



21/10/24

Review Date: 21 October 2025

Orchard Academy

www.orchard-academy.com

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Orchard Academy is committed to cultivating an educational environment that recognises and upholds equality of opportunity as a fundamental right. We believe that every individual deserves fair treatment, and we actively seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination. Our commitment extends to valuing the diverse experiences and perspectives contributed by our varied workforce. Discrimination based on age, disability, gender identity, gender dysphoria, transgender status, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation is strictly prohibited. Our aim is to foster a culture rooted in meritocracy, openness, fairness, and transparency.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy is designed to align with statutory requirements as outlined in the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010: Establishes the public sector equality duty, safeguarding individuals against discrimination.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011: Requires educational institutions to publish information demonstrating compliance with the public sector equality duty and to set clear equality objectives.

Orchard Academy has developed an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan that exceeds our statutory obligations. This plan has been crafted with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the Equality Act 2010 and schools.

To ensure transparency and effective implementation:

- We will publish our equality objectives every four years.
- We will provide annual reports demonstrating compliance with the public sector equality duty.

This policy reflects our shared commitment to these values, ensuring that all schools within Orchard Academy actively promote and achieve equality of opportunity for all individuals. Our diversity enriches our community, and all employees share the responsibility for advancing this policy. Any behaviours or actions that contravene this policy will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with Orchard Academy's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Aims of the Policy

The primary goals of this policy include:

- Developing an ethos that respects and values all individuals.
- Actively promoting equality of opportunity for everyone.
- Preparing students to thrive in a diverse society.
- Fostering positive relationships within our communities.
- Eliminating all forms of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimization throughout Orchard Academy.
- Integrating principles of equality and diversity into all policies, procedures, training, and practices.
- Making reasonable adjustments to remove barriers hindering access to school activities and provisions.
- Supporting individuals and groups whose progress may be limited due to protected characteristics, stereotyping, or cultural misconceptions.
- Monitoring the implementation of equality and diversity initiatives across our schools.
- Ensuring that our policies and practices are fair, transparent, and align with our ethos and legal obligations.
- Upholding decisions, behaviours, and actions that reflect our ethical leadership framework.

This policy applies to all employees, students, members, trustees, and governors, forming the foundation for all Orchard Academy policies and procedures.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Director:** Responsible for approving this policy and ensuring consistent application across Orchard Academy, updating equality information annually, and reviewing objectives every four years.
- **HR Department:** Ensures all employees are aware of this policy and associated procedures, implementing it consistently and fairly.
- **Leaders and Managers:** Tasked with equitable enforcement of this policy and encouraged to seek guidance as needed.
- **Teachers:** Expected to promote equality and diversity and address incidents of discrimination related to protected characteristics, whether perpetrated by students, staff, or visitors. Employees with questions or concerns should consult their line manager or HR.
- **Students:** Encouraged to respect others in language and actions, adhering to our equality and diversity policies.

3. Commitment to Equality and Diversity

Orchard Academy is dedicated to:

- Promoting equality and diversity through its policies, procedures, and guidelines.

- Delivering high-quality teaching and services that cater to the diverse needs of our student population and workforce, ensuring no individual or group faces disadvantages.
- Ensuring that individuals with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, do not experience discrimination.
- Fostering good relations among individuals who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
- Encouraging all individuals to express their authentic selves, with their differences recognised and valued.

To support our commitment, we conduct equality impact assessments to evaluate the potential impact of policies or changes on individuals with protected characteristics. This evidence-based approach allows us to monitor and improve our practices, effectively addressing any unintended consequences.

4. Our Duty

Orchard Academy acknowledges its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. While we comply with non-discrimination provisions, we strive to exceed legal requirements, creating a climate where differences are understood and valued, and where everyone experiences equal opportunities and feels included.

Reports and policies submitted to the Trust Board include a cover sheet with an equality impact assessment, reviewed during decision-making processes. We regularly remind our staff and officers of their responsibilities under the Equality Act through training and meetings, with new staff receiving training as part of their induction.

As outlined in DfE guidance, Orchard Academy aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages faced by individuals related to specific characteristics.
- Meeting the needs of individuals with particular characteristics.
- Encouraging full participation of individuals with protected characteristics in all activities.

We also strive to foster good relations by:

- Promoting understanding and respect for diverse religions and cultures through our curriculum.
- Holding assemblies on relevant issues, encouraging student leadership and external contributions.
- Engaging with local communities, including inviting local faith leaders to speak at assemblies and organising community-based activities.
- Addressing any tensions that may arise among different groups of students, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment.

Through these efforts, Orchard Academy remains steadfast in its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring a supportive and enriching educational experience for all.

Approved by: Management Committee of Orchard Academy

Next Review Date: September 2025