

# Equality Policy

- a) This policy applies to all Trusts managed by Wootton Academy Trust (WAT)
- b) This policy was adopted by WAT in **November 2017**
- c) This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Directors in November 2020

**Lead member of Leadership Team:** Michael Gleeson – Executive Principal

**Designated Special Education Needs  
& Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENCO):** Jessica Newman

**Directors Committee:** Wootton Academy Trust Board

**Associated documentation:**

- Curriculum Statement
- Admissions Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Gifted and Talented Policy
- Assessment, Reporting and Recording Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedure

**Updated: November 2017**

OFSTED evidence for:

### **Introduction**

WAT is committed to the principle that every child has individual needs, has an entitlement to access the full curriculum offer and be fully included in all aspects of the life of WAT, irrespective of ability, race, gender or need and should be respected and valued as individuals.

WAT will address the needs of different groups of learners and deliver high quality learning and teaching practices which will allow every learner to achieve their potential. Where required WAT will adapt the environment and equipment, as much as is practicably possible, as well as seeking specialist advice from outside the organisation to enhance its ability to support all learners. WAT will seek to remove all barriers to learning and achievement.

### **Mission Statement**

To support and challenge every learner at all times to achieve their personal best leading to improved life and career opportunities.

### **Values**

- **Excellence** outstanding student progress and achievement
- **Enrichment** education of the whole student
- **Independence** nurturing initiative in students' attitudes to learning
- **Opportunity** success regardless of background
- **Equality** a safe place to value and celebrate diversity
- **Community** students, staff, parents, governors, directors and other Local people working together
- **Partnerships** collaborative relationships with other organisations
- **Continuity** celebrating our traditions whilst embracing the new
- **Celebration** recognising student achievement
- **Integrity** in all that we do

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of this policy and associated procedures are to ensure that WAT exists to provide an outstanding education for all our students putting their progress at the heart of everything we do. This means that we will always pursue excellence and shall focus upon achieving outstanding results by:

- ensuring that the curriculum offered is wholly focused upon the needs and requirements of our students;
- regularly measuring student progress and achievement so that their learning experience may be adapted to their need;
- making available high quality support to our staff so that they deliver good and outstanding lessons for students. These are consistent with the principles within the Equality Act 2010. The Directors of WAT, mindful of their legal responsibilities but also their wish that every student within the Trust receives a high quality school experience will ensure that our policies and practices are fair and do not discriminate in relation to:
  - the way in which we provide education
  - the way we offer access to benefits, facilities or services
  - admissions
  - exclusions

The Equality Act 2010 makes various behaviours unlawful where there is a protected characteristic. The protected characteristics for schools in relation to its pupils are:

- disability
- ethnicity and race,
- gender,

- gender identity and transgender,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- religion and belief
- sexual identity and orientation.

As an employer, the protected characteristics also include:

- age
- marriage and civil partnership.

The unlawful behaviours are:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Discrimination because a person is thought to have a protected characteristic
- Harassment related to a protected characteristic
- Victimisation of someone because they have made, or helped with, a complaint about discrimination.

For disabled pupils, schools have to make reasonable adjustments to prevent discrimination. This means

- Where something a school does places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students then a school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage
- Schools are expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces in comparison to non-disabled students

**WAT acknowledges its public sector duty to:**

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

**To meet this duty, the schools within WAT will work to:**

- Remove or minimise disadvantages connected with a relevant protected characteristic
- Take steps to meet the different needs of those sharing a relevant characteristic
- Encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activity in which they are underrepresented
- Tackle prejudice such as bullying and promote understanding
- Consider the public sector duty as part of their decision making, including the development and review of policies and the delivery of services

**Context**

In working to deliver equality WAT shall have regard to the impact of the following data sets:

- Male/female pupil ratio
- Male/female staff ratio
- FSM pupils
- EAL pupils
- Disabled pupils
- Disabled staff
- Pupils from ethnic minorities
- Staff from ethnic minorities
- Physical adaptations, site design to show accessibility to buildings etc.

**Key Aspects for WAT and its schools.**

The obligations under The Equality Act will affect many areas of school life and WAT and its schools will need to comply accordingly. Set out below are some specific areas that are considered.

**Curriculum**

The content of a school's curriculum is excluded from the Act. The schools' curricula within WAT are broad and balanced in line with the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. The delivery of the curriculum must comply with the Act. This relates to both how a particular subject or activity is taught and the availability of learning opportunities.

**Acts of Worship**

WAT is required to observe a daily act of collective worship which should be of a broadly Christian nature. Each school looks to celebrate diversity and will include within its curriculum planning and its Social, Moral, Spiritual and Culture policy opportunities to look at different faiths and cultures.

**Uniform**

Schools within WAT have a school uniform for students of compulsory school age and a dress code for post 16 students. Each school will be sensitive to the needs of different groups and will act reasonably in accommodating them.

**Single Sex Classes and Sport**

Sometimes the schools will decide to have single sex classes. This is allowed under the Act provided it does not result in the students in those classes having an unfair advantage or disadvantage when compared to students of the other sex in other classes. An example of discrimination would be catch up classes for one gender group but not the other.

The Act does give an exception in relation to single sex sports, meaning our schools can have single sex approach in relation to the participation in any sport or game, or other activity of a competitive nature, where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy. There are single sex sports teams within our schools; however, WAT is firmly committed to ensure boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities.

**School Trips and Visits**

The schools within WAT are committed to providing students with a range of activities to support their learning and their development as young people. Having a protected characteristic should not prevent a student being able to access these opportunities. In the case of disabled students, the schools will do their best to ensure they play as full a part as possible in school life in line with their obligations to make reasonable adjustments outlined above. However, there will be times when adjustments cannot be made because to do so would have a detrimental effect on other students and would therefore not be reasonable.

**Bullying**

All the schools with WAT take any form of bullying very seriously. Where bullying relates to a protected characteristic this is logged by the school concerned. The promotion of tolerance and respect is a key feature of learning programmes within WAT and includes external resources.

**Accessibility for Disabled Students**

All schools within WAT will implement accessibility plans for disabled students which are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of our schools to enable disadvantaged students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students

**Monitoring**

All schools within WAT monitor and evaluate their practice and procedures.

To ensure compliance with the Equality Act as well as the aim of securing the best outcomes for all students this will include:

- Close monitoring of the performance all groups, including those with protected characteristics
- Targeted intervention where necessary to help raise attainment
- Pursuing the Equalities Award
- Strong pastoral support
- Strong and effective action to counter bullying
- Creation and maintenance of strong parental links
- Establishment of effective links with the wider community

**Equality Objectives**

- To work to reduce the attainment gaps for groups of students who share certain protected characteristics where that information is known
- To accurately map the opportunities that students are given across each school curriculum to increase their understanding of the protected characteristics and the challenges and issues people having those characteristics may face
- To embrace the diversity of cultures with awareness of different religious practices and customs
- To promote the wearing of the uniform with awareness of different religious practices and customs
- To promote sport for all appropriate to ability, capability, sex, religion and culture
- To encourage full participation in organised school trips and visits
- Not to tolerate bullying in any capacity: physical or mental whether personal or cyber and to provide suitable support to allow reporting and action to occur
- To promote a physical environment that is accessible (with assistance as necessary) to all students having regard to the curriculum and fabric of the school.

Legal Status Statutory Approved by WAT Board Date November 2017

Next review November 2020

Further information Michael Gleeson Executive Principal