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Equality Information and Objectives Policy

#GN7

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## **Statement of intent**

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) recognises that certain groups in society can be disadvantaged because of unlawful discrimination they may face due to their race, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, or pregnancy and maternity.

TCAT has a statutory duty to publish an Equality Information and Objectives Statement. This policy sets out how TCAT determines its equality objectives.

# Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

* Human Rights Act 1998
* The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
* Education and Inspections Act 2006
* Equality Act 2010
* The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
* Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
* Data Protection Act 2018
* The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This policy also has due regard for non-statutory guidance, including the following:

* DfE (2014) ’The Equality Act 2010 and schools’

This policy operates in conjunction with the following TCAT and school policies:

* Equality Objectives Statement (GN7A)
* Admissions Policy Trust Level (GN1)
* Complaints Policy and Procedures (GN9)
* Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (GN19)
* Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (GN20)
* Data Protection Policy (FI20)
* Grievance Policy and Procedures (HR4)
* LGBTQ+ Policy (SG19)
* Dignity at Work Policy and Procedures (HR12)

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

* Eliminate discrimination harassment and victimisation
* Advance equality of opportunity
* Foster good relations

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as ‘the Act’. TCAT fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities. Protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

* Age
* Disability
* Race, colour, nationality, or ethnicity
* Sex
* Gender reassignment
* Maternity and pregnancy
* Religion and belief
* Sexual orientation
* Marriage and civil partnership

The Act makes it unlawful for TCAT or a TCAT school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

* In relation to admissions
* In the way it provides education for pupils
* In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility, or service
* By suspending or excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

TCAT’s liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left TCAT, but will apply to subsequent actions connected to the previous relationship between TCAT and the pupil, such as the provision of references on former pupils or access to “old pupils” communications and activities.

TCAT will promote equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and will work in line with this policy and our Dignity at Work Policy and Procedures.

# Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will:

* Ensure that TCAT complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations
* Meet its obligations under the PSED to:
  + Publish equality objectives at least every four years commencing on the date of the last publication
  + Update and publish information every year to demonstrate TCAT compliance with the PSED
* Ensure that the TCAT’s policies and procedures are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans
* Ensure that the TCAT’s Admissions Policy does not discriminate in any way
* Ensure equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, professional development programmes and in membership of the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies
* Proactively recruit high-quality applicants from under-represented groups
* Provide information in appropriate and accessible formats
* Ensure that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to enforce this policy

The Executive Headteacher/CEO, and where delegated, the Headteacher/Head of School will:

* Implement and champion this policy and its procedures
* Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training as part of their induction and CPD
* Ensure that all parents, visitors, and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the provisions of this policy
* Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice
* Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance
* Produce an annual report on the progress of implementing the provisions of this policy and report it to the Trust Board

Staff will:

* Be mindful of any incidents of harassment or bullying within TCAT
* Address any minor issues of harassment or bullying and report any major breaches of the policy to the Executive Headteacher/CEO or to their Headteacher/Head of School
* Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the TCAT’s culture
* Promote equality and good relations, and not harass or discriminate in any way
* Monitor pupils’ progress and academic needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place
* Keep up to date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training
* Champion diversity and inclusion

Pupils will:

* Not discriminate or harass any other pupil or staff member
* Actively encourage equality and diversity in TCAT by contributing their cultural experiences and values
* Report any incidences of bullying or harassment, whether to themselves or to others, to a senior leader, member of the pastoral team or to another member of staff
* Abide by all TCAT’s equality and diversity policies, procedures, and codes

TCAT school’s will have an equality page on their websites, in order to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED in the Equality Act 2010, and advancing equality of opportunity

# Equality objectives

TCAT is committed to promoting the welfare and equality of all its staff, pupils, and other members of the TCAT community.

TCAT sees all members of our community as of equal value, regardless of any protected characteristic. TCAT’s policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences in life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to any protected characteristic.

TCAT’s Equality Objectives Statement sets out how TCAT and our schools are meeting the PSED and outlines how equality of opportunity is ensured for all members of the TCAT community. The Equality Objectives Statement is reviewed at least every four years and is published on the TCAT website annually.

TCAT will consult with stakeholders to establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning.

To achieve this, we have established the following objectives:

1. Promote Inclusive Education and Reduce Attainment Gaps

* Ensure that all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability, or special educational needs (SEN), achieve their full potential
* Identify and address attainment gaps by implementing targeted interventions, particularly for disadvantaged pupils (e.g., Pupil Premium students)
* Monitor progress and adapt teaching strategies to ensure equitable access to learning resources across all schools within TCAT

2. Foster a Culture of Respect, Diversity, and Inclusion

* Embed diversity and inclusion across the curriculum, ensuring that teaching materials and school activities reflect a wide range of cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives
* Deliver anti-discrimination training for staff and pupils to tackle racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and other forms of prejudice
* Implement an effective anti-bullying strategy that specifically addresses issues related to protected characteristics

3. Improve Representation in Leadership and Staffing

* Ensure recruitment and promotion processes promote diversity and reflect the communities that TCAT serves
* Provide career development and leadership opportunities for underrepresented groups within the teaching staff, leadership teams, and governance structures
* Establish mentoring and professional development programmes to support staff from diverse backgrounds to progress into leadership roles

4. Enhance Support for Pupils with SEN and Disabilities

* Ensure equitable access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities for pupils with SEN or disabilities
* Provide training for staff to effectively support pupils with additional needs and promote inclusive teaching strategies
* Improve accessibility across all school sites, ensuring that physical and digital learning environments cater to all pupils' needs

5. Strengthen Community Engagement and Partnerships

* Develop stronger links with parents, carers, and community groups, particularly those from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds
* Provide opportunities for parents and carers to engage in their child’s education, with particular attention to hard-to-reach families
* Work with external organisations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in school activities, governance, and decision-making

6. Promote Gender Equality and Challenge Stereotypes

* Ensure equal access to all subjects, activities, and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls
* Challenge gender stereotypes in subject choices, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) and creative arts
* Implement policies and practices to ensure that all pupils feel safe, valued, and respected, regardless of their gender identity or expression

7. Regularly Monitor, Review, and Report on Progress

* Collect and analyse equality data across all schools in the MAT to track progress against objectives
* Ensure pupil voice and stakeholder feedback shape ongoing equality strategies
* Publish an annual report on equality progress, identifying key achievements and areas for improvement

TCAT will regularly review the steps being taken and the progress made towards the achievement of these objectives and, in line with the specific duties of the PSED, publish this information on the TCAT website every year. TCAT will update and publish its equality objectives at least every four years.

# Collecting and using information

In accordance with the requirements outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018, personal data will be lawfully collected and processed in line with the principles and practices outlined in the Data Protection Policy and only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, e.g., to comply with TCAT’s legal obligations.

TCAT will collect equality information for the purpose of:

* Identifying key issues, e.g., unlawful discrimination in teaching methods
* Assessing performance, e.g., benchmarking against similar organisations locally or nationally
* Taking action, e.g., adapting working practice to accommodate the needs of staff who share protected characteristics

We will build an equality profile for staff to assist with identifying any issues within their recruitment regime. We will obtain the following information from our staff:

* Recruitment and promotion
* Numbers of part-time and full-time staff
* Pay and remuneration
* Training
* Return to work of women on maternity leave
* Return to work of disabled employees following sick leave relating to their disabilities
* Appraisals
* Grievances (including about harassment)
* Disciplinary action (including for harassment)
* Dismissals and other reasons for leaving

TCAT will use the information we obtain to analyse any gaps present in our equality documentary evidence, including the Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

# Publishing information

TCAT will publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the Act. TCAT will publish information relating to persons within the TCAT community who share relevant protected characteristics, these will include:

* TCAT employees where the total number of employees exceeds 150
* Other persons affected by the TCAT’s policies and procedures

TCAT will not provide this information if:

* The employee is employed under contract personally to do work
* The employer does not have, and it is not reasonably practicable for the employer to obtain the data

TCAT will publish findings within our annual report.

When TCAT exceeds 250 employees, we will publish the following information annually with regard to the gender pay gap:

* The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male and female full-pay relevant employees
* The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male and female full-pay relevant employees
* The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male and female employees
* The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male and female employees
* The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid bonus pay
* The proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in lower, lower middle, upper middle, and upper quartile pay bands

The above information will be updated and published annually on the TCAT website in a manner that is accessible to all its employees and to the public for a period of at least three years from the publication date.

# Promoting equality

TCAT’s Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and LGBTQ+ Policy set out our approach to promoting equality and diversity across the whole TCAT community.

# Addressing prejudice-related incidents

TCAT and our schools are opposed to all forms of prejudice.TCAT will ensure that pupils and staff are aware of the impact of prejudice. Individual school leadership will address any incidents immediately and, where appropriate, report them to the Executive Leadership, the respective Local Governing Body (LGB) and the LA.

Any reports of bullying and prejudice will be carefully monitored and dealt with accordingly. Regular training will be given to all staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying.

# Complaint’s procedures

TCAT aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure. Any person, including a member of the public, is able to make a complaint about the provision of facilities or services that TCAT provides.

TCAT will adhere to the Complaints Policy and Procedures to ensure a straightforward, impartial, non-adversarial process, which allows a full and fair investigation, respects confidentiality and delivers an effective response and, appropriate redress. If a complaint has completed TCAT’s process and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to appeal, as outlined in the Complaints Policy and Procedures.

TCAT works to develop good professional relationships between colleagues; however, we understand that sometimes conflicts may arise. Through maintaining open communication, we want our staff to feel able to raise any grievances so that appropriate and effective solutions can be put in place. Grievances raised by staff members will be processed in accordance with our Grievance Policy and Procedures.

# Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the published schedule at the front of this document and at any point material changes require it by the Executive Headteacher/CEO and Chief Finance Officer in conjunction with the Executive Leader for Safeguarding and Inclusion, Headteachers/Heads of School, and the Trust Board. Any changes made to the policy will be amended by the Executive Headteacher/CEO and will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is 31st August 2028.

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| Signed by: | | | |
|  | Executive Headteacher/CEO | Date: |  |
|  | Chair of the Trust Board | Date: |  |