



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Who is this policy for?

All employees (past – for the purposes of providing references, present and future – job applicants), all workers, contractors and sub-contractors, consultants, agency workers, employees seconded to the Trust from other employers, AAB members, volunteers, Trustees and Members, pupils of our academies/schools and their parents/carers and other members of the communities we serve.

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Revision History

REVISION	DATE	AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION
1	23/11/2016	H. Ruddle	New Trust policy
2	September 2017	H. Ruddle	
3	1 December 2021	H. Ruddle	Updated/revised to reflect Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and modernised/appropriate terms used, in consultation with JNC.
4	12/02/2025	H. Ruddle	Review and update in consultation with JNC Trade Unions following the introduction of the duty for the employer to protect employees from sexual harassment

1. INTRODUCTION

Delta Academies Trust is committed to ensure that diversity and equality are effectively incorporated into decision making and considered when recruiting, developing and leading staff as well as when developing and implementing effective teaching and learning for children through our curriculum.

This policy celebrates difference whilst also framing our commitment to create an inclusive culture, where people can come to work being themselves and feeling a strong sense of belonging. We believe that when we ensure a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture, we will amplify our effectiveness in forging strong partnerships and delivering positive impact for children.

We will continue to work collaboratively with Trade Unions to ensure our equality, diversity and inclusion commitments are upheld.

This policy has regard for the following policies, guidance and advice (DfE documents and legislation accessible from the Government website and Delta/Academy policies from SharePoint):

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Academy Admission Policy
- Academy Care, Support Guidance and Behaviour Policy
- Academy Uniform Policy
- HR01 Delta Disciplinary Policy
- HR04 Delta Safer Recruitment Policy
- HR05 Delta Grievance Policy
- HR06 Delta Harassment and Bullying Policy
- HR15 Delta Staff Code of Conduct
- HR27 Delta Staff Dress Code

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. Equality

The term 'equality' means that everyone should be treated fairly. It recognises that everyone has individual needs and that they have the right to have their needs respected.

2.2. Diversity

The term 'diversity' has many definitions, but they all tend to embrace the notion that our background, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experiences are all different and that our differences should be valued and appreciated.

2.3. Inclusion

The term 'inclusion' is the overarching culture in which the mix of people can come to work, feel comfortable and confident to be themselves, and delivers the needs of the Trust. Inclusion ensures that everyone feels valued and importantly, adds value.

2.4. Unconscious Bias

The term 'unconscious bias' describes how we are all shaped by our prior experiences and the social and cultural values that we absorb throughout our life. We all hold deeply ingrained assumptions and beliefs and create our own internal stereotypes.

Most people feel more comfortable around people like themselves (similar age, background or culture) and unconscious bias is a natural result of this, but it can cause unintentional prejudice. Unconscious bias can affect our behaviour in many ways, but if the bias is against a protected characteristic it could lead to illegal discrimination. It can affect recruitment, progression, recognition and much more. Types of unconscious bias are:

Affinity bias – Leads us to prefer people we feel a connection with.

Halo bias – Leads us to rate a person more highly overall because they have one single characteristic or achievement.

Horns bias – Leads us to not consider a person because of one quality that we don't like about them (opposite of halo bias).

3. AIMS

We strive to create a work culture that actively learns from diversity in order to strengthen the impact we seek to achieve. We recognise that people from different backgrounds and experiences bring valuable insights, diverse thoughts and a wealth of abilities.

An inclusive workplace culture is where you can come to work being the authentic version of yourself and feeling respected and valued. It is a culture supported by equal access to opportunities, a culture characterised by acceptance and a sense of someone "having your back" and where the diversity of our team amplifies our ability to drive impact.

We also strive to create a work culture that builds on our passion for learning, our values and our ways of working.

A work culture that builds on a sense of belonging is where you can come to work feeling you are part of something bigger than yourself, and where the role of each of us serve to enable our goal is what connects us. Our passion for learning is what unites us, and our heritage is what shapes us.

At Delta, we celebrate differences and strive to create a strong sense of belonging, while retaining our core purpose that is firmly grounded in our vision and values.

4. EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect in October 2010. It consolidated and streamlined existing legislation and strengthened the law to support progress on equality.

The Equality Act 2010 details a list of 'protected characteristics' which are grounds upon which it is unlawful to discriminate against people. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief (or lack thereof)

- Pregnancy and maternity

The Trust will seek to identify and act upon any unfair or unlawful discrimination which denies someone opportunities due to a protected characteristic.

The Trust will provide reasonable adjustments, wherever possible, to remove any barriers due to disability, including providing alternative formats where needed.

5. TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

5.1 Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (perceptive discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (associative discrimination).

5.2 Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can happen when there's a condition, rule, policy or a practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

5.3 Association discrimination

Association discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic.

5.4 Perceptive discrimination

Perceptive discrimination occurs when a person directly discriminates against another person because the person thinks they possess a particular protected characteristic. This applies even if the person being discriminated against does not have the protected characteristic.

5.5 Victimisation

Victimisation is when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so.

5.6 Harassment

Harassment is defined in law as unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

5.6.1 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct, as outlined in point 5.6, but which is of a sexual nature. The conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature.

An individual can experience unwanted conduct from someone of the same or different sex.

Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted. However, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted.

Any type of complaint raised (outlined above) will be taken seriously. Employees will be supported in a sensitive and confidential manner when raising concerns. However, if following a fair and thorough investigation, it is found that an employee has maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint, they will not be protected under the Equality Act and appropriate action will be taken.

6. THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY (PSED)

The PSED, introduced by the Equality Act 2010, applies to all public bodies including academies and extends to all protected characteristics.

The duty requires us to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other behaviour that is unlawful
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic, as well as those who do not share one

In order to demonstrate relevant and proportionate consideration is being given to the above, we must ensure:

- Decision makers are aware of and have due regard of the duty when making a decision or taking action and must assess the potential impact on any particular group
- Policy developers should consider potential impact on any particular group before and during this process
- The PSED is integrated into our functions seriously and with an open mind.

As part of our commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in the Trust, and in accordance with the PSED, we will:

- Publish our objectives and update these at least every four years
- Share information annually to demonstrate our progress against each objective, which may include the outcomes of our Equality Impact Assessments.

6.1. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that policies, procedures and practices within the Trust are fair to all people. Where any unfairness is highlighted, the EIA will help to identify what changes can be made, what cannot be changed and how improvements can be made.

The EIA document will also provide evidence that the Trust has given due regard to the PSED.

7. PURPOSE

Our purpose is to:

- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, permanent, part time or full time
- Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

8. COMMITMENT

We are committed to:

- Actively explore and challenge our unconscious biases, which if unchallenged, will limit our decisions, behaviour and actions to what we are primed to do or how we normally see things
- Create a working environment free of harassment, bullying, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity, acceptance and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- Take seriously complaints of harassment, bullying, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, Trustees, AAB members, the public and any others in the course of the Trust's activities
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Trust
- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Foster appropriate spaces and competencies to engage in dialogue, sharing our own experiences, be compassionate to the experience of others, listen actively, stay curious and learn from each other
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also updated them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- Ensure the entire employee life cycle is fair and that our employee related processes do not treat people differently based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc. Meaning our recruitment is consistent with the diversity we seek to promote, that our performance and development process gives individuals the ability to thrive and perform being who we are, and that we continuously build capabilities to value and grow personally and professionally within a diverse environment in order to succeed together
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy
- Create a strong sense of belonging among Delta employees building on our commonalities and shared goal of 'Changing Lives'.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff should demonstrate behaviour that is inclusive of diversity and mindful of unconscious biases. As such, staff conduct should help the Trust provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should always consider diversity in their daily duties, be mindful of unconscious biases, be open to feedback about their own biases, ensure they are aware of this policy and support their colleagues in being inclusive. Our leaders will help to role model this behaviour and encourage open dialogue regarding diversity and unconscious biases and how these influence the effectiveness of our work.

All staff should understand they, as well as the Trust, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, pupils, parents, visitors, suppliers and the public.

Staff should recognise that if not acted upon a continuous lack of inclusion (exclusion) can become discrimination. Therefore, staff should also be familiar with the Trust's Bullying and Harassment Policy, which is available on SharePoint, as this outlines the Trust's approach to preventing and managing behaviour such as harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination.

Where staff experience attitudes, behaviour, structures or processes that are inconsistent with this policy, they are encouraged to discuss this within the situation it has arisen, if possible, or bring it to the attention of their line manager, HR or Compliance so that possible actions can be considered for individuals or the Trust. If required, reference should be made to the Trust's Grievance Policy (available on SharePoint).

If someone feels offended by another person's behaviour/conduct, it should not be assumed that there was negative intent behind their actions. It is important that the offended person has the opportunity to explain why they felt the words or behaviour was offensive to them and for the other person to actively listen to understand their perspective. Even in circumstances where the person did not intend to offend, these interactions provide opportunities to learn and grow.

In summary, we should all:

- Comply with the law and the Trust's policies
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity

- Not make derogatory comments, unfairly discriminate or act in a way that might cause distress or embarrassment to others, whether intentionally or not
- Not engage in harassment or bullying behaviour
- Respect other's beliefs
- Report inappropriate behaviour immediately

10. TRAINING

As part of our commitment, we will ensure managers and other employees are trained about their rights and responsibilities under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

All staff will receive equality, diversity and inclusion training as part of their induction and at regular intervals thereafter, which will include training modules accessed via the Trust's online training provider, to ensure that staff understand what is expected of them during their employment and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

Training records of all completed staff training will be maintained at academy level for academy-based staff and at Trust level for all centrally appointed staff.

11. SUPPORT

Where staff have experienced behaviours that are not in line with the Trust's expectations and standards, support can be provided including but not limited to counselling, mediation or other appropriate interventions.

Useful sources of support are:

- Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) – Care First
- Trade Unions
- ACAS

12. SUSPECTED BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Suspected breaches of this policy will be dealt with as misconduct under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy. Following an investigation, appropriate action will be taken, if required. Where serious breaches are found, this could amount to Gross Misconduct and could lead to summary dismissal (dismissal without notice).

13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Through monitoring and review, the Trust will

- Assess how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy and any supporting action plans are working in practice
- Review the policy and plans annually and consider and take action to address any issues raised