



Marches Academy Trust

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Equality policy for School Staff working with Children & Young People

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy Owner	Executive Team
Scope	All MAT CYP, employees (including casual employees), Members, Trustees & Governors.
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Date of approval	17.03.2025 by Board of Trustees.
Summary of last revision	Spring 2025 - addition of the word equity in the policy, amendment to the protected characteristics with inclusion of colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin under race and reference to combination of characteristics, added requirements for staff training under section 4, updated section 10 on suspensions and exclusions to better reference schools' duty under the Equality Act, 2010, and Children and Families Act, 2014, amended guidance under section 11 gender identity and amended section 13 on complaints and grievances to signpost readers to the Trust's complaints policy.
Related Policies/Documents	MAT Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Policy control survey	Please complete this survey and provide feedback if you have had to use this policy https://forms.office.com/r/HMeZtB29Si

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Marches Academy Trust (the Trust) is committed to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- 1.2 The Trust aims to promote a positive and diverse culture in which all staff and CYP are valued and supported to fulfil their potential irrespective of any protected characteristic.
- 1.3 The Trust opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent provisions.
- 1.4 The following groups have been identified as key recipients in terms of the implementation of this policy:

- i. CYP who are Previously or currently Looked After
- ii. CYP with a social worker
- iii. SEND
- iv. CYP persistently at risk of suspension(s) or permanent exclusion
- v. CYP from an ethnic group, including those from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller background
- vi. CYP who are persistently absent or missing in education
- vii. CYP with medical conditions affecting attendance at school
- viii. are school age / teenage parents
- ix. are young carers
- x. CYP within, or at risk of joining, the criminal justice system
- xi. CYP who have experienced adverse childhood experience or are otherwise trauma-experienced
- xii. CYP with mental health issues
- xiii. CYP in receipt of free school meals
- xiv. CYP living in areas of deprivation
- xv. CYP that are gifted and talented
- xvi. CYP from the LGBTQ+ community.

***This list is not exhaustive**

- 1.5 This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including volunteers and CYP on placement), young people and visitors at our schools and should be read in conjunction with the following Trust-wide policies or policies of the respective school:
 - i. [MAT Behaviour Policy & Procedures \(incorporating tackling bullying, inclusion, personal development, support, and use of reasonable force & physical intervention\)](#)
 - ii. [MAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#)
 - iii. [MAT Children who are Previously or currently Looked After Policy](#)
 - iv. [MAT Relationships, Sex, Health Education Policy](#)
 - v. [MAT Special Education Needs and Disabilities Policy](#)
 - vi. [MAT Children with Medical Conditions Policy](#)
 - vii. [MAT Accessibility Plan](#)
 - viii. [MAT ICT Policy](#)
 - ix. [MAT Wellbeing Policy](#)
 - x. [MAT Professional Code of Conduct](#)
- 1.6 Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action. Discriminatory treatment, bullying or harassment of staff or CYP by visitors will also not be tolerated.

2 Compliance

- 2.1 This policy has been developed in response to the Equality Act 2010 and replaces previous policies relating to race, gender and disability equality. It has been designed to help the Trust meet the public sector equality duty to:
- 2.1.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
 - 2.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - 2.1.3 Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 2.2 We will ensure that we do not discriminate against CYP on the basis of:
- i. disability,
 - ii. gender reassignment,
 - iii. pregnancy or maternity,
 - iv. race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin,
 - v. religion or belief,
 - vi. sex or sexual orientation; or
 - vii. any combination of those listed above (the protected characteristics).
- 2.3 Staff, Trustees and Local Governors will:
- i. Actively promote equity and equality of opportunity in all areas of school life.
 - ii. Ensure that members of each school community know their rights, and respect the rights of others.
 - iii. Aim to ensure that prejudice or discrimination in all its forms is actively rejected.
 - iv. Raise awareness of equity and equality issues for all members of each school community, and through our links with the local community.
 - v. Establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum and enable each individual to fulfil his/her potential regardless of ability, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.
- 2.4 Equality principles based on the above aims will be embedded in our daily practices, policies and the processes of decision-making, including:
- i. Admissions, induction and attendance.
 - ii. CYP progress and achievement.
 - iii. CYP personal development and wellbeing, particularly in relation to safeguarding.
 - iv. Responsible adult involvement (taken to mean those with parental responsibility¹ for the child or young person and may include parents, carers, kinship carers, corporate parents, or guardians), and other agencies.)
 - v. Working with the wider community.
 - vi. Behaviour management.
 - vii. Staff recruitment and professional development.
 - viii. Curriculum access and participation.
 - ix. Teaching styles and strategies.

¹ [S3 Children At 1989](#)

3 Publication of Information and Equality Objectives

- 3.1 The Trust acknowledges its legal duties to publish information on compliance with the three strands of the public sector equality duty and, in addition, to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.
- 3.2 The Trust will work across its school communities to analyse data and existing practices to set out the actions taken in compliance of the equality duty and to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives to support the development of each academy and its community. These will be set out in each school's EDIB objectives linked to their School Development Plan.
- 3.3 The information on the equality duty will be updated annually and the objectives every four years. The EDIB Yearly report will be published on schools' websites.

4 Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy and for ensuring compliance. The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at each school is the Headteacher.
- 4.2 As part of their induction all staff members will receive training on this policy.
- 4.3 All staff will receive further training sessions (as required), to ensure that they remain aware of their responsibilities. Such training will:
 - 4.3.1 ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations;
 - 4.3.2 ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support CYP with protected characteristics;
 - 4.3.3 provide support for staff to effectively manage any discrimination towards CYP with protected characteristics;
 - 4.3.4 provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics;
 - 4.3.5 develop appropriate strategies for communication between responsible adults, educators and CYP about any issues related to a protected characteristic; and
 - 4.3.6 ensure the principles of an inclusive curriculum are embedded in our academic and social curriculum
- 4.4 It is the responsibility of all staff to:
 - i. treat colleagues, CYP and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
 - ii. support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity.
 - iii. actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities; and
 - iv. report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.

5 Duty to make reasonable adjustments

- 5.1 Responsible adults should notify the Headteacher in writing if they are aware or suspect that a CYP has a protected characteristic and provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information about a CYP's protected characteristic upon request. Providing such information will enable the school to support the CYP as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. Every school will have due regard to any request made by a responsible adult or CYP (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's protected characteristic as confidential.
- 5.2 The Trust will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments, where there is a need to ensure that a disabled person has the same access to everything as a non-disabled person, as far as is reasonable. We will take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by a disabled individual, as far as is reasonable.
- 5.3 The duty to make reasonable adjustments covers all aspects of school life, including the curriculum, classroom organisation and timetabling, access to facilities, clubs and visits, sports and policies.
- 5.4 In making reasonable adjustments, the Trust is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled students. Staff will carefully consider any proposals made by responsible adults and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.
- 5.5 The Trust will monitor the physical features of the school's premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the Trust will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. Please see the Accessibility Plan for further information, which can be found on the respective academy's website.

6 Uniform policy

- 6.1 Each school's uniform policy is consistent with this policy. The same uniform policy applies equally to all CYP, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, all schools will consider reasonable requests to alter the uniform, for example for genuine religious requirements and in making reasonable adjustments for disabled CYP to avoid substantial disadvantage.
- 6.2 Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by CYP when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred to the Headteacher, whose decision will be final, subject to the complaints procedure.

7 Admissions policy

Admissions criteria are defined under the Trust's admissions policy and are applied consistently to every CYP, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

8 Religious Beliefs

The Trust respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, CYP and responsible adults, and each school will comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice wherever possible. An example where a request may be refused is if the religious observance takes place during lesson time. Whilst the school will explore other ways to accommodate the request, this may not always be possible.

9 Curriculum delivery

- 9.1 The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for CYP with protected characteristics. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and social curriculum. Positive and proactive steps will be taken to prevent discrimination against, or victimisation of, any CYP in the provision of education or access to any benefit, facility or service including educational trips, work experience and leisure activities.
- 9.2 The Trust recognises and promotes awareness of the possibility of bias relating to protected characteristics and works to eliminate such bias in both teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are being carefully reviewed and developed across all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias.
- 9.3 The Trust is developing our understanding of training needs to meet the needs of CYP with protected characteristics.
- 9.4 All CYP are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other CYP, irrespective of any protected characteristics. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the Trust, and CYP are encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

10 Suspensions & Exclusions

The decision to exclude a CYP for a fixed period or permanently is a last resort and will be made in accordance with relevant supporting Trust policies. Schools will ensure they fulfil their duty under the Equality Act, 2010, and Children and Families Act, 2014, and ensure that decisions to suspend or permanently exclude are not discriminatory against those with protected characteristics, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; schools will review their actions prior to suspension and/or permanent exclusion to ensure that reasonable adjustments and best endeavours have been implemented ([Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England including pupil movement, DfE, 2022: pg. 9-10](#)). Please refer to the Trust's [MAT Behaviour Policy & Procedures \(incorporating exclusions\)](#).

11 Gender Identity

- 11.1 In order to be protected under the Equality Act 2010, a CYP will not necessarily have to be planning, or undergoing, a medical procedure to change their sex but they must be taking steps to live in an alternative gender or be proposing to do so.
- 11.2 CYP who have confirmed that they are gender questioning, proposing to or taking steps to transition into a new gender fall under the protected characteristic of gender-reassignment and will be provided with appropriate pastoral care and support.
- 11.3 The DfE record the gender of the CYP in the binary format of 'M' (male) or 'F' (female) but states that *"Gender should be self-declared and recorded according to the wishes of the parent and/ or pupil. Individuals are free to change the way their gender is recorded"*
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2021-to-2022>

12 Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination and harassment

All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment must be reported to senior staff and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident). All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise) will be addressed in accordance with the Trust's Behaviour Policy & Procedures

13 Complaints and Grievances

For all complaints and grievances see the Trust's policy on each school website for policy and procedure.

14 Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

- 12.1 The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy' in each school is the Headteacher.
- 12.2 Additional support would also be provided to any responsible adult, or significant person, wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on each school's premises during office hours and an electronic copy is posted under the Equality page of each school's and the Trust's website.
- 12.3 The Equality Policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle by a representative working party consisting of the following stakeholders:
- i. CYP
 - ii. Responsible adults
 - iii. Staff
 - iv. EDIB Committee
 - v. Local Governors
 - vi. Trustees
 - vii. Community representatives
- 12.4 The effectiveness of this policy will be assessed using a self-evaluation framework and an assessment of progress against school EDIB objectives identified in each school development plan, together with stakeholder views. Following this evaluation, recommendations will be made for changes to the policy and action planning for the future to continue to improve the culture of equality, diversity and inclusion for all within the Trust.