GLF

Where Children Grow, Learn and Flourish

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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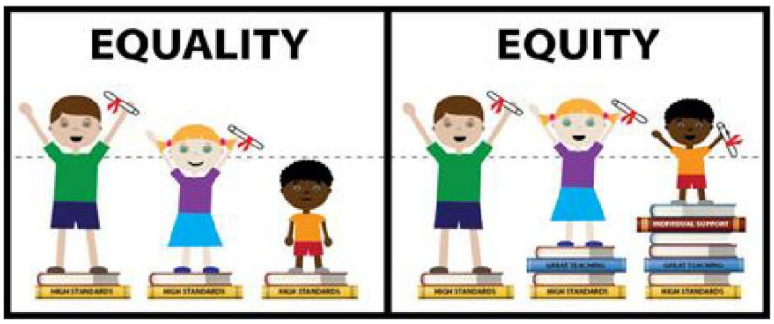

To address equality, is to address equality of opportunity (equity); to provide access to participation to all individuals and groups and act to protect those discriminated against.

We are all different whether because of our physical abilities and qualities, appearance, life and work experience, commitments or other experiences.
Diversity enriches decision making, is an enabler for role models and should reflect the diversity of our communities.





Inclusion is the feeling of being respected, valued, safe and trusted.

Staff and Pupils in inclusive environments have a sense of belonging and are able to be their best selves and to do their best work.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Diversity and Inclusion Policy Guidance and Toolkit.

1. What is Diversity and Inclusion?

In simple terms, 'diversity' is the mix; 'inclusion' is getting the mix to work well together. Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another while inclusion is a state of being valued, respected, and supported. An inclusive workplace and school is where there is a focus on the needs of every individual and ensures the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve their potential and to feel a sense of belonging. Inclusion is reflected in an organisation's culture, practices, and relationships that support a diverse workforce.

2. The Importance of Diversity and Inclusion at GLF Schools

GLF Schools recognises and celebrates the diversity of its schools and their communities. There is a shared commitment across the Trust to develop further a culture of respect, where discrimination is not tolerated, and individuals are treated equitably and fairly and feel a sense of belonging. We strive for an inclusive environment where staff, children and students are comfortable to express their own identity, should they wish, in which diversity and inclusion is of mutual benefit for everyone in our schools.

3. General Principles

We believe:

- There is no place for discrimination within the Trust, be it in relation to employment, education, research or in its learning environment. This includes all contractual service providers and collaborative partners, who are required to adhere to equality legislation when providing goods, facilities or services.
- Promoting equality of opportunity will better enable staff, children and students to reach their full potential.
- For the benefit of the Trust, employees, children and students should feel able to express their own identity without fear of abuse or discrimination.
- It is important to acknowledge and celebrate the breadth of experience and intellectual resources that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the life of the Trust.
- Creating an ethos which promotes equality, develops understanding and challenges myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices is important.
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing progress and impact of actions will create a cycle of continuous improvement to advance equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- Mandatory training will raise awareness and enable individuals to be equipped to recognise and challenge assumptions, stereotyping and undertake action that will support the trust to be culturally diverse.

4. The Legal Context

For the purpose of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') the Trust is defined as a public sector body. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (Including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin)
- Religion or belief (Including philosophical belief and a lack any such religion or belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Further information regarding the legal context can be found in the policy toolkit.

In addition, we recognise the importance of socio-economic diversity within our workforce, and we are committed to identifying opportunities to promote social mobility for our staff and students.

5. Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to all schools in regard to upholding their obligations and commitment to the Equality Act 2010. For the purpose of this policy, reference to the Trust, is reference to its schools which includes its employees, all who serve in governance, service providers, children and students, parents, volunteers and visitors.

The Act does not override health and safety legislation nor take precedence over other statutory duties and the Trust will take whatever action is necessary to ensure it fulfils its responsibilities both under the Act and under any other legislation that applies to it.

The scope of this policy is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time; and for all those in our school communities.
- not unlawfully discriminate in relation to 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.

GLF Schools commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in all of schools and workplaces.
- Create an environment for our staff, children and students, where bullying is dealt with appropriately, free of harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all Staff are recognised and valued.

- This commitment includes training all employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help GLF provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, stakeholders and the public.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, stakeholders, visitors, the public and any others during GLF work activities.
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the GLFs grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the GLF Schools Ending Bullying and Harassment Policy. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice. Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic is a criminal offence.
- 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 service we provide to our schools.
- Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited
  exemptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, 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.
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

6. Framework

To meet our legal obligations and drive the diversity and inclusion agenda forward, the Trust has established a framework. Senior Leaders will consider how best to embed a culture in which equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion is valued and celebrated, taking the lead to 'champion' the inclusion agenda.

A Trust Strategy Group has been established to lead the Diversity and Inclusion strategy reporting to the Trust Board on a regular basis.

Focus groups will ensure stakeholder feedback and a collaborative approach to address areas of commonality across the Trust, enabling a level of consistency that aligns with the requirements set out in the Act. The focus groups will share knowledge and best

practice, identifying areas of priority and initiatives to meet the Trust's obligations and co mmitments.

Each school will complete an equality action plan on a four-year cycle to address the specific needs of their school and community that:

- addresses inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage, which will differ in each school.
- creates a culture in which discrimination, unfair treatment and disadvantage is not tolerated.
- focuses on diversity, taking proactive measures to address under-representation, or in activities that inform or influence the school diversity and inclusion plan.

7. Accountability and Responsibility

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Trust has a Diversity and Inclusion Policy in place
- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy by the reviewing of regular reports
- Agreeing the Strategy for Diversity and Inclusion and monitoring progress against the strategic plan
- Provide proactive support, challenge, feedback and guidance

The Trust's Executive Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring a cohesive approach to Diversity and Inclusion, ensuring Diversity and Inclusion focus groups are held throughout the year and key data is reviewed to identify initiatives or action that would be beneficial to driving the diversity and inclusion agenda forward.
- Considering equality implications set out in the equality analysis guidance (appendix 3 of the toolkit) and embedding good practice in policies when developing policy and making strategic decisions.
- Monitoring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the requirement for a published school equality action plan, including annual review and progress report.
- Maintaining an awareness of the importance of addressing equality, diversity and inclusivity with its schools, ensuring familiarity with all relevant legislation and the content of this Policy.
- A Steering/Strategy group is in place to ensure the development and delivery of the Trust Diversity and Inclusion agenda.

The School's Strategy Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing and challenging their school's equality action plan and level of progress, for the purpose of advancement of the DI agenda and compliance with its obligations.

- Ensuring the SSB is drawn from a wide and diverse pool which is representative of its community.
- Maintaining and awareness of the importance of addressing diversity and inclusion in its school and ensuring familiarity with the content of this policy.

The Headteacher regarding their school and Trust Central Leaders are responsible for:

- Setting out and publishing on a four-year cycle, the school equality action plan with monitoring and an annual summary of progress, which stakeholders understand their responsibilities to meet the Trust's commitment to EDI and its legal obligation
- Ensuring its senior management team lead, and act as champions for equality, diversity and inclusivity, promoting an awareness of the value and benefits for all.
- Ensure the curriculum is reviewed and implemented in line with the Trust's expectations for equality and diversity in the curriculum.
- Ensuring all school policies and practices such as behaviour policies and uniform policies, and any other materials or communications adhere to the requirements of the Act and the spirit of this policy and do not inadvertently discriminate or cause offence.
- Ensuring bullying by children/students related to a protected characteristic is treated with the same level of seriousness as any other form of bullying.
- Providing staff with appropriate training that raises awareness of and compliance with the Act, and which requires staff commitment to the general principles set out in this policy.
- Ensuring staff are aware of the named contact to report an allegation.
- Monitoring compliance with the Act, with serious breaches reported to the Trust and managed swiftly in-line with Trust policy.
- Ensuring visitors and contractors are aware and abide by the general principles of this Policy and adhere to meeting their legal obligations.

Employees are responsible for:

- Their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out whilst employed by the Trust, whether or not the Trust is also liable. However, an employee will not be held personally liable in relation to disability discrimination in its school.
- Conducting themselves in a manner that is considered non-discriminatory and upholding the general principles detailed in this policy.
- Reporting any practices by staff, pupil or parents that could be considered inflammatory or discriminatory to equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- Develop a level of understanding that supports and contributes to the Trust being recognised as culturally diverse, inclusive and equitable and meeting its legal obligations.
- For staff who are in position of trust (e.g. staff working directly with children/students or other positions of responsibility): considering the context when expressing their views must not extend to the point at which it could discriminate against others.

The Trust Community is responsible for:

- Each member of the Trust community has a responsibility for upholding this Policy and for behaving in ways that are consistent with fair and equal treatment for all. This includes staff working for companies contracted to a school and those involved in collaborative activities with the Trust in whatever form.
- Each person is responsible for their own learning and engagement with equality issues and actions and has a duty to consider the impact of their actions to ensure that they do not have a detrimental effect on achieving equality of opportunity. Equality, diversity and inclusion is not optional or negotiable.

8. Public Reports

Equality Action Plan

The Act sets out a specific requirement for schools:

a) to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
b) to prepare and publish equality objectives

This will be achieved through our schools each producing an equality action plan, on a four-year cycle to address the specific needs of their school and community that:

- addresses inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage, which will differ in each school.
- creates a culture in which discrimination, unfair treatment and disadvantage is not tolerated.
- focuses on diversity, taking proactive measures to address under-representation, or in activities that inform or influence the school diversity and inclusion plan.

In setting out this requirement, the government has stated that it should not be overly burdensome on schools and will not be required to collect any statistical data which they do not already collect routinely.

Gender Pay Gap

To advance gender equality, the Trust will complete an annual analysis and report to the Trust's Finance and Audit Committee on the Gender Pay Gap for the Trust as a whole. In line with statutory reporting, the Trust will submit a return report on its website.

9. Policies and Practice

The Trust is committed to the equality, diversity and inclusivity movement and believes to fully effect change, the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion should be reflected in its ethos and embedded in its policies and practices; not delivered as a 'tick box exercise' to satisfy regulations. To enable all colleagues, children and students to reach their full potential the Trust further reflects on the Act when considering certain practices.

School Admissions

The discrimination provisions on age do not extend to school admissions. Current approaches in which admissions and transition between schools are determined by a child's age will not be open to challenge.

When determining admissions, the academies where they can, will also consider if children and students from a protected group receive less favourable treatment.

Competitive sport and sex discrimination

The Act includes and exception for sex discrimination in relation to a competitive sport, game or other competitive activity. It will therefore be for the school to determine, considering governing guidance, whether for sporting competitions in which physical strength, stamina or physique are significant factors in determining success or failure, that separate events for boys and girls are held.

However, schools must not preclude participation in a given sport on the grounds of sex.

Occupational Requirement

The Act further allows discrimination because of a person's sex if someone of a particular sex is required for reasons of privacy and decency, or where personal services are provided.

School Curriculum

Whilst the content of the school curriculum is outside of the Act, the way in which school provides education and the delivery of the curriculum is included. Each school takes active steps to ensure that content and resources in all areas of the curriculum are inclusive, representative of modern Britain and promote a greater understanding of equality and diversity. There is acknowledgement of the importance of challenging stereotyping and discrimination in all areas of the curriculum.

Schools monitor the attainment and progress of children and students by socio-economic background, ethnic group, by gender, EAL, AEN and other focus groups, believing that no group should be regarded higher than another, and tracking these groups help to ensure equity.

Religious Observance

The Trust will be supportive and enable, where it is able to, the needs of children, students and staff to participate in religious observance where it is a fundamental part of their faith.

Daily Collective Worship

The religion or belief provisions of the Act do not cover the daily act of collective worship, however, to raise awareness and for inclusivity, the Trust encourages its schools to celebrate a range of religious festivals and non-religious events to raise pupil awareness of differing faiths and none.

Children/Students with a declared disability

The Trust understands that the definition of disability is not the same as the definition of special education needs in s20 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and recognises the importance of the need to treat children/students with a disability differently where it

would put the child/student on more level footing with children/students without a disability.

Schools will consider providing auxiliary aids and services as a reasonable adjustment for children and students where these are not supplied through SEN statements, or from other sources in line

10. Reporting and Allegations

Individuals should feel able to inform an appropriate person wherever inappropriate or discriminatory practice occurs, without fear of retribution and in the knowledge that the matter will be handled effectively under the Trust's policies and procedures. The contact person will be detailed within the appropriate policy.

The Trust will treat any contravention or breach of this Policy very seriously and take appropriate action wherever it is justified.

Where a staff member or child/student who, in bad faith, gives false information or evidence (that is, information or evidence that he or she knew was false), or alleges that information was false and given in bad faith, would not be protected against victimisation. The original complaint or claim would not be affected, provided it was not made in bad faith.

11. Resolving Disputes

Whilst the Trust would encourage, in the best interests of everyone, to attempt to resolve any disputes informally, where this may not be possible, the following policies should be referred to:

Related to Children/Students	Complaints Policy	Available from School/Trust website/Staff Portal
Related to Employees	Grievance Policy Disciplinary and Capability Policy Ending Bullying and Harassment Policy	Available from the School/Trust website/Staff Portal

If the dispute relates to alleged discrimination, it must be reported within six months of the alleged discrimination. Where there has been a continuing process of discrimination taking place over a period of time, the six months will begin at the date of the last discriminatory act.

The Government Equalities Office has issued a good practice guide on asking and responding and to questions about discrimination in the provision of services and public
functions including education services and can be found at: GEO_GFS_Guidance_January_2014_v1.02.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Parents/Carers can make a complaint to Ofsted if the complaint affects the school as a whole rather than an individual pupil. Ofsted will not deal with complaints where there is an alternative legal remedy.