporary. The policy underpins all Trust and school policies, procedures and processes. Decisions relating to students, parents/carers/associated persons, employees, members, trustees, governors and visitors will be based on business-related criteria only and any irrelevant information will not form part of the process.

The single Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 (PSED) requires public bodies to promote equality. There are three key elements to the PSED:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who shared a protected characteristic and people who don't share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, and between people who share a protected characteristic and people who don't share it.

The Trust is committed to considering equality implications when developing policies and making decisions. The Trust is required as a public body to publish information demonstrating how we comply with the PSED alongside equality objectives, all of which can be found on our website. The Trust reviews this information at least annually and objectives at least once every four years.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The **Trust Board** is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently across the Trust.

The **CEO** is responsible for ensuring that all stakeholders adhere to this policy and that breaches are managed swiftly, effectively, fairly and consistently.

The **Human Resources Department** is responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy and associated procedures. The team will also ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

**Leaders and managers** must ensure they implement this policy fairly and equitably, seeking guidance, clarification and support as and when required.

**All employees** must be willing and able to access appropriate learning and development, ensuring their knowledge, skill and expertise is up-to-date and that their statutory and mandatory training needs are met within specified timescales. Employees are responsible for: promoting equality and diversity, actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination related to protected characteristics perpetuated by students, staff or visitors.

The **Local Governing Bodies and Heads of School** are responsible for: monitoring the application of this policy within their respective schools; providing a high-profile lead on equality and diversity; advancing equality and diversity inside and outside school and; ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with all equality legislation.

**Students** are responsible for respecting others in their language, behaviours and actions and obeying all school equality and diversity policies, procedures and practices.

## 3. Equality and Diversity

The Trust is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines.

- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged.
- Ensuring anyone with a protected characteristic as described within the Equality Act 2010 does not experience discrimination (e.g. age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership).

## 4. Principles

The aim of this Equality and Diversity Policy is to:

- develop an ethos which respects and values all people
- actively advance equality of opportunity
- prepare students to embrace a life in a diverse society
- promote good relations amongst people within the schools community and the wider communities within which we work
- eliminate all forms of unfair indirect and direct discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or other oppressive behaviour across the Trust
- deliver equality and diversity through our school policies, procedures and practice
- make reasonable adjustments and do our utmost, within available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to school provision and activities
- take effective action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by protected characteristics, stereotyping and cultural expectations
- monitor the implementation of equality and diversity within the schools
- ensure that recruitment and selection procedures and practices within the Trust are open, transparent and merit based, ensuring fair and equal selection criteria is developed and applied.

## 5. Eliminating Discrimination

The Trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions. Reports and policies that go before the Trust Board have a cover sheet that includes an equality impact assessment as appropriate. The Trust Board reviews this as it makes decisions and approves policies and procedures.

Policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct and employees and officers of the Trust are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings and via training and development.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every year.

The Trust has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and an equality link Trustee. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of issues and subsequent actions 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, which are connected to a particular characteristic, they have (e.g. students with disabilities, or gay students who are being subjected to homophobic bullying).
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim students to pray at prescribed times).
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all students to be involved in the full range of school societies).

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

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how students with different characteristics are performing.
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information.
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying).
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues, which could affect our own students.

## 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 our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, alongside activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local community. This includes 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 students within the Trust. For example, our school councils have representatives from different year groups and they are formed from students from a range of backgrounds. All

students are encouraged to participate in school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

## **8. Equality Considerations in Decision Making**

The Trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made, including pay and performance decisions. The Trust always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, schools consider whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays or observances.
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities.
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls.

An equality impact assessment is undertaken 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. Risk assessments also need to include observances such as fasting to ensure student's health and wellbeing is fully considered. Each report, policy and procedure taken to the Trust Board includes a cover sheet detailing the equality impact assessment to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions as appropriate.

## **9. Equality Objectives**

1. Train all employees and officers of the Trust involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination by 31 March 2020. Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those attending have a good understanding of the legal requirements. We have chosen this objective as the Trust is increasing in size and it is crucial that those involved in recruitment and selection have a good understanding of the context in which our robust recruitment processes exist.
2. To reduce differences between SEND students and non-SEND students by identifying and removing barriers to learning, such as attendance, literacy (specifically reading) and exclusion from school.
3. To ensure all students, including all prescribed groups detailed in the Equality Act 2010 have equal access to the curriculum.

## **10. Right of Complaint**

If an individual feels that any member of the Trust (employees or officers of the Trust) has not treated them in accordance with this policy, they have right of complaint via the Trust's Dignity and Respect Policy and Procedure. Where an individual not employed by the Trust feels an employee, manager or officer of the Trust has discriminated against them, they should refer to the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

## **11. Monitoring Compliance with and Effectiveness of the Policy**

Effectiveness and compliance of this Policy will be monitored on an annual basis.

## **12. Review**

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed within two years of the date of implementation with recognised trade unions at local secretary level.