Equality and Diversity Policy

The Inspire Multi Academy Trust (South West)

July 2026 - 2029

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1. Aims

TIMAT is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act 2010. We want to reduce disadvantages, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity, and promote diversity in terms of our children, our workforce and the community in which we work.

The Trust aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been prepared with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149, which protects people from discrimination and requires the Trust to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, which require schools and academy trusts to publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives.
- Department for Education guidance on the Equality Act 2010 for schools, Equality and Human Rights Commission technical guidance for schools, and relevant guidance on meeting the specific duties that support the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. General principles

3.1. The Trust seeks to build capability across all areas within the organisation in the development of an inclusive culture and the removal of obstacles to equality.

3.2. Equality, diversity and inclusion priorities align with and underpin the trust's strategic aims to ensure that stereotypes and biases are recognised and removed from all teaching and learning materials and in our teaching styles.

3.3. The Trust adopts flexible approaches to engagement to ensure that the voices of stakeholders are taken into account as appropriate.

3.4. The Trust adheres to an evidence-based approach to underpin equality, diversity and inclusion planning.

3.5. The Trust produces equality objectives that proactively seek to eliminate disadvantage and promote inclusivity.

3.6. The Trust conducts equality analysis on its policies, practices and procedures as a means of identifying any potential adverse impact and exploring possible solutions to mitigate these.

3.7. The Trust makes reasonable adjustments for all stakeholders in accordance with identified needs wherever possible within the statutory criteria.

3.8. The Trust implements an Accessibility Plan at each school that aims to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled children/staff/visitors can participate in the curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled children/staff/visitors to take better advantage of the education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled children/staff/visitors

3.9. Each school's plan will be reviewed annually by the Local Governing Body.

3.10. The Trust ensures that information about stakeholders with disabilities is reported at regular intervals to the Local Authority via census returns.

3.11. The Trust ensures that provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is made in accordance with the Trust's SEND Policy and that provision for SEND pupils and their performance data are monitored regularly throughout the academic year.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. All staff, children and other members of the Trust community have responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

4.2. The Trust Board is responsible for:
- Ensuring that the Trust meets its legal obligations relating to equality
- Ensuring that equality analysis is carried out on all senior level proposed policies and decisions where appropriate
- Reviewing this policy regularly to ensure that it takes into account any changes in legislation and best practice

4.3. The Local Governing Body is responsible for:
- Ensuring that each of the schools implements the actions required in order to meet the trust's equality objectives
- Monitoring equality issues via local governing body meetings;
- Ensuring the accountability of the CEO/Headteachers for the communication and implementation of this policy
- Ensuring that the school/s carries out the letter and the spirit of the statutory duties

4.4. The CEO/Headteachers are responsible for:
- Effectively communicating and implementing this policy
- Holding line managers accountable for effective policy implementation
- Ensuring that pastoral support and student behaviour policies reinforce the trust's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and that appropriate actions are taken in respect of any student breaches
- Ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination
- Holding staff accountable for their behaviour, and providing support and guidance as necessary

4.5. The HR Director is responsible for:
- Supporting all managers in ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

4.6. All members of staff are responsible for:
- Upholding and implementing the aims of this policy
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity
- Behaving with respect and fairness to all colleagues and children
- Making the curriculum accessible to all children, addressing their individual needs and abilities and enabling them to realise their full potential
- Providing guidance and advice that avoids stereotypes and enables pupils to make informed choices to help them reach their full potential
- Taking positive action to address any instances of discrimination in a sensitive and consistent manner
- Raising issues which could contribute to policy review and development with their line manager

4.7. Stakeholders are responsible for:
- Upholding the principles of this policy
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity

4.8. Parents and Carers are expected to:
- Support the guiding principles of this policy and help to eliminate discrimination

- Make their child aware of the importance of treating people equally

5. Eliminating discrimination
The trust complies with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct. Trustees, Local Governors and all staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during staff meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

We monitor, record and deal effectively with incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment, and for pupils this includes taking into account the rates of exclusion or behaviour issues among children from particular groups. We encourage all staff to raise any potential concerns that they may have in respect of how equality, diversity and inclusiveness is managed within the Trust and will investigate all allegations of unacceptable behaviour. Details on the process for raising concerns is set out in Section 10 of this policy.
The Trust will take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees and workers in the course of their employment. This includes preventative action through policy, training, risk assessment, clear reporting routes, timely investigation and appropriate action where concerns are raised.

6. Advancing equality of opportunity
As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected by a particular characteristic they have
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities
- Monitoring the academic progress of groups with and without protected characteristics and tackling underperformance by any particular group

7. Fostering good relations
The trust aims to foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Ensuring that lessons across the curriculum promote the trust's values of knowledge, aspiration and respect, and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping.
- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of the curriculum (Jigsaw Curriculum). This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas.
- Holding assemblies that address relevant issues.
- Providing opportunities for children to engage with their local community, such as through guest speaker events, school trips or community events.
- Encouraging all pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Developing links with external organisations that have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics.

8. Equality considerations in decision-making
The trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

In both our schools, we will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:
- cuts across any religious holiday
- is accessible to pupils with SEND
- has appropriate and accessible facilities for all pupils, taking account of sex, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment and any other relevant protected characteristic

9. Monitoring arrangements
9.1. The Trust and Joint Local Governing Body will receive an annual report in relation to the monitoring and impact of the equality objectives.

9.2. The Trust will publish information annually on its website, and/or on each school website as appropriate, to demonstrate how it complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This information will be reviewed and updated at least annually.
9.3. The Trust will publish one or more equality objectives at least every four years and will review progress towards those objectives regularly.

9.4. We maintain confidentiality and work to data protection principles. We publish information in a way so that no student or staff member can be identified.

10. Breach of the policy
10.1. The Trust will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to this policy by pupils, staff, contractors or visitors. Any instances of non-adherence will be investigated with the intent of resolving matters. Where appropriate, such instances will be considered under the relevant disciplinary or behaviour policy. There is not a separate channel for addressing non-adherence to this policy.

10.2. The Trust strongly encourages informal and local resolution of issues or complaints and will facilitate mediation where necessary.

10.3. Concerns about breaches of the policy should be raised at a local level in the first instance, with a view to informal and timely resolution. If such attempts to resolve complaints are not successful, or are inappropriate due to the nature of the breach, then;

- Concerns should be raised directly to the child's class teacher
- Instances of a child breaching the policy will be investigated handled in line with the behaviour policy
- Employees who believe there has been a breach of this policy may raise this through the Grievance Policy and procedures.

10.4. Support is available for both pupils and staff when these procedures are invoked. For pupils, support is available from the school team and wider professional agencies. For staff, advice and guidance is available from their manager, union representative or HR Director.

10.5. Any visitor who believes there has been a breach of this policy may complain in writing to the Trust's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chair of the Trust Board.

11. Equality Objectives
11.1. As a public body, The Inspire Multi Academy Trust (South West) complies with The Equality Act (2010), which protects individuals against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on the nine protected characteristics.

These are:

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

The Equality Act (2010) consolidates and replaces all previous equalities legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.
The Public Sector Equality Duty places additional duties on public sector organisations such as Multi-Academy Trusts.

The duties include working proactively to eliminate discrimination based on the nine protected characteristics. The duties also require public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act (2010).
- advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups.
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

Our Equality Objectives for 2025-2029

Objective 1: To implement broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum ensuring all children experience equity and fairness in relation to access and engagement for learning, enrichment, and extracurricular opportunities. This curriculum should reflect and celebrate the diversity of our communities and beyond, to ensure we are fully inclusive of all our stakeholders, to maximise their attainment and aspirations.

Evidence and monitoring: Progress will be monitored through curriculum monitoring, teaching and learning reviews, pupil voice, participation in enrichment and extra-curricular activities, and outcomes for pupils, including pupils with protected characteristics where data is available and appropriate.

Objective 2: To maximise the attendance, attainment, and inclusion of children vulnerable to disadvantage, including those with Special Educational Needs, disabilities, and protected characteristics enabling all children to experience an excellent education.

Evidence and monitoring: Progress will be monitored through attendance and persistent absence data, attainment and progress outcomes, behaviour records, suspensions and exclusions, SEND review information, participation in enrichment activities, and pupil and parent/carer voice.

Objective 3: To maintain and build links between schools and Parents/Carers, service partners and wider stakeholders to strengthen relationships, increase access to support and nurture a sense of belonging within and across our school communities.

Evidence and monitoring: Progress will be monitored through parent/carer engagement, attendance at events, stakeholder feedback and surveys, themes from complaints and compliments, and engagement with service partners and wider community organisations.

Objective 4: To improve, by reference to protected characteristics, the recruitment, retention, progression, career development and experience of all employees, so that staff performance is further enhanced, staff satisfaction increases and the staff team reflects the diversity of the local population at all levels.

Evidence and monitoring: Progress will be monitored through recruitment, retention, professional development, appraisal and progression information, staff voice, staff survey outcomes, themes from grievance or complaint processes, and workforce data where available and appropriate.

Appendix 1: Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	
Age	The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
Disability	Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender Reassignment	The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. Where transsexual people are absent from work or study because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, it is discrimination to treat them less favourably than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.
Pregnancy and Maternity	A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled.
Race	For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or Belief	In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.
Sex	Both men and women are protected under the Act.
Sexual Orientation	The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.

Appendix 2: Equality Act 2010 Prohibited Behaviours

Prohibited Conduct	
Direct Discrimination	Section 13 of the Act defines direct discrimination to be where people are treated less favourably than others on grounds related to their identity as one of the protected groups (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation). The definition of direct discrimination extends protection based on association and perception.
Discrimination by Association	Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Discrimination by Perception / Perception Discrimination	Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.
Indirect Discrimination	Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. Section 19 of the Act defines indirect discrimination as occurring when a provision, criterion or practice is neutral on the face of it, but its impact particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic, unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Ultimately, if tested, it will be for a court of law or tribunal to determine what is justifiable.
Discrimination Arising from Disability	This can occur when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their impairment and the treatment cannot be justified.
Failure to make Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled People	The Equality Act 2010 places a duty upon organisations to make reasonable adjustments for staff, pupils and service users in relation to: • provisions, criteria or practices • physical features • auxiliary aids These adjustments apply where a disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people.
Bullying	Bullying is defined as offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power which undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient. The behaviour is unwelcome and may be carried out as a deliberate act or unconsciously
Harassment	Harassment is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Victimisation	Section 27 of the Act defines victimisation as less favourable treatment of someone because they have made or might make a complaint about discrimination under one of the above Protected Group categories. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.