



Brook Learning Trust

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

At Brook Learning Trust we bring together our unique academies in our belief in the power of education to change lives and communities. It is our steadfast purpose to challenge and defy the barriers that constrain the educational progress of any child. We set high aims for aspiration and secure collective responsibility for all our children's achievements. Our work is underpinned by the values of Integrity, Respect, Courage, Optimism, Excellence and Accountability.

Purpose

This Equality and Diversity Policy represents a commitment to a common set of values and objectives, and to a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring the policy. BLT and its academies are committed to advancing and achieving equality of opportunity for all students, parents, carers, staff, academy councillors, trustees, members and visitors. We believe that all people are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity and that our diversity enriches our community.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to confirm BLT's commitment to equality and to valuing diversity as an employer and a provider of education. We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims and they are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who have a shared characteristic and those who do not.

BLT will review annually how well we achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act and as listed in the scope of this document.

Scope

BLT actively seeks to promote an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and where all staff and students are encouraged to fulfil their full potential. It is our policy to promote equality to all irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sex or sexual orientation
- Race (including nationality; ethnic or national origin)
- Gender (including gender reassignment)
- Marital Status including civil partnership
- Religion or belief
- Trade union membership.

This policy applies to all employees, potential employees, supply staff, agency staff, volunteers, contracted staff, academy councillors, trustees and members. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Public Equality Duty Statement and other related policies listed below:

- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Employee Grievance Procedure Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure Policy
- The DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

Values, principles and standards

Equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is therefore underpinned by the following values, principles and standards:

- equality and social justice
- acknowledging and valuing diversity
- respect for others
- elimination of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination
- active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behaviour
- commitment to inclusive education which enables and supports all students to develop their full potential
- commitment to the positive development of all staff, academy councillors, trustees and members
- commitment to fair and open recruitment processes that comply with appropriate employment legislation
- compliance with equality legislation
- accountability for compliance with this policy by all employees and those engaged in BLT activity

Equality Objectives

We aim to provide the highest possible education for all of our students. The ethos of BLT and our academies clearly reflects our commitment to fully including and respecting all members of our academy communities.

We have set ourselves the following objectives for annual review:

- To ensure that staff and those within BLT's governance structure are aware of current legislation surrounding equality and diversity and understand the academy's responsibility
- To promote cultural understanding and awareness and tolerance of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our community
- Actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between students for all groups of students; especially students eligible for Pupil Premium, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from minority ethnic groups
- Continue to improve accessibility across the school for students, staff and visitors with disabilities
- Monitor the incidence of the use of homophobic, sexist and racist language by students in the academy community
- To review and revise the curriculum so that it encourages tolerance and respect.

Communication of Equality and Diversity Policy

We will take active steps to communicate this Equality and Diversity Policy to all students, parents, carers, staff, academy councillors, trustees, members and visitors to our academies.

Responsibilities and accountabilities

The Trust Board are responsible for:

- making sure the Trust and academies follow the equality and diversity policy, and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality

The Executive team is responsible for:

- making sure the Trust follows the equality and diversity policy, and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality
- giving a consistent and high-profile lead on equality and diversity, modelling equality of opportunity in their leadership
- advancing equality and diversity within the Trust
- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with all equality legislation

The Principal is responsible for:

- giving a consistent and high-profile lead on equality and diversity, modelling equality of opportunity in their leadership
- advancing equality and diversity within the academy
- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with all equality legislation

- ensuring that the academy implements the equality and diversity policy

Academy leaders (for example senior, subject and pastoral leaders) are responsible for:

- putting the equality and diversity policy into practice
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities 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

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) are responsible for:

- promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination, related to protected characteristics perpetrated by students, other staff or visitors
- keeping up-to-date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training

Students are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions
- obeying the Equality and Diversity Policy

Monitoring and review

This Equality and Diversity Policy has been approved and adopted by Brook Learning Trust and will be reviewed every four years, or as required, to ensure it remains compliant with Equality legislation.

Complaints

Any breaches of the policy should be reported in the first instance to the Principal at academy level or to the CEO for central trust staff. Investigation, if required, may be delegated to a designated member of staff and the Staff Disciplinary Policy invoked if a member of staff is found to be in breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

POLICY REVIEW AND RATIFICATION

Policy reviewed every 4 years and ratified by the BLT Board in October

This review by CEO September 2017

Summary of amendments The policy has been completely rewritten
to this iteration:

Ratified by the BLT Board October 2017

Next review September 2021