

School Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Policy Launch	Next Review	Review Frequency	Coordinator	Nominated Trustee
September 2023	September 2025	Every 2 years	School Director	Zoe Lattimer

POLICY STATEMENT

The Mulberry Bush School recognises that providing equality of opportunity, achieving diversity and continuously working towards ensuring an inclusive working environment are vital to our success. Having a diverse and inclusive workforce allows us to provide the best support for all those affected by childhood trauma. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all employees and volunteers and value every contribution, regardless of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status (including civil partnerships), disability, nationality, religion or belief.

This policy aims to support the implementation and embedding of a culture of fairness and inclusion for all.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and trustees of the Mulberry Bush School.

All these groups have a personal responsibility to be aware of the content of this policy and to abide by it at all times. This policy and all associated initiatives should be implemented and promoted by all individuals. EDI must be considered and demonstrated in all aspects of the Mulberry Bush School so it becomes embedded in everything we do.

DEFINITIONS

What is Equality?

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. No one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people have experienced discrimination. These groups are protected under the Equality Act 2010. There is a need to actively manage the working environment to ensure that people experience the working environment and have access to opportunities in a fair and equal way.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits all employers and providers of education, from discriminating against, harassing or victimising individuals with protected characteristics.

What is Diversity?

Diversity refers to the differences between people. Whilst the Equality Act 2010 legislates in relation to the 9 protected characteristics, there are many other ways in which people differ. Everyone should be treated with respect and we will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment in relation to any of our differences.

These differences can be visible or non-visible and include, amongst other things, socio-economic background, personality and accent. We believe that a diverse workforce enables us to be more productive, effective and in a position to meet the needs of children more effectively.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is the goal we seek. People are included when they feel able to fully participate, contribute their skills and reach their potential. Inclusion acknowledges that we are all different and is an active process by which we constantly challenge our culture, policies, processes and personal behaviours to ensure they enable all of us to participate.

Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 defines direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation, and harassment.

Direct Discrimination

Treating an individual or group less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. For example, employing someone because they are white.

Indirect Discrimination

A practice, policy or rule applied to everyone that may at first appear fair or neutral, but puts people of a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage. For example, requiring paperwork to be handwritten by all employees. This policy likely places dyspraxic workers at a disadvantage.

Victimisation

This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation. For example, an employee who has raised a concern about harassment is ostracised by colleagues.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct which affects the dignity of people at work; it encompasses unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour which denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory. The essential characteristic of harassment is that the action(s) is unwanted by the recipient.

Some behaviours would immediately be recognised by everybody as being inappropriate, for example racism or a physical assault. However, there are many behaviours that are not seen as universally inappropriate. If someone finds your behaviour inappropriate and brings this to your attention, you should listen to their concerns seriously and modify your behaviour so that you do not cause them undue distress. If you disregard their concerns, your behaviours will likely be considered as harassment. There are many behaviours that are inappropriate in the workplace, some examples include:

- Ignoring contributions in a meeting
- Aggressive behaviour, such as shouting or personal insults
- Spreading malicious rumours or gossip, or insulting someone
- Offensive comments/jokes or body language
- Isolation, deliberate exclusion and/or non co-operation at work
- Persistent and unreasonable criticism
- Unreasonable demands and impossible targets

As the Harassment and Bullying Policy explains, harassment is not the same as supervising someone's performance. If your Supervisor is giving you work to do or managing your performance using an informal or formal approach this will not be considered harassment, as long as it is conducted in a respectful, professional manner, in accordance with the Mulberry Bush's policies and procedures.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone has an impact on how inclusive the Mulberry Bush School is. Whilst different stakeholder groups have specific responsibilities in relation to this policy, all stakeholders need to demonstrate the following behaviours to support an inclusive culture.

Expected Behaviours:

- Treat others with respect and fairness. Be open to the idea that whilst fairness and respect may be your intention, your behaviours might impact others more negatively.
- Challenge all inappropriate behaviour you experience or witness. The person displaying this behaviour might be unaware of its impact and you owe it to them and the wider school community to raise this as an issue.
- Be open, reflective and willing to change your approach if your behaviour is challenged as discriminatory or inappropriate.

- Create an environment where others feel comfortable raising sensitive issues with you.
- Learn about the lived experiences of people who are different to you. Not everyone will experience the world in the same way you do.
- Be open to new approaches and methods of working. What is appropriate today may not be in the future.

The Trustee Body

Trustees should be aware of the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion. They should be alert to the need to identify any instances of discrimination or harassment and make sure that these are followed up.

The School Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT holds responsibility for reviewing this policy and achieving its aims. As it is responsible and accountable for the development of diversity and equality awareness within the school, all members of the SLT will ensure that they lead by example and monitor the work of their teams.

Managers

All managers are responsible for implementing and enforcing this policy and ensuring that their teams are aware of their responsibilities. Managers will 1) promote, respect and encourage each member of their team to reach their full potential as well as deal appropriately with any breach of the policy; 2) ensure that this policy and the values underlying it are actively employed in all aspects of care, education and treatment and 3) actively monitor the environment and engage with staff to understand whether people feel safe and included, taking proactive steps where this is not the case.

Role of Staff

All staff have a duty to engage the principles of this Policy and act in accordance with it, behaving in a way that is respectful of others. Staff should understand how to challenge or report any inappropriate behaviour in a respectful and professional way, should they feel they are being treated unfairly.

COMMITMENTS

Recruitment & Selection

All recruitment and selection activities must be in accordance with the Recruitment & Selection Policy. Recruitment activities will be based on a clear job description, person specification and skills model that have been signed off by the senior management team.

Job applicants who disclose a disability must be invited to interview if they meet the minimum requirements for the job and reasonable adjustments should be made to the selection process to ensure fair participation.

Positive Action

The Equality Act 2010 allows the Mulberry Bush School to take positive action to deal with underrepresentation in the workforce. Analysis of the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaires enables identification of underrepresentation in the workforce. Staff are encouraged but are not compelled to share their demographic data, to help ensure action can be taken to improve the diversity of the workforce. Positive action can include a range of measures to support the careers of people from underrepresented groups including:

- Targeting job adverts at specific groups
- Engagement: inviting people from underrepresented groups to open days
- Offering training or internships
- Providing shadowing or mentoring opportunities

The Mulberry Bush School will not positively discriminate with the aim of redressing underrepresentation and all recruitment and promotion decisions will be taken on the basis of merit.

Promotion

All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of performance, merit and qualifications. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to review equality of opportunity at all levels.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Mulberry Bush School is committed to being an organisation which understands the effects of disability, and provides effective support so that disabled employees are able to perform to the best of their ability. This means ensuring that they have the opportunity to discuss and request reasonable adjustments, and that managers will ensure that any agreed adjustments are put in place promptly.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The training dept. will ensure that training needs of the staff group in relation to equality and diversity are identified and these areas developed. More generally the school's commitment to equality will be reflected in all training offered, including any training provided by external providers.

MONITORING & REVIEW

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate discrimination and enhance inclusion.

The Mulberry Bush will collect, monitor and analyse diversity data provided by employees and job applicants to make sure our employment processes are fair and are achieving the aims of this Policy. Processing and monitoring of data will be carried out in strict confidence and in accordance with our GDPR processes. Employees are not obliged to provide the data requested.

We will monitor equality, diversity and inclusion climate through the annual staff survey.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures including the Harassment & Bullying Policy, Recruitment and Selection Policy, Whistleblowing policy and the Anti-Racism Statement. These are available on the intranet or from the HR department.