



## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

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# Contents

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	<b>Pages</b>
1 Introduction, Purpose and Scope	1
2 Roles and Responsibilities	2
3 Protected Characteristics	3
4 Forms of Discrimination	4

# 1. Introduction, Purpose & Scope

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 The Pontefract Academies Trust (“The Trust”) is committed to giving all employees the support and encouragement they need to raise aspirations, unlock potential and work to achieve excellence through encouraging a “can do” culture, which nurtures confident and competent people.
- 1.02 The Trust is committed to valuing diversity, promoting equality and dignity at work and achieving equality of opportunity for all learners, employees, potential employees, local governors, parents or carers, volunteers and contractors. The Trust believes that unfair discrimination on any grounds either defined by law or not, is unacceptable and will be addressed under the appropriate policies and procedures.

## 1.1 PURPOSE

- 1.1.1 The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Policy is to:
- a) develop and maintain an ethos which respects and values all people;
  - b) actively advance equality of opportunity;
  - c) promote good relations amongst people within the communities in which we work;
  - d) eliminate all forms of unfair indirect and direct discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or other oppressive behaviour
  - e) deliver equality and diversity through our Trust and school policies, procedures and practice;
  - f) make reasonable adjustments and do our utmost, within available resources, remove barriers which limit or discourage access to school’s provision and activities;
  - g) take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by protected characteristics, stereotyping and cultural expectations;

- 1.1.2 To prevent both direct and indirect discrimination.

## 1.2 SCOPE

- 1.2.1 This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010:
- i. Age
  - ii. Gender
  - iii. Gender Reassignment
  - iv. Disability
  - v. Marriage and Civil Partnership
  - vi. Pregnancy and Maternity
  - vii. Race
  - viii. Religious belief and political opinion
  - ix. Sexual Orientation

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

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### 2.0 CEO/EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER/HEADTEACHER/NOMINATED MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

In the context of this Policy, the term “Manager” will refer to the CEO/Executive Headteacher/Headteacher or nominated Manager with leadership responsibilities.

Managers are responsible for:

- promoting equality and diversity throughout the Trust/School and ensure that all learners and colleagues are aware of their responsibilities and expectations with regard to their conduct.
- delivering equality of opportunity to all employees including access to information, resources, training, support and application of policies and procedures.
- ensuring compliance with the Equality and Human Rights Commission Employment Statutory Code of Practice in respect of each protected characteristic.
- ensuring that all customs and practices within the school adhere to the principles stated within this policy.
- ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and that any contravention will be dealt with under the bullying and harassment policy, grievance policy, complaints policy, or disciplinary policy as appropriate.
- ensuring arrangements are in place for the monitoring and reporting of data as required and in line with the School Workforce Census.
- ensuring that before making decisions or taking action an assessment is made as to whether it may have implications for any individuals with particular protected characteristics
- ensuring local policies enhance the positive impact of a proposal and remove or minimise any negative or adverse impact on equality, at the stage that the policy is reviewed.

### 2.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Every employee, irrespective of their job or position within the Trust, has an individual responsibility not to unfairly discriminate, to treat others in a fair and non-judgemental manner, and to promote positive attitudes and relationships.

Individual employees will be held accountable for their decisions and actions if they contravene the Trust’s commitment to act as an equal opportunities employer and education provider.

### 2.2 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER/ADVISOR ROLE

The Human Resources Manager/Advisor or his/her nominee will provide advice and assistance to managers in regards to this policy and procedure where required.

## 3. Protected Characteristics

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### 3.0 Age

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- challenging age stereotyping
- recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce

### 3.1 Gender

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at all levels of the organisation through:

- challenging gender stereotypes
- supporting employees in balancing their life at work and at home
- supporting employees who become pregnant and taking active steps to facilitate their return to work after maternity leave.

### 3.2 Gender Re-assignment

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. The Trust will take positive steps to support a trans-gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

### 3.3 Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued at all levels of the Trust through:

- focusing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities
- making appropriate reasonable adjustments in the workplace to help people with disabilities achieve their full career potential.

### 3.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership

People are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status. Women are treated fairly during the period of pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave entitlement. Any period of absence due to pregnancy related illness is not taken into account when taking a decision about employment and in accordance with the law.

### 3.5 Race

The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is represented at all levels of the Trust through:

- challenging racial stereotypes
- understanding, respecting and valuing different racial and cultural backgrounds and perspectives.

### 3.6 Religious belief and political opinion

People are treated fairly irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices or political opinions by recognising individuals' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution.

### 3.7 Sexual Orientation

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- respecting different lifestyles
- challenging negative stereotypical views.

## 4. Forms of Discrimination

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**4.0** All forms of unfair discrimination on any grounds is unacceptable and will be addressed under the appropriate policies and procedures.

### **4.1 Direct Discrimination**

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person treats another less favourably than they treat or would treat others because of a protected characteristic they possess (paragraph 1.2.1) and/or:

- a protected characteristic of someone they are associated with, such as a friend or family member/colleague and referred to as **direct discrimination by association**; and/or
- a protected characteristic they are thought to have, regardless of whether this perception by others is actually correct or not and referred to as **direct discrimination by perception**.

### **4.2 Indirect Discrimination**

Indirect discrimination occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied equally to everybody but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group, because the proportion of the group which can comply with it is much smaller than for the other group.

### **4.3 Harassment and Bullying**

Discrimination law covers harassment on a variety of grounds including disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, race, religious belief or other similar philosophical belief, and sexuality. The Equal Treatment Amendment Directive means the Sex Discrimination Act contains a specific prohibition against harassment and sexual harassment. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 have outlawed harassment on the grounds of age.

Harassment and bullying comes in many forms including: cyber and electronic forms (e.g. emails, texts, blogs etc), physical contact which is unwanted, unwelcome remarks about a person's dress, appearance, race or marital status, jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, sectarian songs and letters, posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting and emblems, isolation or non-cooperation and exclusion from social activities, coercion for sexual favours and pressure to participate in political/religious groups. Harassment can also exist as a result of the general prevailing culture, for example one in which it is acceptable to tell discriminatory jokes.

### **4.4 Victimisation**

Victimisation is where an employee is singled out for using their workplace complaints procedures or exercising their legal rights. For example, bringing a complaint of discrimination or giving evidence or information on behalf of another employee who has brought proceedings for discrimination.

Victimisation may present itself in many ways. It may be that individuals are refused requests for time off, denied promotion or training, ignored by their manager or colleagues, criticised continually for their work.