



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Version 2

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Name of Responsible Committee/Individual:	Trust Board
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Target Audience:	All stakeholders
Related Documents: All TEAL policies and procedures referred to are located on the TEAL website, www.theeducationalliance.org.uk. All TEAL policies are available in alternative formats. If you require assistance/translation, please contact the HR Department. This policy has been equality impact assessed, as detailed in section 3.	The Equality Act 2010 Worker Protection Act 2024 Grievance Procedure Complaints Procedure Expectations and Code of Conduct Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 Flexible Working Policy Women at Work Policy Whistleblowing Policy (Prevention of) Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Policy

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POLICY STATEMENT

We are here to make great schools and happier, stronger communities so that people have better lives.

TEAL does not accept any form of discrimination from staff, pupils, visitors or third-party contractors.

Equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. TEAL is fully committed to eliminating unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings. TEAL will not discriminate because of age, disability, class, gender identity/reassignment, gender dysphoria, transgender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values openness, fairness and transparency.

As an educational establishment, we are well positioned to educate not only our pupils, but our staff and the communities we serve. It is our aspiration to build a culture where difference is valued, understood and respected.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

There are statutory requirements detailed under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives
- The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, links the Worker Protection Act to EDI and introduced a new preventative duty requiring employers to take proactive steps against sexual harassment in the workplace. The Act mandates that employers must take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees, which is enforceable as an unlawful act under the Equality Act. The Act aims to create a safer more inclusive work environment.

In developing this policy, the Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools, has also been considered.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, to publish:

- Equality objectives, at least every four years
- Information to demonstrate compliance with the public sector equality duty annually

This policy represents a commitment to a common set of values and objectives. All schools within TEAL are committed to advancing and achieving equality of opportunity for all, and we believe that everyone is entitled to equality of opportunity and that our diversity enriches our community. All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and could be managed in line with TEAL's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Develop an ethos which respects and values all people
- Actively advance equality of opportunity
- Prepare pupils to embrace a life in a diverse society
- Promote good relations amongst people within the communities within which we work
- Eliminate all forms of unfair indirect and direct discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or other oppressive behaviour across TEAL
- Deliver equality and diversity through our TEAL and school policies, procedures, training and practice
- Take all reasonable steps to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to school provision and activities for staff and pupils
- Take effective action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups who may feel their progress has been impacted by protected characteristics, stereotyping and cultural misconceptions
- Monitor the implementation of equality and diversity within our schools and organisation
- Ensure that our policies and procedures are fair, transparent and in line with our culture and ethos, and our legal and statutory responsibilities
- Ensure decisions, behaviours and actions align with our ethical leadership framework

The policy applies to all employees including casual workers, members, trustees and governors, volunteers, third party contractors, visitors and pupils. The policy underpins TEAL and school policies and procedures.

Church of England Schools

Since 2019, TEAL has welcomed a number of Church of England schools into the trust, we believe the values of this policy are embedded within the values set out by the Diocesan Board of Education, highlighted in an agreed statement to root the work they do:

'As a Church organisation, the Board of Education believes that Equity, Diversity, and Justice is at the heart of all that we do. As Christians we are charged to "love one another" and treat everyone with dignity and respect. We recognise and celebrate the vast diversity in our Diocese knowing that every single one of us is made in God's image and is unconditionally loved by God.

We aim to create an environment where everyone feels valued, everyone feels included, and everyone feels that they belong. We must be bold and courageous and challenge discrimination and prejudice in all its various forms wherever it occurs.

We do these things not just because they are the right things to do, but with Jesus as our role model, it is what we are charged to do. We do because Jesus did.'

The Trust's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion extends to all individuals, irrespective of their faith or beliefs.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Trust Board** is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently across TEAL. The Board will ensure that TEAL's published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.

The Trust Board delegates responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives and their impact in our schools to Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs).

The **CEO** is responsible for ensuring that all stakeholders adhere to this policy. They will ensure that suspected breaches are investigated, and breaches are managed swiftly, effectively, fairly and consistently.

The **HR Team** are responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy and associated procedures. The team will ensure appropriate EDI training is provided as part of the new starter procedure and also ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently alongside annual refresher training for all staff. HR Team will provide data and reports to Trust Board, CEO and Headteachers on EDI concerning received complaints, grievances and disciplinary actions.

Leaders and managers are accountable for driving EDI initiatives within their school as well as sharing ideas and best practice with other colleagues, for the benefit of all staff and pupils of The Education Alliance. They must ensure the policy is implemented fairly and equitably, seeking guidance, training, clarification and support as and when required.

All **employees** must promote equality and diversity, and they must actively respond to any incidents of unfair discrimination related to protected characteristics perpetuated by pupils, staff or visitors. If employees have queries or concerns, they should speak to their line manager or HR for further advice and guidance.

Local Governing Bodies and Headteachers are responsible for monitoring the application of this policy within their respective schools, ensuring our schools are inclusive learning and working environments, providing a high-profile lead on equality and diversity, advancing equality and diversity inside and outside school. They must ensure school policies and procedures comply with all equality legislation.

Pupils are responsible for respecting others in their language, behaviours and actions and they must adhere to our equality and diversity policies, procedures and practices.

Leaders and HR will work collaboratively with recognised **trade union partners** to develop, review, and implement EDI policies, ensuring they are fair, inclusive, and reflective of the needs and views of the workforce.

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

TEAL is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines
- Delivering high-quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its pupil population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged
- Ensuring anyone with a protected characteristic, or characteristics, as described within the Equality Act 2010 does not experience discrimination (e.g. age, disability, sex, gender identity/reassignment, gender dysphoria, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership).
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Encouraging people to bring their whole, authentic self to work and school, with the knowledge that TEAL values difference and diversity.

Equality Impact Assessments enable TEAL to consider any direct or indirect impact a policy, procedure, guide or change might have on people with protected characteristics. Evidence gathering can assist with monitoring and evaluation processes (e.g. trend analysis) to assist TEAL in understanding if an unintended impact has occurred. Equality impact assessments support evidence-based decisions, transparency and consideration of equality issues. This policy has been equality impact assessed, and any risks associated with protected characteristics have been addressed, such as ensuring that the policy includes all protected characteristics. The objectives detailed in section 5 highlight the priority areas that require attention, enabling TEAL to strengthen its approach in these areas over the next few years.

4. OUR DUTY

We are aware of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and whilst TEAL complies with non-discrimination provisions it aims to go above and beyond legal and statutory requirements to ensure each school operates in a climate where difference is valued and understood, where everyone experiences equal opportunities and where everyone feels part of an inclusive community. Reports and policies that go before the Trust Board have a cover sheet that includes an equality-impact assessment, and the Trust Board reviews this as part of its decision-making processes and discussions.

Policies include reference to the importance of promoting equality and diversity, employees and officers of TEAL are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings and via training and development. New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction.

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, TEAL aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people which are connected to a particular characteristic, or characteristics they have (e.g. pupils and staff with disabilities, or gay pupils or staff who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who have a particular characteristic, or characteristics (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils or staff to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic, or characteristics to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

TEAL aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Creating an inclusive workplace where individuals of all ages are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. We are committed to preventing age discrimination, harassment and victimisation, valuing the contribution of employees at every stage of their career and believe that a workforce inclusive of different age groups strengthens our organisation through diverse perspectives, skills and experiences.
- For staff, promoting tolerance, awareness inclusivity and understanding through our training and development programmes on protected characteristics.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies, and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local communities. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups and other underrepresented groups to speak at assemblies and organising school trips and activities based around the local community. This also includes encouraging staff to attend assemblies as part of their learning and development, and to act as role models for pupils.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with any tensions which may arise between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, school councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. Our schools work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.
- Encourage participation when representation is disproportionately low.
- Actively seeking the feedback of underrepresented groups through staff and pupil voice.

In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court made a significant ruling that changes how "sex" is interpreted under the Equality Act 2010. According to the judgment, the legal definitions of "man" and "woman" now refer to biological sex, not gender identity – even if someone holds a Gender Recognition Certificate. The Trust, will continue to make decisions on a case by case basis, whilst taking into account this judgement.

We continue to develop links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

TEAL considers equality, diversity and inclusion in its decision-making, and our schools always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, our schools considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for all

The school keeps a written record of equality impact assessments to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment before planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

TEAL is required to publish information relating to those who share a relevant protected characteristic who are affected by our policies and practices. This means we are required to publish the demographic information for each of our schools for the 9 protected characteristics, for pupils and staff, ensuring that individuals aren't identifiable through the data we publish. As well as protected characteristics, we aim to improve inclusion, therefore this policy not only considers our legal and statutory obligations but also considers how TEAL can become more inclusive. For example, the equality, diversity and inclusion action plan includes socio-economic background and class, recognising that this can have an adverse impact on a pupil's ability to fully engage in all school activities and opportunities. This policy also widens the scope of EDI to include intersex and ableism. We aim to create a culture of acceptance, utilising whole school training sessions to raise awareness and educate staff and pupils on the use of appropriate language. Wider stakeholder involvement will enable pupil and staff voice to influence the development and implementation of meaningful, effective action plans that include the curriculum, pastoral activities, workforce and culture.

We aim to advance equality of opportunity, and we publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing. This data is analysed to determine strengths and areas for improvement, and appropriate actions are implemented in response to the information collated. TEAL also considers trends in data and makes evidence available for identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying). TEAL publishes data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our pupils.

We are also committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all staff. We analyse workforce data, including protected characteristics, across key areas such as recruitment, progression, grievances and disciplinary processes. This enables us to identify trends, address any disproportionality and take action to ensure fair, inclusive and unbiased practices.

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which took effect on 26 October 2024, introduces significant changes to workplace protections. This legislation creates a new preventative duty requiring employers to take proactive steps against sexual harassment.

Understanding what law covers sexual harassment in the workplace is essential for compliance. Organisations must now implement comprehensive measures to protect staff not only from colleagues but also from third parties such as pupils, visitors, and contractors.

The Act introduces the possibility of increased compensation of up to 25% for successful claims where employers have not met their preventative duties. Organisations must conduct regular risk assessments to identify potential areas of concern and implement appropriate preventative measures.

See our (Prevention of) Sexual Harassment at Work Policy for further details.

Our Trust is committed to fostering inclusive, respectful environments by actively challenging all forms of extremism—including far-right ideologies—through staff training, open dialogue, and curriculum approaches that promote critical thinking, diversity, and mutual respect.

5. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives should align with TEAL and school priorities. They should be achievable, considering the size and circumstances of the school. In developing our objectives, we have considered the following potential aims:

- increase participation
- Close performance gaps through targeted support that lifts attainment, without diminishing high performance.
- reduce exclusion rates
- increase understanding between religious groups
- reduce number of homophobic incidents
- raise attainment in a specific subject
- encourage non-stereotyped career options
- anticipate needs of incoming pupils from a new group, such as Traveller children.

Our objectives for 2026-2030 are to:

1. Cut the incidence of sexually inappropriate behaviour, language and misogyny between pupils.
2. Cut the incidence of gender bias.
3. Reduce the impact of social deprivation, socio-economic status and class and improve the involvement of pupils and families affected by these issues.
4. Increase support for LGBTQIA pupils and staff, ensuring that pupils and staff can bring their whole selves to work and school, whether they choose to disclose or not, and feel they are in a safe inclusive environment, as well as providing staff and pupils with someone to speak to, should they need to, increasing engagement and understanding.
5. Acknowledge the inequalities and challenges women at work face, and look to reduce those inequalities and challenges, increasing understanding and equipping staff through education, signposting and support, with specific reference to menopause.
6. Ensure that proactive steps are taken by TEAL in relation to the preventative requirements of the Worker Protection Act 2023.
7. Continue to signpost opportunities for flexible working, including flexible working in adverts and encouraging staff and managers to consider options for flexible working for the diverse range of roles we have across our organisation.
8. Enhance leaders and managers' understanding of neurodivergence and how to support staff that may require adjustments.
9. Update all relevant EDI data into the new HR system to enhance reporting mechanisms, including the option for self-service updates.
10. Utilise workforce data to monitor equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes regularly reviewing data relating to protected characteristics in relation to complaints, grievances and disciplinary processes to identify and address any potential bias or disproportionality.
11. Continue to work towards increasing recruitment diversity to fully represent the local communities we serve, in teaching and non-teaching roles.
12. Actively engage with staff from the broad range of protected groups within the trust.
13. Develop core and optional educational content on protected characteristics including neurodiversity, specifically for managers to utilise when leading their teams.
14. Continue to develop current, and look to encourage new, identity networks to support our LGBTQIA+, global majority and other protected communities.

6. BREACHES

If an employee feels that any member of the organisation has not treated them in accordance with this policy, they have right of complaint via TEAL's Grievance Procedure. Where an individual not employed by TEAL feels an employee, manager or officer of TEAL has discriminated against them, they should refer to TEAL's Complaints Procedure.

All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated in a fair, transparent, and proportionate manner. TEAL recognises the importance of enabling individuals to raise genuine concerns without fear of victimisation or detriment.

However, where, following investigation, a complaint is found to have been made maliciously, in bad faith, or with a deliberate intent to mislead, this may be treated as a disciplinary matter. A distinction will always be made between complaints that are unsubstantiated but raised in good faith—which will not result in disciplinary action—and those that are intentionally false.

7. MONITORING COMPLIANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY

Effectiveness and compliance of this policy will be monitored on an annual basis.

8. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed within two years of the date of implementation via the JCNC.