

Ormiston Academies Trust

Equality Policy

Policy Version Control

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Policy prepared by (name and department)	Nicki Wadley – Head of Governance
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Name and date of line manager's approval	Julie Bloor, Executive Head and Regional Director.
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I. Policy statement and principles

I.1 Policy aims and principles

- To treat all individuals with equal value.
- To eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- To foster positive attitudes and good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (i.e. tackle prejudice and promote understanding).
- To take such steps as are reasonable to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- To take such steps as are reasonable to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- To provide a range of education and training programmes which encourage everyone to participate in learning.
- To ensure that recruitment, retention and development of staff is done so following the equality principles.
- To consider equality implications before and at the time that policies are developed as well as keeping them under review on a continual basis.
- To carry out equality impact assessments to assess whether policies and / or plans are having a negative or adverse, or positive impact on specific groups of individuals.
- To ensure that all marketing activities and procurement processes meet equality and diversity best practice.
- To respect the religious beliefs and practices of all individuals.

Prejudice, discrimination, and victimisation are not tolerated, and we work hard to instill a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others.

In both its delivery of services and the employment of its staff, Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) will ensure that no person will be discriminated against due to any of the protected characteristics as detailed in the Act. This includes discrimination due to association or perception (where it is believed that an individual has a particular characteristic). The characteristics protected by the act are:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In addition to this no employees will be discriminated against due to trade union membership or activities.

The Equality Act 2010 provides positive action provisions that allows OAT to use targeted measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of individuals with

particular protected characteristics. Such measures will only be used where they are considered proportionate in order to achieve the relevant aim.

This policy and the Equality Act deals with the way in which OAT treats its current and prospective staff but the relationship between one individual and another is not within its scope.

In the execution of its duties OAT will be required to gather data, report on progress and publicise information. OAT will ensure that this is done in line with the **OAT Data Protection Policy**.

We incorporate equality and diversity into everything we do. Equality and Diversity flows through our values and is an integral part of our business. This policy is consistent with all other policies adopted by OAT and is written in line with current legislation and guidance.

This policy should be read in conjunction with OAT's **Equality Objectives** (published at least every four years) and the Equality Information (published annually).

Any alleged breach of this policy will be taken seriously and where proven, breaches may lead to formal disciplinary action.

1.2 Complaints

All complaints are dealt with under the **OAT Complaints Policy**

Complaints should be made in writing and will follow the OAT complaint procedures and set timescales. The handling of complaints may be delegated to an appropriate person.

The outcome of the complaint will be communicated in writing.

1.3 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or in the following circumstances:

- in line with changes to the equality objectives
- changes in legislation and / or government guidance
- as a result of any other significant change or event
- in the event that the policy is determined not to be effective

If there are urgent concerns these should be raised to the Director or People and Projects in the first instance for them to determine whether a review of the policy is required in advance of the review date.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Key personnel

Director of People and Projects		Carmel Brown
Contact Details	Email	Carmel.brown@ormistonacademies.co.uk
	Telephone	0121 2624717
Chief Executive		
Contact Details	Email	CEO.Office@ormistonacademies.co.uk
	Telephone	0121 262 4700

Individuals are expected to take responsibility for supporting and promoting equality above and beyond the responsibilities listed below.

Ormiston Academies Trust

OAT is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the Equality Policy and to deal with unfair and / or unlawful discriminatory incidents. OAT will promote equality of opportunity and diversity opposing unlawful discrimination against any member of the OAT community. All staff will:

- be up to date and aware of their responsibilities in regards to equality
- report back to trustees immediately on any incidents relating to discrimination or victimisation, so that these incidents can be reviewed and action taken where necessary
- are aware that failure to comply with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary procedures to be followed

The Director of People and Projects

The Director of People and Projects is the first point of contact for any queries or concerns that arise relating to this policy. They will also:

- ensure that the equality information is published annually detailing how OAT is meeting its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED – otherwise known as the general duty)
- ensure that the equality objectives are reviewed and published every four years
- monitor equality outcomes, and regularly reports back to the trustees
- ensure that individuals are informed of any incident related to this scheme which could directly affect them
- consider all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice

3. Disability

The disability provisions in the Equality Act are different from those for the other protected characteristics in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction; it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. OAT may treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and therefore may have to make reasonable adjustments to practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit to the same extent that a person without that disability can.

OAT continuously considers and reviews its facilities and physical features to ensure that it is inclusive and accessible for all people as part of its general accessibility planning.

3.1 Making reasonable adjustments

OAT will make reasonable adjustments for individuals in the event that OAT does something that places a disabled person at a disadvantage compared to other people.

Auxiliary aids or services will be provided when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the person faces in comparison to non-disabled individuals.

[Guidance](#)¹ from the Equality and Human Rights Commission will be used to assist in determining when it would be reasonable for the academy to make adjustments.

¹ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice/>

4. Employment provisions

OAT is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

As an employer, OAT strives to ensure that discrimination and harassment is eliminated in our employment practice and we actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

OAT will not discriminate against a potential employee in respect of whether to offer a job or the terms on which a job is offered. With regards to existing employees, OAT will not discriminate against an individual in respect of the benefits, facilities and services it offers including training opportunities, promotion or dismissal (including discipline and suspension). All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit, ability and in *compliance with the law*.

OAT is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for employees or potential employees and will ensure that staff with disabilities have access to appropriate support in the form of aids, adaptations and other specialist services and will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage.

More information about our procedures relating to staff can be found in the following policies:

- **Appraisal Policy**
- **Discipline, Conduct and Grievance Policy**
- **Performance Management Policy**
- **Recruitment Policy**

4.1 Enquiries about health and disability

OAT will not enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work for the position that has been applied for.

In some instances OAT may decide to ask necessary health questions after a job offer has been made to an individual. In such a situation OAT will ensure that health-related questions are targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

4.2 Training

All staff will receive equal opportunities training which will include disability awareness / equality. This training will be part of staff induction as well as the CPD programme. All staff will receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

OAT will ensure that no member of staff is denied access to any form of training because of an inaccessible venue or because the provision does not account for their disability. Staff with disabilities will be actively encouraged to attend course which will support their career progression and personal development.

4.3 Staff discipline and suspension

OAT is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and consistently and this is held to account through our staff appraisal discipline, conduct, and grievance policies.

Staff performance will be monitored and we expect that staff will feel able to voice complaints and grievances in confidence, trusting that OAT will deal with their grievances fully, promptly, and fairly.

OAT puts great faith in all its employees, and hopes never to have to discipline anyone as a result of misconduct.