



POLICY FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

**Presented to
Trustees
6 December 2017**

Date approved: ¹	6 December 2017 Trust Board
Date reviewed: ²	3 March 2015 AMVC Personnel Committee
Date of next review: ³	March 2020

¹ This is the date the policy was approved by the meeting

² This is the date the policy was reviewed prior to its approval above

³ This is the date as set by the policy review clause or the date approved plus 3 years

Footnote:

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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY FOR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST STAFF

1 Policy

- 1.1 The Trust Board of The Four Cs Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.2 We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age; race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion, faith or belief. (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff, Governors and Trustees treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.
- 1.3 All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Your attention is drawn to our separate Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure (Staff).
- 1.4 This policy has been agreed following consultation with the trade unions and staff representatives.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2 Who is Covered by the Policy?

- 2.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, employees, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff, Governors and Trustees (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

3 Who is Responsible for this Policy?

- 3.1 The Trust Board has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the Senior Manager with responsibility for equalities issues has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. The Trustee Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reporting on the progress made in achieving targets set by the Trust Board. Day-to-day operational responsibility including regular review of this policy has been delegated to the relevant Senior Leader responsible for Personnel matters at each school.
- 3.2 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The relevant Senior Leader (with responsibility for Personnel matters) has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. All members of staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. In certain

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circumstances the Trust Board could be held to be vicariously liable for actions of their staff. Staff should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in school or on school related business.

- 3.3 If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Senior Leader responsible for Personnel matters to request training or further information.

4. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

4.1 This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

4.2 We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. Please see the following for specific information on our approach to these issues: eg Recruitment Selection Policy and Procedure, Flexible Working Policy.

5. Forms of Discrimination

5.1 Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

5.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

5.3 Indirect discrimination is where there is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, a requirement to work full time adversely affects women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will be discriminatory unless it is objectively justified.

5.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure (Staff).

5.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

5.6 Disability discrimination; this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

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6. Staff Training and Promotion and Conditions of Service

- 6.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.
- 6.2 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

7. Discipline and Termination of Employment

- 7.1 We will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.
- 7.2 We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

8. Disability Discrimination

- 8.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 8.2 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should speak to your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 8.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers or job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff.

9. Fixed Term Employees, Casual and Agency Workers

- 9.1 We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

10. Part Time Work

- 10.1 We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

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11. Breaches of this Policy

- 11.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment or bullying you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure (Staff).
- 11.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

12. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

- 12.1 The Trust Board (or responsible committee) will review this policy in line with the procedure for policy review.
- 12.2 If no other reason for review (see policy review procedure) this policy will be reviewed in December 2020.

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