



Flourish
Learning Trust

Equality and Objectives 2023-2026

Key Elements

This document sets out how Flourish Learning Trust meets its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and related objectives.

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Trustees

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1. What Is Unlawful Behaviour?	1
2. Context	2
3. Aims	2
4. Promoting Equality and Access.....	4
5. Roles and Responsibilities	5
6. Further Equality Objectives	6



1. Introduction

This document sets out how the Trust's schools and services carry out its legal and moral duty to stand against discrimination, tackle inequalities and meet the duties of the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards, as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

This policy is an umbrella policy, which covers, and is inseparably linked to, every other Trust/school's policy including those relating to human resources, safeguarding, health and safety and our code of conducts.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades within our Trust, including senior managers, full/part-time and permanent/fixed-term employees, trainees, volunteers, agency staff (collectively referred to as 'employees', 'staff' or 'workers' in this policy) and all those from all tiers within our Trust governance structure

The principles of non-discrimination, equality and equity of opportunity also apply to the way in which we all treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members. As an employer, the Trust cannot discriminate against our staff, or treat them less favourably because of their:

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

1.1. What Is Unlawful Behaviour?

The "unlawful behaviour" outline in the Equality Act 2010 includes:

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- discrimination arising from disability
- harassment
- victimisation

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools, to comply with the Public-Sector Equality Duty and two further specific duties:

1. The Public-Sector Equality Duty or 'general duty': this requires all public organisations, including schools, to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
 - Foster good relations between different groups.



2. Two 'specific duties': these require all public organisations, including schools, to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty.
- Publish specific and measurable Equality objectives at least every 4 years.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way the Trust complies with this can be found in our Recruitment Policy. All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against, or harass, other members of staff, regardless of their status. Please refer to the Trust Dignity at Work Statement and managers guidance.

2. Context

Our schools are based in the London Borough of Waltham Forest that falls within the top 20 most diverse areas in the country. It is estimated that 47% of residents are from a minority ethnic background. Waltham Forest is ranked as the 18th most diverse borough in England and Wales. It is also estimated that 40% of the Waltham Forest's residents were born outside the UK with 15% of residents arriving in the last decade. This context is reflected in our pupils that attend the trust's community of schools'.

We work hard to ensure our workforce mirrors this the local community and to consider and support our pupils' experience in a diverse society.

National and local information over recent years shows that BME children and young people and/or those with special needs and disabilities can be:

- Over-represented amongst those who are excluded from school
- Likely to experience poverty,
- can experience hate in the community and on our streets more than any other group
- are more likely to have poor health outcomes
- disabled and black and minority ethnic communities are more likely to be isolated from community and cultural activities.

3. Aims

As a specialist education Trust, we recognise that, in the very nature of what we do, inclusion is at the forefront of our organisation. The Trust exists in order to support children and young people with Education and Health Care Plans, who might otherwise be disadvantaged by reason of their special educational needs and broad range of abilities.

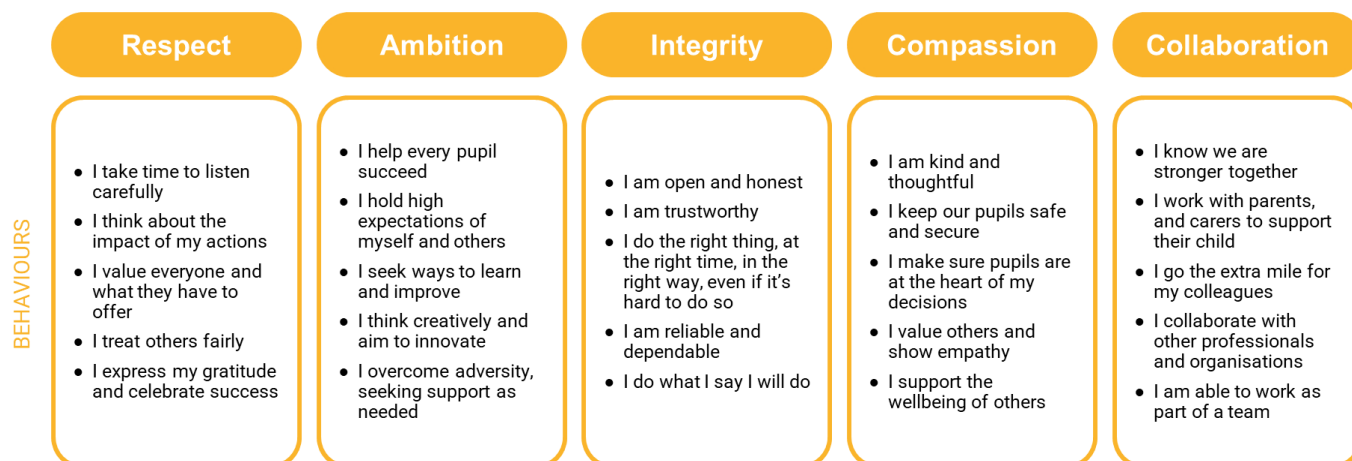
Flourish Learning Trust aims to foster diverse and inclusive communities where our pupils and staff are able to thrive and fulfil their full potential, giving them the best opportunities in life that we can. We embrace and value diversity and pride ourselves in being strong advocates for inclusion, equity and equality for all.

The Trust's work is guided by our ethos of ***enjoyment, achievement and wellbeing for all:***



- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Advancing equality and equity of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Our values underpin our approach to promoting and embracing equality. We aim to integrate them into our day-to-day work with our children and young people, staff and wider stakeholders. These are:



Our aims and approach to equality are based on the following 5 key principles:

1. **Everyone is of equal value;** whatever their age, ability, ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status; whatever their sex, gender and gender identity, and sexual orientation; whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background.
2. **We recognise, respect, embrace and value difference;** understanding and promote the idea that diversity is a strength.
3. **We foster positive attitudes and relationships;** actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. **We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging;** so that all members of our community to feel a sense of belonging within the Trust's schools, services and wider community. Also, to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully within the Trust and our schools.
5. **We observe good equalities practice;** *ensuring that policies and procedures benefit all pupils, employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.*

In respect of our **pupils**, this means we strive to:

- provide a personalised curriculum where all pupils can make progress, whatever their starting point and whatever their disability;
- support all pupils to feel cared for and valued and encourage them to treat other people with care and respect;
- provide a range of learning activities and resources which are relevant and interesting to all pupils;
- celebrate the diversity of our community and support pupils to learn about the community around them;
- develop pupils' self-advocacy skills;
- encourage those pupils who can do so to recognise and challenge unfairness and discrimination.

In respect of our **staff**, this means we strive to:

- build a workforce at all levels which reflects our community;



- offer a range of family-friendly employment policies, flexible working arrangements and staff engagement forums, alongside exceptional personal and professional development opportunities.
- treat all staff equally, fairly and with respect, whatever their role and whether they are temporary, part-time or full-time;
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all;
- ensure that individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued;
- provide all staff with access to high-quality continued professional development which meets their needs;
- ensure that all staff have opportunities to progress in their career, with decisions based on merit;
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

4. Promoting Equality and Access

- The schools' curriculum intent and implementation will ensure that all pupils make progress from their starting points, within 'pathways' reflecting different needs, further differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils and their preferred learning styles.
- We offer a range of qualifications and accredited courses so that all children and young people have external recognition for their achievements and are enabled in their next stage of education or employment
- School leaders review progress evidence to check whether there is any sign that any group is making less progress
- Positive Behaviour Strategies underpin related policy and practices
- The Staff Code of Conduct sets out clear expectations for all Trust staff at every level
- The Trust provides supported internships (Project Search), supporting young people with SEND to move into full time employment
- The curriculum includes education for a diverse society at a level appropriate to different groups of pupils. The school environment shows positive images of people across the whole community. Wall displays, newsletters, electronic images on digital signage and the school website celebrate how all pupils at Whitefield can enjoy learning and achieve.
- A strong, bespoke offer of Augmented, Alternative, Communication (AAC) is designed for pupils to support with communication.
- The Trust has invested in facilities on site so that children and young people for whom SEND might be a barrier in the community are able to enjoy swimming, sports, adventure play and soft play.
- The PSHE/ SED curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that all children and young people are supported to be part of the school community and equipped to live and work alongside other people in adult life.
- The Trust expects all members of the community to respect and value different faiths. A cycle of fortnightly themes includes the faiths represented within the community.
- The Trust's admissions process ensures that all potential pupils are treated equally regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief
- The schools work actively to support children and families who are disadvantaged and children who are looked after so that deprivation will not be a barrier to achievement or wellbeing.
- The schools' have a dedicated leader for Children who are Looked After to monitor the progress and wellbeing of children and young people who might be disadvantaged by reason of their life experience.
- Access for wheelchair users and/or people with movement difficulties is supported through the use of lifts in all building with floors above ground level
- Lifts with bigger capacity are available in Margaret Brearley School due to the higher percentage of pupils with physical needs.



- The Trust values continued professional development for all staff to ensure that current practice meets the needs of pupils.
- The Trust's recruitment process ensures that all applicants are treated equally regardless of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age.
- The Trust recognises and follows its responsibility to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable staff with a disability to contribute to the school.
- The schools and services take account of its duties in preparing annual School Improvement or Service Plans each year, also identifying how Pupil or other Premium Funds will be spent and in its ongoing monitoring of the quality of education.
- School and Trust policies take due account of the Equality Act.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees will:

- Ensure that schools and services in the Trust policies comply with the equalities legislation
- Identify a committee and link trustee to oversee the application of this policy, discuss key issues and how they are being addressed and report back to the Board.
- Review the KPIs and reports produced by the executive to ensure that no protected group is disadvantaged and that funding to promote equality is used effectively
- Ensure that the CEO takes account of this policy in monitoring the Trust's services and operations

Trust and school leaders will:

- Act as role models to promote an understanding of equality and diversity and to show that they value everyone equally in line with the Trust's values
- Keep the equality objectives under review, make every effort to put them into plans and practices and act to address any issues.
- Ensure that staff receive training in equalities and are aware of the Trust's objectives for equality and access
- Ensure that the curriculum as taught to children and young people prepares them for life in modern Britain
- Monitor pupils' progress and wellbeing, identifying and addressing any variations between different groups
- Monitor how the staff whom they line manage behave towards other members of the school community and that any concerns are followed up quickly and fairly, using the Trust's misconduct policy where appropriate. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- Make opportunities for professional development and progress available to all staff, encouraging them to develop their full potential and to use their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the pupils
- Work within fair employment practices and procedures and update them to take account of any changes
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

All school staff will:

- Behave in a positive, professional and respectful manner towards all other members of the community, in line with the Trust's values
- Treat all pupils in their care equally with care, concern and respect



- Provide a range of learning activities and resources which are relevant and interesting to all pupils
- Support pupils to celebrate the diversity of our community and to learn about the community around them
- Encourage those pupils who can do so to recognise and challenge unfairness and discrimination
- Follow up any incidents or complaints which may indicate discrimination, bullying or lack of respect by challenging the perpetrator directly, by alerting the class teacher in the case of a pupil or by making a report to the appropriate line manager
- Understand the potential consequences of any act of bullying, harassment or victimization
- Conduct themselves so as to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Be aware of, and work towards, the objectives as set out in sections 5 and 6

6. Further Equality Objectives

The Executive Team have identified the following priority objectives for equality and access for 2023-26

- To review and audit girls' access to enrichment activities in sport and expressive arts and take any necessary action to ensure equality of opportunity
- To enable all children and young people to participate in high quality enrichment and clubs
- To offer more opportunities to learn off site
- Increase the number of supported internships places the Trust offer for 19–25-year-olds
- Train external agencies to promote equality and inclusion in the pupils' wider community and local amenities
- To continue to improve access to and around the site for people with a physical disability by further developing the reception area
- To provide a wider range of qualification on offer and work experience opportunities for pupils
- Introduce flexible working for staff
- To further development of practice to support mental health and emotional wellbeing for staff, children and young people.
- To complete an annual survey of staff regarding their perception of equalities within the Trust and to identify relevant objectives based on the outcomes of the survey.