

Equality & Diversity Policy

Audience:	REAch2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees
Ratified:	REAch2 Trust Board December 2022
Other related policies:	Dignity at Work policy Safer Recruitment policy Grievance policy Discipline policy Admissions policy Behaviour policy Staff Code of Conduct
Policy owner:	oDirector of HR
Review:	Every 3 years

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.



Leadership

Finding the leader in all of us.



Inclusion

Realising the greatness in our difference.



Learning

Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.



Enjoyment

Loving what we do.



Inspiration

Feeling the power of the possible.



Integrity

Being courageously true to our purpose.



Responsibility

Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

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Policy Overview

This policy outlines the Trust's position on the embedding and promotion of equality and diversity. Specific policies and procedures are in place covering employees and children that should be referred to as necessary.

The ethos of Inclusion for All, as outlined in this policy, is applicable across all Trust Schools delivered through policies, processes and procedures and embedded in our Touchstones.

REAch2 Academy Trust is committed to equality and diversity in an environment that promotes a Culture of Inclusion for All. This holistic approach helps us maintain an open and accessible working, living and learning environment where all are supported to reach their full potential.

This commitment is further embedded by our culture that strongly reflects our Touchstones: seven principles which make our academies unique, they are:

- Learning
- Leadership
- Enjoyment
- Responsibility
- Inspiration
- Inclusion
- Integrity

This policy has been developed in direct response to UK equality legislation and seeks to take a proactive and positive approach via our commitment to Inclusion for All.

The Equality Act 2010 protects a range of groups from unlawful treatment under the term 'protected characteristics' covering

- disability
- age
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This policy also covers the Trust's responsibilities under the Equality Duty which requires the Trust to pay 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Advancing equal opportunities (between people that share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it)
- Fostering good relations (between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not).

Policy In Detail

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy is relevant across the entire Trust. As such all staff, children, and visitors, contractors, subcontractors, and service providers along with any other persons associated with the functions of the Trust are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to this policy. Further responsibilities have been outlined below:

- The REAch2 Trust Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Trust meets the commitments detailed in this policy and that the Trust's legal obligations are understood and implemented across the Trust.
- The Education Committee has responsibility for ensuring that equality and diversity is fully considered within its agenda and filtered to relevant areas of the Trust.
- The Executive Team has responsibility for ensuring that the day-to-day management of the Trust reflects the content of this policy.
- The Executive Team has responsibility for ensuring that the policy is understood and well communicated and will monitor and review this policy.

Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, challenging inequality and less favourable treatment
- promote diversity and equality for staff and children, recognising and valuing the contributions of our diverse population
- provide an environment that encourages disclosure of individual circumstances and supports change
- clearly demonstrate our commitment to creating an inclusive environment, tackling discrimination, and eradicating inappropriate behaviour across the Trust community.

We will achieve these objectives by:

- ensuring we understand our legal obligations and engaging positively with staff and children and representative groups to fulfil our legal requirements
- clear and consistent communication to staff, children, and representative groups
- providing access to training and support for staff to enable them to understand how equality and diversity is relevant to their roles and assist them in fully mainstreaming equality and diversity into their everyday activities
- undertaking equality and privacy impact assessment on all new and revised policies and procedures
- taking forward activities that meet our commitments and actively promote equality and diversity throughout the Trust community.

Scope

There are several areas across the Trust that take a lead role in taking forward the functions of the Trust. The purpose of this policy is to draw linkages to those areas.

Staff Related: Equality and diversity is embedded throughout our employment practices to ensure that we are a positive and responsible employer.

- **Recruitment and Selection:** Good practice in recruitment and selection is at the core of achieving equal opportunities in employment. The Trust has developed policies and procedures to ensure that decisions on appointments are made wholly on the grounds of the candidate's abilities rather than on any other criteria that cannot be shown to be properly justifiable. All those involved regularly in recruitment interviews will have attend specific training, either online Recruitment and Selection module provided by Human Resources or an alternative approved by the Director of Human Resources
- **New employees:** All new employees must read this policy.
- **Equal Pay:** The Trust believes that staff should receive equal pay for like work. We are committed to undertaking equal pay audits and taking remedial action where necessary.
- **Performance Review and Development:** The Trust promotes Performance Review and Development meetings for all staff. Managers use this process to give feedback to individuals and provide clear guidance on their area of work. It provides a one-to-one opportunity for staff to raise issues of any kind with their line manager and to highlight individual development and support needs around equality and diversity
- **Equality and Diversity Awareness:** All staff are required to undertake online Diversity in the Workplace Training.
- **Progression and Promotion:** The Trust is firmly committed to the principle that opportunities for progression and promotion should be available equally to all members of staff. To this end it has developed policies and procedures, to ensure that the criteria used for advancement and promotion are fair and open, and that decisions are made consistently in accordance with published criteria. All staff involved in selection for progression and promotion, including relevant members of departments and promotion bodies, will have undertaken equality and diversity training to help them reach unbiased judgments.
- **Grievance Procedures:** Any staff who have concerns about unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying are advised to contact the HR Department. Should a staff member be in breach of this policy, they will be addressed with recourse to the Disciplinary Policy if necessary.
- **Child Related:** Our community of children is a varied population at a range of different stages of study, this policy is relevant across all cohorts. At times the functions outlined below may take place centrally or locally across the Trust.
- **Admissions:** We will ensure that no applicants are treated less favourably because of any protected characteristic. The Trust will take steps to ensure that the wellbeing of pupils is fully considered and that we meet legal requirements. Further information is in our Admissions Policy.
- **Learning and Teaching:** We value the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that our children bring to our Trust community. We aim to ensure that all teaching, learning, and assessment strategies are equitable, undertaken with awareness of the different needs of pupils and can foster academic and personal development. The Trust recognises that diversity should be reflected across all aspects of the curriculum. This is monitored at school level, by the Local Governing Body (LGB) and by the Education Committee on behalf of the Trust Board.
- **Pupil Support:** The welfare of all children in the Trust is of the highest importance. We will provide dedicated support for SEND pupils. Our services will continue to ensure that the needs of the diverse community of children are met.
- **Services and Facilities:** Services or facilities provided by, for or in association with the Trust, aim to ensure equality of access. This includes catering facilities, sports provision, technology and social activities.

- **Procurement:** Procurement activities are undertaken across the Trust with Procurement Services responsible for purchasing policy and procedure. These aim to ensure that contractors and suppliers are aware of, and comply with, this policy. We will take steps to ensure equality and diversity is embedded throughout our contractual relationships.
- **Individual Circumstances:** The Trust has a duty of care across the Trust community. Where individuals disclose circumstances, it is the responsibility of the immediate line manager or HR contact to work closely with individuals, and external services where required, to enable positive outcomes for both the individual and the Trust. A declaration of circumstances, verbally or in writing, is a formal declaration to the Trust and should be responded to as such. In some instances (for example if there is a concern over safeguarding and/or wellbeing) confidentiality may not be maintained and the concern will be forwarded to the appropriate person within the Trust.

Equality and Privacy Impact Assessment: To ensure equality and diversity is embedded throughout the Trust's functions, where applicable (all those areas that impact on people) equality and privacy impact assessment will be undertaken for all new and revised policies, procedure, and functions, prior to endorsement or ratification by the oversight/responsible committee.

Monitoring and evaluation

We are committed to creating and maintaining a supportive environment which promotes equality of opportunity alongside dignity and respect, an environment where members of our community are confident and willing to disclose personal information referring to any of the protected characteristics.

Complaints of discrimination based on the grounds of protected characteristics should be raised through relevant grievance procedures for staff or complaints procedures for students. Complaints regarding harassment or bullying should be raised in accordance with the Dignity at Work / Anti Bullying policy.

Implementation

The Trust is made up of a range of Schools and central services. It is the responsibility of Heads of Schools and Heads of Service to determine responsibilities within their areas with reference to this policy.

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- comply with this policy and co-operate with their line manager
- treat others with respect and uphold the values of the Trust
- participate in training and wider learning opportunities to assist the Trust in meeting its Equality Duty
- ensure behaviours and actions do not unlawfully discriminate and that they are not harassing or bullying others
- be accountable for their actions All children have a responsibility to:
- treat others with respect
- be accountable for their actions

All visitors, contractors, subcontractors, service providers and any other persons associated with the functions of the Trust have, in discharging their duties to the Trust a responsibility to:

- comply with this policy
- treat others with respect
- ensure behaviours and actions do not unlawfully discriminate

- be accountable for their actions

Training and support will be provided for all staff to assist in the implementation of this policy. All staff are expected to undertake online training. Training for pupils will be provided via the curriculum and in the classroom.

Policy Review

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or sooner, to take into account any legislative changes.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.