



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

Issued: September 2021
Review: Term 1 annually
LST: AWI

THE MNSP (THE TRUST) EQUALITY ACT POLICY

1. Purpose of Statement and Guiding Principals

The purpose of this statement is to define the Trusts commitment to equality and diversity and represents our commitment to a common set of values and objectives, and a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring the statement.

The Trust and its member academies/schools is committed to equality in both employment and education provision. We aim to ensure that students, parents, governors, trustees, employees, contractors, partners, clients and those who may potentially join the Trust community, are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect.

This policy encompasses the following protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;
- sex (including transgender);
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation; and
- marriage and civil partnership (for employees)

The Trust recognises that it is also unlawful to discriminate by association or perception, e.g. treating a student unfairly based on the Protected Characteristics of their parents or other family members.

This statement recognises the four types of unlawful behaviour

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

Every possible step will be taken into account in the aim of ensuring individuals are treated fairly and decisions are based on objective criteria.

2. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Trust and its member academies/schools are fully aware of the requirement, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Due regard means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty. For the Trust and its member academies/schools this means that:

- We will be aware of the duty and have due regard when making decisions and will assess whether it may have a particular implication for people with a particular protected characteristic.
- We will consider equality implications before and the time a policy is developed and will keep those implications under review on a continuing basis.
- We will ensure that the duty is integrated into the carrying out of the school/THE TRUST functions.

In accordance with its obligations under the [Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), THE TRUST will draw up and publish equality objectives ([Appendix 1](#)) every four years and annually publish information ([Appendix 2](#)) demonstrating how it is meeting the aims of the public sector equality duty. Where there are school specific objectives such objectives will be published for that individual school.

3. Links with Other Policies or Legislation

This statement applies to every policy, procedure and guidance document that is produced in relation to students, staff, parents and Governors.

This statement is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 (“the Equality Act”).

Other Trust policies which link to this statement are:

- SEN Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy
- All Employment Policies

4. Equality Statement

The Trust will ensure that equal opportunities and the principles of fairness underpin all aspects of policy, procedure, education provision, consultation and decision making.

The Trust is committed to equality in its delivery of education, whether or not the service is directly provided by us or contracted out to a third party provider.

The Trust aims to provide high quality education services, making sure services are easily accessible. We will improve what we do by continuing to consult with staff, students, parents and governors, their communities and partners about equalities issues. We will promote our equal opportunities policy in our contact with parents, staff, governors and external organisations.

We will make every effort in creating equality of opportunity in order to ensure they are accessible and fair to everyone. Every person has the right to be treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, disability, age culture, religion, nationality or caring responsibilities.

Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments, or additional support, to ensure equality of access to an education and suitable working environment.

Our staff and governors who agree and deliver our education provision will recognise diversity and demonstrate a proactive approach in their day-to-day work. They will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, recognising special needs and understanding differences.

Behaviour will reach our high standards of conduct (staff and students) and the learning environment we provide will be safe and accessible for those studying and working.

The Trust will adhere to statutory Government legislation and give consideration to other relevant guidance, which aim to make sure that everyone is treated with equity.

The Trust will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against members of the academy/school community.

5. Employment

The Trust is committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to jobs, training, and professional development opportunities

All employment policies refer to the provisions of the Equality Act.

The Trust recognises that it has broader responsibilities to employees and situations that may be covered by the Act. For example, an employee with parental or caring responsibilities for a disabled dependent may have rights under the Act which the Academy would need to consider.

All recruitment will be undertaken with regard to the obligations set down by the Equality Act and applications will be monitored to report on recruitment activity, in line with the Act.

Age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment, but does not apply to students in the academies/schools.

Employees who are in breach of this statement will be dealt with under the THE TRUST disciplinary policy.

6. Student Provisions

The Trust and its member academies/schools will ensure that students are provided with appropriate support to recognise their individual needs. This includes protection under the Act extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students.

All policies relating to the provision of education, the curriculum, behaviour for learning, attendance, exclusion, medical treatment and Child Protection and safeguarding policies should consider the provisions and duties of the Act.

7. Contractors and Service Providers

The Trust will ensure that all service providers that are contracted to provide services to students, staff or visitors will comply with Equalities legislation.

Where services are deemed not to meet Trust standards, in relation to equal opportunities and fairness, contracts may be terminated.

The Trust Equalities Objectives

In setting our objectives for we are guided by the following 9 principles:

1. All learners are of equal value
2. Recognise and respect difference
3. Foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
4. Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
5. Aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
6. Consult and involve widely
7. Society as a whole should benefit
8. Base our practices on sound evidence
9. Measurable objectives

Objectives - Agreed and Published Sept 2019 *(to be reviewed annually and updated every 4 years (2023)).*

- By the end of the school year, the percentage of boys in key stage 2 achieving age related expectation in writing will be at the national level at least for KS1 and KS2.
- By the end of the school year, progress for boys in English at GCSE will be Progress 8 (0) for the Trust.
- Disadvantaged children will make progress in line with 'others' nationally at all key stages.
- Children with a special educational need or a disability, will make progress in line with 'others' nationally at all key stages.
- We will work to ensure that there is more equal representation of genders in each of the four quartiles of pay in the Trust.
- We will ensure that there are more people with protected characteristics on our Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies.
- We will ensure that all children and staff no matter their sexual orientation are treated fairly and supported.

In order to satisfy the public sector equality duty we have undertaken the following over the last academic year (2020/21):

a) Eliminating discrimination:

- We have published clear policies relating to behaviour, bullying, recruitment and pay where the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct is expressly set out.
- Our Trust Board and LGB meetings discuss and reinforce equality duties.
- We have supported staff training on equality issues.
- We have worked across school to support the BLM movement and raise awareness of unconscious bias
- We have adopted as our charity of the year the Stephen Lawrence Foundation and provided funds raised at school charity events to the foundation for their work with children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

b) Advancing equality of opportunity:

- We publish achievement data showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing.
- We have published clear plans in the Trust and School Improvement Plans to show our focus on pupils with different characteristics.
- We collect data and adjust programmes where necessary, to ensure pupils with different characteristics can access educational visits and extra-curricular activities.
- We have provided post 16 students with bursaries to support their studies.
- We have supported PP and SEND children during lockdown by having them in school and ensuring they have electronic devices to work on. To date the Trust has provided over 2,500 electronic devices for use by children.

c) Fostering good relations

- Our curriculum offer across all schools (published on websites), highlights a curriculum which promotes tolerance or understanding of others (e.g. religion, culture, race, etc.).
- We have robust anti-bullying policies.
- We use assemblies to focus on equality issues.
- All schools work with the local community or other schools to encourage appreciation of diversity.
- We have engaged with outside speakers to raise awareness of issue relating to discrimination.

Annual report for 2019/20 on objectives set:

- **By the end of the school year, the percentage of boys in key stage 2 achieving age related expectation in writing will be at the national level at least for KS1 and KS2.**

This was largely achieved in 2019 and 2020 and therefore at KS2 the gap between boys and girls has been reduced.

- **By the end of the school year, progress for boys in English at GCSE will be Progress 8 (0) for the Trust.**

This was achieved in 2020, but not achieved in 2019. This remains an area of focus for the Trust secondary schools.

- **Disadvantaged children will make progress in line with 'others' nationally at all key stages.**

This was achieved across the Trust at Primary school and in the secondaries. However, some individual schools still have a significant gap between the performance of disadvantaged children and 'others'.

- **Children with a special educational need or a disability, will make progress in line with 'others' nationally at all key stages.**

SEND children in 2019 and 2020 made good progress across the Trust at primary schools and secondary schools. In 2019 the composite P8 score for SEND children was +0.28. In 2019 Norton Hill, Somervale, St Dunstan's and Beechen Cliff had positive progress 8 scores for SEND children

- **We will work to ensure that there is more equal representation of genders in each of the four quartiles of pay in the Trust.**

There are significantly more female employees now in both the upper quartile and upper middle quartiles and male employees. The gender pay gap for the Trust has reduced by 3% over the last 2 academic years.

- **We will ensure that there are more people with protected characteristics on our Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies.**

The Trust Board now has ethnic minority representation. There is also ethnic minority representation on a number of LGBs.

- **We will ensure that all children and staff no matter their sexual orientation are treated fairly and supported.**

We are actively involved in a number of projects to raise awareness of the issues of sexual orientation. We have programmes in all schools via PSHE to ensure children are informed about protected characteristics and their role in supporting integration and valuing people who may be different to themselves. We have taken a tough stance on homophobic, racist and all other prejudicial behaviours including when necessary, permanent exclusion from school. The rates of inappropriate behaviour and language in our schools is very low and reduce on previous years.

Some very pleasing progress has been made over the last 12-18 months on the objectives set. However, there is still further work to be done to ensure that the work undertaken by the Trust to satisfy the objectives is embedded in our every-day practice.