



NORTHAMPTON PRIMARY
ACADEMY TRUST PARTNERSHIP

Equality and Diversity Policy

Date approved by the NPAT Board of Trustees:	December 2021
Chair of Trustees Signature:	Jeremy Stockdale
Renewal Date*:	December 2024

*This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary if/when any changes are made to legislation that affect our Trust's practice. Otherwise, or from then on, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years and shared with the full Trust board.

1. Introduction

Northampton Primary Academy Trust (the trust) is inclusive; while of course we focus on the well-being and progress of every child, we are also committed to ensuring all members of our community are treated with fairness and equity. We believe that the Equality Act (2010) provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between all parties who come into contact with the trust. These parties include but are not limited to staff, pupils, parents, governors, suppliers and the wider community. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement. 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.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the trust takes positive action to eliminate all possibility of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the **Equality Act 2010** and to advance **equality** of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Our approach to equality is based on 6 key principles:

- a All parties are of equal value, whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, economic background, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background, whatever their sexual orientation and whether or not they are pregnant or new mothers.
- b We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to background, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation.
- c We believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- d We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our trust community to feel a sense of belonging within the trust and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in their school life.
- e We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development. See Section B which outlines our Equality commitment to our workforce.
- f We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole trust.

2. Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics which are referred to as 'protected characteristics' and include sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

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

The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty” requires all public organisations, including schools to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Two “specific duties” require all public organisations, including schools to:

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

This policy describes how the trust is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the trust is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

3. Northampton Primary Academy Trust aims, mission and equality objectives

The NPAT vision is *to achieve educational excellence, create opportunities and enrich lives.*

The NPAT mission is *to develop a multi-academy trust of highly effective and sustainable schools.*

We will ensure that the educational provision across our schools engenders the statutory, ethical and moral spirit of equality legislation to develop ALL children academically and holistically regardless of their background or need. This will include:

- Actively closing the gap in attainment and achievement between all groups of children but particularly focusing on those facing disadvantage, children from ethnic minority groups, children with disabilities or special educational needs and children who are looked after or previously looked after
- Delivering a balanced and well-planned curriculum, including PHSE, ensuring it contains non-stereotypical content in order to overcome preconceived ideas of gender, ethnic origin, culture or religion
- Promoting a positive self-image in all children and to respect their individuality
- Providing for all pupils according to their needs, not labels
- Ensuring equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and ethos of our schools
- Using well-planned curriculum resources such as books, materials and equipment that are multicultural and non-sexist, providing positive images of all groups
- Acknowledging the richness and diversity of British society and to help prepare children for their part in that society
- Developing a positive attitude to equal opportunity by all staff, parents, helpers, governors, children and all who participate in the school.
- Increasing the diversity of our workforce

4. What we do to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to use facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils –designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The trust ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

NPAT school's individual Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies and the Trust's Pupil Attendance and Exclusions policies take full account of our duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustments for pupils who have additional needs. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of overrepresentation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

5. What we do to promote equality of opportunity between different groups

All NPAT schools prepare and publish individual Inclusion Policies (incorporating SEND) which detail

- The specific actions they take to identify and close any gaps in learning using a range of teaching strategies that ensure that the needs of all pupils are met with specific attention focused on vulnerable groups.
- Procedures the school has in place to identify children who may have additional needs (SEND or otherwise) both prior to admission to the school and whilst attending the school.
- How they ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

Pupil attainment records, including attainment and progress of vulnerable groups, attendance data, exclusions and behaviour data are monitored at Trust level.

6. In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of all parties who come into contact with the trust and to foster good relations between different groups we;

- Review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires and parents' evening,
- Secure and analyse responses from staff Well-being survey, staff meetings and training events
- Review feedback and responses from individual children and groups of children
- Ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body and trust level

Section B

Equality & Diversity in the NPAT Workforce

- 1.1 Northampton Primary Academy Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.2 We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age; race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion, faith or belief (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and Governors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.
- 1.3 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. Your attention is drawn to our separate Bullying and Harassment policy.
- 1.4 This policy has been agreed following consultation with the trade unions and all staff employed by Northampton Primary Academy Trust.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. Who is covered by the policy?

- 2.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, employees, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff and governors (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

3. Who is responsible for this policy?

- 3.1 Northampton Primary Academy Trust has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the Chief Executive Officer with responsibility for equalities issues has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reporting on the progress made in achieving targets set by the Northampton Primary Academy Trust Board of Trustees. Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.
- 3.2 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. All members of staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. In certain circumstances the Northampton Primary Academy Trust Board of Trustees could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. Staff should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in School or on School-related business.

- 3.3 If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Chief Executive Officer to request training or further information.

4. Scope and purpose of the policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- 4.2 We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. Please see the following for specific information on our approach to these issues:
- a) Recruitment Policy
 - b) Code of Conduct for All Staff
 - c) Flexible Working Policy

5. Forms of discrimination

- 5.1 Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- 5.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.
- 5.3 Indirect discrimination is where there is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, a requirement to work full time adversely affects women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will be discriminatory unless it is objectively justified.
- 5.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- 5.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.
- 5.6 Disability discrimination; this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

6. Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

- 6.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

- 6.2 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

7. Discipline and Termination of Employment

- 7.1 We will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.
- 7.2 We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

8. Disability discrimination

- 8.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 8.2 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should speak to the Head Teacher to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Head Teacher may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 8.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff.

9. Fixed-term employees, Casual and Agency Workers

- 9.1 We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

10. Part-time work

- 10.1 We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

11. Breaches of this policy

- 11.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Policy. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment or bullying, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- 11.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in

good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.

- 11.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

12. Monitoring and review of the policy

- 12.1 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives and in light of developments in legislation that affect our Trust's practice.
- 12.2 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Chief Executive Officer.