

Equality & Diversity Policy

Audience:	REAch2 Staff Local Governing Bodies Trustees
Ratified:	REAch2 Executive Team REAch2 Finance and Resources Committee REAch2 Trust Board May 2026
Other related policies:	Admissions Policy Appraisal Policy Behaviour Management Policy Complaints Policy Dignity at Work Policy Disciplinary Policy Grievance Policy Redundancy Policy Safer Recruitment Policy SEND Policy Sickness Absence Policy Speak up at Work Policy Staff Code of Conduct
Policy owner:	Rowan Oliver, Director of People
Review:	Every three years

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.



Leadership

Finding the leader in all of us.



Inclusion

Realising the greatness in our difference.



Learning

Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.



Enjoyment

Loving what we do.



Inspiration

Feeling the power of the possible.



Integrity

Being courageously true to our purpose.



Responsibility

Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

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Policy Overview

This policy outlines the Trust's position on the embedding and promotion of equality and diversity. Specific policies and procedures are in place covering employees and children that should be referred to as necessary.

The ethos of 'Inclusion for All', as outlined in this policy, is applicable across all the Trust's schools delivered through policies, processes and procedures and embedded in our Touchstones.

REAch2 Academy Trust is committed to equality and diversity in an environment that promotes a culture of 'Inclusion for All'. This holistic approach helps us maintain an open and accessible working, living and learning environment where all are supported to reach their full potential.

This commitment is further embedded by our culture that strongly reflects our Touchstones: seven principles which make our schools unique, they are:

- Learning
- Leadership
- Enjoyment
- Responsibility
- Inspiration
- Inclusion
- Integrity

This policy has been developed in direct response to UK equality legislation as defined within the Equality Act 2010 and seeks to take a proactive and positive approach via our commitment to 'Inclusion for All'.

The Equality Act 2010 protects a range of groups from unlawful treatment under the term 'protected characteristics' covering:

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

This policy also covers the Trust's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires the Trust to pay 'due regard' to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization and any other conduct as prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advancing equal opportunities (between people that share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it);
- Fostering good relations (between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not).

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions.

The Trust's Public Sector Equality Duty Statement is attached as Appendix A.

The Trust's Equality Objectives are attached as Appendix B.

Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulations.

Key Definitions

Equality

The Equality and Human Rights Commission describes equality as: "ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, what they believe, or whether they have a disability".

Diversity

Diversity can be described as having or being composed of differing elements. In the context of this policy, diversity exists in both visible and non-visible ways through our employees, children and stakeholders having physical, religious and cultural differences; varied life experiences and choices and views and perspectives. The Trust aims to foster an environment in which diversity is promoted and celebrated through inclusion, respect and appreciation of one another.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination is the term used in law to describe a situation in which an individual is treated less favourably than someone else has been treated (or would be treated) because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic under the Equality Act. Unless there is a statutory exception, direct discrimination cannot be excused or defended in law.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when action is taken which appears to treat everyone equally, but which in practice leads to people from a particular protected group, under the Equality Act 2010, being treated less favourably than others. This may occur through the implementation of policies or procedures and will not be justified unless the action is needed to achieve a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have asserted their legal rights in line with the Equality Act 2010 or supported another individual to do so.

Harassment

Harassment can be described as unwanted conduct related to one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 which has the purpose or effect of violating the individual's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive environment

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy is relevant across the entire Trust.

As such all staff, children, visitors, contractors, subcontractors, and service providers, along with any other persons associated with the functions of the Trust, are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to this policy.

Further responsibilities have been outlined below:

The Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies

They are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust complies with equality legislation.
- Meeting requirements to publish measurable equality objectives.
- Ensuring Trust policies, procedures and strategies adopted are designed to support equality and diversity and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- Scrutinising recording and reporting procedures.
- Ensuring the schools / central team within the Trust adhere to the equality and diversity policy and other associated policies and procedures.

The Executive Team

They are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust complies with current equality legislation by regular monitoring;
- Ensuring that schools within the Trust implement the relevant equality and diversity policies and practices and that suitable training is provided by the Trust to senior staff to aid them to do so
- Providing consistent and high-profile leadership in relation to equality and diversity.
- Advancing equality and diversity inside and outside the Trust and schools by promoting a culture in which diversity is celebrated and in which discrimination and inequality are understood by all members of the community to be unacceptable.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Trust's environments properly accommodate people with disabilities.

Headteacher and Senior Leaders

They are responsible for:

- Ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and is readily available – governors, staff, children and families know about it.
- Setting an appropriate standard of behaviour, leading by example and ensuring that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the Trust's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.
- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out.
- Following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- Ensuring that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against.
- Promoting the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for children.

All Employees

They are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and co-operating with their line manager.
- Promoting equality and diversity through their own actions, their work within the Trust and avoiding unfair discrimination.
- Modelling good practice, treating others with respect and ensuring that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.
- Providing children with resources that give positive images and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups or genders.
- Actively responding to or reporting to management, as appropriate, any incidents of unfair discrimination which relate to protected characteristics perpetrated by children, other employees or stakeholders.
- Keeping up-to-date with equality requirements and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training to assist the Trust in meeting its Equality Duty.

Children

They are responsible for:

- Behaving in a way that is consistent with the expectations of the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy and other associated policies, such as the Behaviour Management Policy.
- Respecting others in their language and actions.

Stakeholders (including parents, regular visitors and volunteers)

They are responsible for:

- Behaving in a way that is consistent with the expectations of the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy and other associated policies.
- Respecting others in their language and actions and avoiding any discriminatory behaviour.

Objectives

Our Objectives are to:

- ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, challenging inequality and less favourable treatment
- promote diversity and equality for staff and children, recognising and valuing the contributions of our diverse population
- provide an environment that encourages disclosure of individual circumstances and supports change
- clearly demonstrate our commitment to creating an inclusive environment, tackling discrimination, and eradicating inappropriate behaviour across the Trust community.

We will achieve these objectives by:

- ensuring we understand our legal obligations and engaging positively with staff and children and representative groups to fulfil our legal requirements
- clear and consistent communication to staff, children, and representative groups
- providing access to training and support for staff to enable them to understand how equality and diversity is relevant to their roles and assist them in fully mainstreaming equality and diversity into their everyday activities
- undertaking equality and privacy impact assessment on all new and revised policies and procedures

- taking forward activities that meet our commitments and actively promote equality and diversity throughout the Trust community

Scope

There are several areas across the Trust that take a lead role in taking forward the functions of the Trust. The purpose of this policy is to draw linkages to those areas.

Employees

Equality and diversity is embedded throughout our employment practices to ensure that we are a positive and responsible employer.

- **Recruitment and Selection:** Inclusive practice in recruitment and selection is at the core of achieving equal opportunities in employment. The Trust has developed policies and procedures to ensure that decisions on appointments are made wholly on the grounds of the candidate's abilities rather than on any other criteria that cannot be shown to be properly justifiable. All those involved regularly in recruitment interviews will have attended specific recruitment and selection training, provided by the People Team or an alternative approved by the Director of People.
- **New employees:** All new employees must read this policy.
- **Equal Pay:** The Trust believes that staff should receive equal pay for like work. We are committed to undertaking equal pay audits and taking remedial action where necessary.
- **Performance Review and Development:** The Trust promotes appraisal meetings for all staff. Managers use this process to give feedback to individuals and provide clear guidance on their area of work. It provides a one-to-one opportunity for staff to raise issues of any kind with their line manager and to highlight individual development and support needs around equality and diversity
- **Training:** All employees will be given equal, fair and appropriate access to training and developmental opportunities to enable them to process within the Trust.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** The Trust will consider requests for reasonable adjustments from employees/applicants with disabilities to ensure they are not at a substantial disadvantage. Whether an adjustment is 'reasonable' will be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the effectiveness of the change, its cost and the resources available to the Trust"
- **Equality and Diversity Awareness:** All new entrants to the Trust are required to undertake mandatory online Equality & Diversity Training within the first three months of their employment.
- **Progression and Promotion:** The Trust is firmly committed to the principle that opportunities for progression and promotion should be available equally to all members of staff. To this end, it has developed policies and procedures to ensure that the criteria used for advancement and promotion are fair, open and that decisions are made consistently in accordance with published criteria. All staff involved in selection for progression and promotion will have undertaken equality and diversity training to help them reach unbiased judgments.
- **Grievance Procedures:** Any staff who have concerns about unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying are advised to contact the People Team. Should a staff member be in breach of this policy, they will be addressed with recourse to the Disciplinary Policy if necessary.

Child Related

Our community of children is a varied population at a range of different stages of study, this policy is relevant across all cohorts. At times, the functions outlined below may take place centrally or locally across the Trust.

- **Admissions:** We will ensure that no applicants are treated less favourably because of any protected characteristic. The Trust will take steps to ensure that the wellbeing of pupils is fully considered and that we meet legal requirements. Further information is in each of school's Admissions Policy.
- **Learning and Teaching:** We value the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that our children bring to our Trust community. We aim to ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment strategies are equitable, undertaken with awareness of the different needs of pupils and can foster academic and personal development. The Trust recognises that diversity should be reflected across all aspects of the curriculum. This is monitored at school level, by the Local Governing Body (LGB) and by the Education Committee on behalf of the Trust Board.
- **Pupil Support:** The welfare of all children in the Trust is of the highest importance. We will provide dedicated support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in line with the SEND Code of Practice. Our services will continue to ensure that the needs of the diverse community of children are met.
- **Services and Facilities:** Services or facilities provided by, for or in association with the Trust, aim to ensure equality of access. This includes catering facilities, sports provision, technology and social activities.
- **Equality and Privacy Impact Assessment:** To ensure equality and diversity is embedded throughout the Trust's functions, where applicable (all those areas that impact on people) equality and privacy impact assessments will be undertaken for all new and revised policies, procedures, and functions, prior to endorsement or ratification by the oversight/responsible committee.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Trust will:

- meet statutory equality reporting requirements, including gender pay gap reporting
- review available workforce and pupil equality data periodically
- consider whether further actions or objectives are required to improve equality outcome.

Breaches of this Policy

Employees

Employees who believe they have been treated in a way that breaches this policy should raise the issue informally with the individual concerned or with their line manager. If this is not appropriate or does not resolve the matter, it should be escalated through the Trust's Grievance Policy or the Trust's Dignity at Work Policy for bullying, harassment or victimisation complaints.

Concerns about the treatment of a colleague, child or stakeholder should be raised with the individual involved or with their line manager, or through the Trust's Speak Up Policy.

All alleged breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and investigated under the appropriate procedures. Employees who raise concerns in good faith will not be victimised. Knowingly false

allegations may result in disciplinary action.

Any staff member found to have engaged in discrimination, bullying or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

Children

Children are encouraged to speak to a member of staff that they trust if they feel that they or anyone else is being treated in a way that is inconsistent with this policy.

Parents / Carers

Parents or carers who believe their child has been treated in a manner inconsistent with this policy are encouraged to raise the concern with a member of staff in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved, it should be escalated through the Trust's Complaints Policy.

Where a child's behaviour does not meet the Trust's expectations regarding equality and diversity, the school will respond in accordance with its Behaviour Management Policy. Any response should be based on a fair investigation and prioritise an educative approach.

Policy Review

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or sooner, taking into account any legislative changes.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix A – REACh2 Multi Academy Trust Public Sector Equality Duty – Equality Statement

REACh2 Academy Trust is committed to promoting equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering positive relationships across all of our schools.

As a primary-only multi-academy trust serving communities with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, we recognise our responsibility to ensure that every child—regardless of background, identity, or circumstance—has the opportunity to thrive.

We understand that children from disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional barriers to success.

We therefore work proactively to address inequality by:

- ensuring our curriculum is inclusive, representative, and accessible to all pupils
- identifying and reducing barriers to learning, participation, and achievement
- using data and evidence to monitor outcomes and target support where it is most needed
- promoting a culture of respect, belonging, and high expectations across all schools
- providing staff with training to understand and meet the needs of our diverse communities

We are equally committed to promoting fairness, dignity, and respect for all employees.

We aim to create an inclusive working environment in which staff feel valued, supported, and able to contribute fully.

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation and ensure that employment practices—including recruitment, development, and progression—are equitable and transparent.

1. Reduce attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils and those with protected characteristics.

We will use assessment data to identify gaps in progress and attainment and implement targeted interventions to ensure all pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve strong outcomes.

2. Improve representation and inclusivity within the curriculum.

We will ensure that the curriculum reflects a diverse range of cultures, identities, and experiences and that teaching materials promote equality, respect, and belonging for all pupils.

3. Promote positive relationships and reduce incidents of discriminatory behaviour.

We will monitor behaviour data to identify patterns or concerns and take action to reduce incidents of bullying, prejudice related behaviour and discriminatory language across all schools.

4. Improve engagement with parents and carers from all backgrounds.

We will strengthen communication and engagement strategies to ensure that parents and carers—particularly those from disadvantaged or under-represented groups—feel informed, included and able to contribute to school life.

5. Ensure fair and inclusive recruitment and selection practices.

We will review and monitor recruitment processes to ensure they are equitable, accessible, and free from bias, with the aim of increasing diversity across the Trust workforce.

6. Improve representation and progression of under-represented groups.

We will monitor workforce data to identify disparities in career progression and take action to support the development and advancement of staff from under-represented groups.