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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY



Accord

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



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Approvals

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Mr Andy Lancashire	Chair of Trustees	<i>A Lancashire</i>	14 July 2025
Mr Alan Warboys	CEO	<i>A Warboys</i>	14 July 2025



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1. Introduction

The Accord Multi Academy Trust (the 'Trust') recognises the importance of fair treatment and the positive promotion of equal opportunity for all employees, pupils, Trustees, Members, Governors, visitors, parents/carers and all job applicants to the Trust. The Trust's approach to equality is all embracing and designed to prevent discrimination on any grounds.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for approval of all Trust employment policies and will do so following the relevant persons within the Trust having consulted where appropriate colleagues and Trade Unions on the content of the policy. Trustees are responsible for ensuring the Trust complies with the anti-discrimination provisions of the Equality Act 2010, including as an employer; compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010; and compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The CEO has overall responsibility to ensure that there is equality of treatments across the Trust in all aspects of the organisation and business.

Academy Education Committees (AEC)

Academy Education Committees are responsible for supporting the Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) in terms of all aspects of equality of provision and service.

Senior Leadership Teams

Executive Principals, Heads of Academy, Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams will ensure that this policy is implemented within their academies. This will include:

- making sure measurable steps are taken to address the Trust's stated equality objectives, integrated with other strategic priorities;
- making sure Governors, employees, pupils, students and their parents and carers are aware of equality issues, as relevant;
- making sure all employees know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out (as appropriate);
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including identity-related incidents; and
- enabling reasonable adjustments to be made, in relation to disability, in regard to pupils, employees, parents / carers and visitors to the Trust / Academy.



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HR Department

HR will provide advice and guidance to Executive Principals, Heads of Academy, Headteachers, Senior Leaders and employees regarding the Equality and Diversity Policy. HR will support leaders with training requirements. HR will advise and guide senior leaders where evidence of a potential breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy is found, to determine whether disciplinary or other formal action should commence in line with the appropriate Trust Policy.

Managers

All other managers will apply this policy and its principles in a fair and equitable manner in all aspects of their work.

Employees

All employees will comply with this policy and are responsible for:

- avoiding unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promoting equality of opportunity in their work;
- fostering good relations between groups;
- dealing with identity-related incidents, whether or not they amount to bullying;
- taking up relevant professional development opportunities.

Employees found to be in breach of any aspect of this policy, displaying actions or conduct which is in breach of the equality provisions and ethos may be subject to disciplinary action under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

3. Aims

The Trust recognises our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to avoid direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics which are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;



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- Sexual orientation.

As an Academy Trust, we are also required by the **Public Sector Equality Duty** under Section 149 of the Act to take positive steps to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

The Trust endeavours to create a strong, sustainable and cohesive community in our academies and across the Trust. The Trust will continue to develop and promote policies and systems to ensure that our pupils, students, employees and anyone associated with our Trust are not unlawfully discriminated against and that we encourage a commitment to equality, diversity and fair treatment of all.

Everyone who works or applies to work at the Trust will be treated fairly and equally and this principle will apply to recruitment and selection, job/task allocation, promotion, secondment, training, appraisal, discipline and grievance and all terms and conditions of employment.

Independent contractors and service providers are encouraged to apply the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy within their own area of practice.

The Trust commits to encouraging equality and diversity in the workplace and equal opportunities for all. The Trust will wherever possible take positive steps to redress any under-representation of ethnic groups. The Trust is also committed to educating all staff through professional development opportunities and staff communications of equality and diversity issues.

The Trust will promote equality and diversity through an inclusive curriculum. Discrimination will be robustly challenged in all areas of the curriculum. Curriculum planning will take account of the needs of all pupils/students and will cover issues of equality and diversity.

The Trust also commits to creating and maintaining a working environment free of bullying, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all and an environment where individual differences and contributions of all employees are recognised and valued.

Where discrimination against any person or group is referred to in this policy, it shall mean discrimination in the application of any of the policies and procedures of the Trust.

4. Equality and Diversity

This policy applies to all Trust employees, irrespective of age, race, colour, religion/belief, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership,



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domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership.

All employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner recognising any special needs of individuals or circumstances where adjustments need to be made and/or considered.

No employee will suffer any form of discrimination, inequality, victimisation, harassment or bullying as a result of implementing and adhering to this policy.

If at any time, this policy is considered to be discriminatory in any way, the HR Department should be contacted immediately for concerns to be discussed.

5. Equality Definitions and Terms of Discrimination

Discrimination is treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction towards, a person based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong. These include all of the nine protected characteristics as well as other categories / groups / definitions that a person may be perceived to belong.

Direct Discrimination

This is where a person is treated less favourably or more favourably than others would be on grounds that are not justifiable, such as race, gender, disability or any other protected characteristic or perceived group to which the person belongs.

Indirect Discrimination

This consists of treatment, which appears to be fair and applied to everyone equally but has an unjustifiable impact upon a particular group of people or particular group of people with a protected characteristic.

Institutional Discrimination

Is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an effective and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin, nationality, religion/belief, gender, disability, sexuality, age or other status or protected characteristic. It can be seen or detected in process, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination. Through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantages people.

Association Discrimination



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Association discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination

Perceptive discrimination occurs when a person directly discriminates against another person because the person thinks they possess a particular protected characteristic. This applies even if the person being discriminated against does not have the protected characteristic.

Racism

Racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another, which often results in discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity.

Racism can also occur where false assumptions are held regarding people from ethnic backgrounds.

Institutional racism occurs when people from different ethnic backgrounds are disadvantaged in some way within an institution. This is often subtle and underlying rather than openly stated and applied.

Disability Discrimination

This will be deemed to have occurred where all reasonable possibilities which would enable the retention of a person with a disability have not been explored. This could include modifications to equipment, the use of special employment aids, job re-structuring or redeployment where appropriate.

Victimisation

This is unlawful and occurs where a person is treated less favourably because they have asserted their rights under the Equality Act or would not be considered for a post because they have made a claim at an Employment Tribunal for example.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Genuine Occupational Requirement



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Occasionally the Trust may wish to specify that they wish to appoint to a particular protected characteristic or group, for example a male or female employee relevant to the requirements of the job role. Such situations are lawful if they demonstrate that there is a genuine occupational requirement with regard to the nature or context of the work i.e.:

- a) it is an occupational requirement,
- b) the application of the requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, and;
- c) the person to whom a) applies, the requirement does not meet it or the Trust has reasonable grounds for not being satisfied that the person meets it.

6. Statutory Obligations

In formulating new or amending existing policies, practices, strategic plans, service plans and in employment and service development; the Trust will take account of its responsibility within the following statutory obligations:

- Equality Act 2010
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 (amendment 2018)
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Public Sector Equality Duty.

7. Training

Any training and development needs, particularly statutory and mandatory training required for employees will be arranged by the appropriate manager or senior leader in conjunction with the HR Department. All staff will receive equality, diversity and inclusion training as part of their induction and at regular intervals thereafter, to ensure that staff understand what is expected of them during their employment and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

Training records of all completed staff training will be maintained by the HR Department or the academy.

8. Equality Information



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The Trust may gather and analyse information on pupils, students, employees and others including those with declared protected characteristics who are affected by Trust policies and practices. The purpose of analysing this information is to ensure that the Trust is furthering the three aims of the public sector equality duty. This information will include local and national data as well as Trust data including surveys, complaints, focus groups, interviews and pupil voice.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust will carry out Equality Impact Assessments in order to ensure that policies, procedures and practices cater for the individuals who share protected characteristics in relation to the Equality Act 2010. The purpose of these assessments is to ensure that policies, procedures and practices within the organisation are fair to all. If unfairness is highlighted, the assessment will also seek to show how this can be changed and where it can't be changed, how it can be improved.

10. Conclusion

The Trust will endeavour to uphold the aims of this policy and is committed to ensuring equality and fairness in treatment across the organisation. The Trust will do everything in its power to create a transparent and equitable environment for all.

The Trust will annually consider and review how our workforce reflects diversity and where possible take actions to address any shortfalls.

11. Review

The Trust will review this policy on a bi-annual basis and at any such other time should changes to Employment Legislation or recommended Codes of Practice dictate necessary changes. The policy will be monitored for consistency and adherence to equalities legislation.

The Trust will bi-annually consider and review how our workforce reflects diversity and where possible take actions to address any shortfalls.

12. Contact Information

Employees may contact their trade union representative for further advice and support regarding discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Employees are also encouraged to speak to their line manager and / or the HR Department should an issue relating to discrimination, harassment or victimisation occur.



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In addition, further information for advice and support can be found at:

Equality and Human Rights Commission

0808 800 0082

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Citizens Advice Bureau

03444 111 444

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Civil Legal Advice (CLA)

0345 345 4 345

<https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice>

13. Trust Contact Information

Name	Email:
Human Resources	hr@accordmat.org



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Appendix 1 – Equality Objectives 2025-2027

Leading Success	• Our consistent application of our policies and procedures will demonstrate our continuous commitment to equality and diversity. • We will ensure that our processes for recruiting, retaining and managing staff (and potential applicants) support all those in groups protected by the Equalities Act. • We will undertake equality assessments of all new and existing policies and procedures.
Securing Success	• We will ensure that our curriculum (including enrichment and extra-curricular activities) is varied and balanced, providing opportunities for all pupils. • We will promote understanding between different groups of people, cultures and societies among our pupils and staff. • Our PHSE curriculum will include education that challenges stereotypes and perceptions.
Developing Success	• We will provide career development and progression opportunities to all (including those in groups protected by the Equalities Act) • We will endeavour to ensure that our staff teams reflect the diversity of the local population at all levels. • We will encourage diversity at all levels of governance across the Trust.
Standards for Success	• We will consistently apply our policies and procedures so that all pupils and staff, including those with protected characteristics, are protected from harassment and discrimination of all kinds.
Supporting Success	• We will aim to raise awareness of career and higher education opportunities among pupils and parents / carers and to challenge stereotypes. • We will forge strong relationships with parents / carers and the local community (including those in groups protected by the Equalities Act and those from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds), so that all learners are supported to maximise their attainment and achieve their aspirations.
Achieving Success	• We are committed to ensuring that the individual needs of all learners are met, so that the gap in the attainment and progress of different groups of learners is narrowed, with a particular focus on improving the achievement of disadvantaged / vulnerable pupils and those with Special Educational Needs. • We will aim to raise aspirations among children and young people, their parents and communities and raise awareness of career and higher education opportunities, to challenge stereotypes.



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Engaging with our stakeholders with regard to our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

We aim to engage and consult with our stakeholders (including parents / carers, pupils, governors, staff and local communities) so we can develop our awareness and review the impact of our policies and equality objectives. Examples of our engagement and consultation include:

- Pupil Voice forums
- School councils
- Staff surveys
- Recognised Trade Union consultations
- Parent forums
- Trustee and Governor meetings / workshops
- Supporting Success events
- Parents Evenings
- Social Media and other communication channels.

How we will demonstrate we meet our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

- Implementation of our Equality and Diversity Policy
- Reviewing pupil progress and attainment data, particularly from identified sub-groups.
- Mentoring and enrichment programmes.
- PSHE programmes, including tutor sessions, assemblies and celebrations involving pupils.
- Data and information published on our websites, including; Pupil Premium and SEN reports.
- Trust Strategic Plan
- Academy Development Plans
- Minutes from Trustee and Academy Education Committees.
- Executive Leader reports.



- Senior Leadership Impact reports.
- Information on SEN or specific support programmes.
- Work profile data and recruitment monitoring information.
- Equality Impact Assessments.
- Policies in place across the Trust.