Policy Information Sheet

Name of Policy:	**Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy**
Delegated Authority	☒ Trust Board ☐ Nominated Committee ☐ CEO ☐ CFO ☐Other _____
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Statutory policy	☒ Yes ☐ No
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Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy

1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Make It Different Trust is an inclusive organisation where everyone is valued and treated with dignity and respect.

2. Aims

Our policy and procedures are written so that when implemented we will:

- comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- provide a safe environment in which all our students can flourish and achieve
- provide a learning environment where all individuals 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 protected characteristics outlined in the The Equality Act 2010, including gender
- plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity
- actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage
- make inclusion a thread which runs through our curriculum and tutor programme.

3. Contents

This policy document contains the following:

Section 4: Definition of Diversity
Section 5: The Equality Act 2010
Section 6: The Public Sector Equality Duty
Section 7:Protected Characteristics
Section 8:Equality Objectives
Section 9:Advancing Equality of Opportunity
Section 10: curriculum
Section 11: Personal Development and Pastoral Guidance
Section 12: Community Cohesion
Section 13: Staffing and Staff Development

Section 14: Monitoring and Evaluation

4. Definition of Diversity

Diversity means having an understanding of, and celebrating the differences between, people, regardless of their unique characteristics as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 or any other differences. We will treat each person (including both students and members of staff, and those applying to work or learn here) equally regardless of these differences.

5. The Equality Act 2010

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student:

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way it provides education for students,
- in the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation:

- Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic, than they treat (or would treat) other people
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic
- Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person"
- Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Act

6. The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty consists of a general equality duty and specific duties, which help authorities to meet the general duty. The aim of the general equality duty is to integrate considerations of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of public authorities. In summary, those subject to the equality duty, must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.

Through the implementation of this policy, Make It Different Trust will ensure compliance to the Duty specifically through:

- raising awareness with staff through use of CPD time, including reference to the most relevant policies and procedures, and our general and specific duties under the Equality Act
- raising awareness with students through targeted activities and tutor time focused on specific areas such as anti-bullying.

7. Protected Characteristics

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

8. Equality Objectives

The Trust Board will:

- ensure that the Trust complies with equality legislation, and in exercising its functions as a public authority, have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty
- ensure that the Trust's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored
- scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures
- adhere to admissions protocols, which are fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups
- monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary
- promote equality of opportunity in the recruitment and appointment of Trustees
- provide information in appropriate, accessible formats
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy
- be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups
- ensure safer recruitment processes are adhered to when recruiting staff to the Trust.

The Principal and Executive Team will:

- implement the policy and its strategies and procedures
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant continuous professional development
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice
- deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy
- produce a report on progress for Trustees as required
- ensure this policy is developed and effectively implemented with Trustees, school staff and any relevant external partners
- ensure all staff are aware of this policy and understand their role in its implementation

- update specific information about the school population (staff and students) annually after the start of each new academic year and publish this on the website (example shown in Appendix 1).

School staff will:

- be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture
- promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any protected characteristics outlined in the The Equality Act 2010, including gender
- promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society
- keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

Students will:

- refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy
- be encouraged to speak out against any discriminatory behaviour that they witness.

9. 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)
- ensuring fairness and equality through our safer recruitment procedures.

10. The curriculum

We will ensure that:

- the curriculum will prepare students for life in modern Britain, providing them with opportunities to become respectful citizens, and develop their understanding and appreciation of diversity
- our curriculum actively promotes the Fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith

- the curriculum will provide access to a broad range of literature and materials pertaining to individuals or groups from diverse cultures, including a focus on a range of religions, ethnicity, gender and disability
- all students have access to the school curriculum and all school activities, where it is deemed safe for them to do so
- all students achieve to the best of their abilities, despite any difficulty or disability they may have
- teaching staff are aware of and sensitive to the needs of all students, teaching them in a way that is most appropriate to their needs
- we identify at the earliest opportunity, all children that need special and specific consideration to support their needs (e.g. educational, social, physical or emotional support)
- we provide suitable provision for children to fully develop their abilities, interests and aptitudes and gain maximum access to the curriculum and other activities in school deemed appropriate in order to support their learning and development.

11. Personal Development and Pastoral Guidance

We will ensure that:

- pastoral staff take account of disability needs, gender, religious and racial differences, sexual orientation and the experience and needs of particular groups such as Gypsy Roma and Traveller, refugee and asylum seeker students
- all students are encouraged to consider the full range of career opportunities available to them with no discriminatory boundaries placed on them due to their disability, gender or race
- all students/staff/parents/carers are given support as appropriate when they experience or perceive discrimination. We also recognise that the perpetrators of discrimination are themselves sometimes victims of their personal circumstances and therefore, where appropriate, remedial work is done to ensure that the actions do not occur again
- positive role models will be used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of students can see themselves reflected in the school community
- emphasis is placed on the value that diversity brings to the school community rather than the challenges
- the tutor programme includes topics with a specific focus on equality and diversity
- strategies are put in place to focus on motivating and reintegrating disaffected students
- students are given opportunities to meet their individual religious needs, especially when important festivals occur
- students' dietary needs are met as far as is practicable.

12. Community cohesion

We are committed to supporting community cohesion by:

- developing a common vision and sense of belonging
- developing an appreciation of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances
- creating opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential

- building strong and positive relationships
- having good links with other schools, locally and regionally
- teachers having links with other schools and promoting good role models when interacting with staff from other schools, through a range of activities
- learners having a strong voice and opportunities to take responsibility through a Student Council
- engaging parents through a range of activities, consultation evenings and information evenings
- having strong links with external agencies
- building networks and partnerships between services to encourage joint thinking and sharing of skills
- building on relationships with the school community and consulting with all stakeholders, giving particular attention to those affected by inequality in the decisions we take to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

13. Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff. This will include:

- encouraging the career development and aspirations of all individuals
- providing staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of students in the various dimensions of equality of opportunity.

14. Monitoring and Review

This will be carried out by the Executive Team, who will consider feedback from a range of sources and report to the Trust Board. Sources will include attendance and truancy figures, exclusions, incidents of racism, homophobia and sexism and all forms of bullying. Student achievement data for particular groups will be compared to national and Local Authority data.

Equality and Diversity Policy - Appendix 1

2025-2026 (updated September 2025), to be updated annually

Data is presented in a way that does not identify individual staff or students and complies with data protection requirements.

As a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty the school publishes the following information about staff and students, specifically information collected about certain protected characteristics (as detailed below):

Protected characteristic	**Data collected and recorded**	
Categories	**Staff**	**Students**
Age (staff)	√	
Disability	√	√
Gender reassignment (Gender identity)	√	√
Pregnancy and maternity	√	√
Race (Ethnicity)	√	√
Religion or belief	√	√
Sex	√	√
Sexual orientation		
Marriage and Civil partnerships (staff)		

Hartlepool Free School monitors the protected characteristics of its pupils and workforce to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Due to the small size of the school community, detailed demographic information is not published as individuals could be identified. Equality information is monitored internally by the Trust Board to identify trends, ensure equality of opportunity and inform the school's Equality Objectives.

This appendix will be reviewed annually should the student and/or staff population change significantly.