

# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

**The OHC&AT Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy – 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**

Jay Mercer  
Chair of OHCAT Board



Peter Lauener  
Chair of OHC Board



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

## INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils, students and apprentices. OHC&AT is a 'family' of providers, comprising Orchard Hill College (OHC) and Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT), which works for mutual benefit. OHC&AT is proud of its diverse community of pupils/students, apprentices, staff and stakeholders and is committed to maintaining excellence in teaching and learning by ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity.

As used within this policy, equality means ensuring everyone is able to participate in all our activities. Diversity acknowledges there are differences between people, which should be recognised, respected and celebrated. Inclusion means everyone feels enabled to participate fully in the life of the OHC&AT community, and valued for the contributions that they make.

OHC&AT celebrates our organisational diversity. We embed a culture where all can contribute and be themselves.

As a public body we strive to be an exemplar to others. We value and welcome the different ideas, skills, behaviours and experiences of all. We aim to foster a culture that promotes wellbeing and mental health and provides support to enable everyone within our community to thrive.

As an employer and provider of education we are committed to meeting our legal obligations and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in both our work and our workforce.

We recognise that we need staff from diverse backgrounds to help ensure we make sound decisions that are representative of different perspectives within society. We seek to positively influence the approach of the staff and pupils/students/apprentices we work with to promote diversity and inclusion. We believe that a diverse workforce can help us to do that much more effectively.

## The Law

- The Equality Act 2010: This is the main law on equality in the UK. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- The Human Rights Act 1998: This law incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. It protects a number of human rights, including the right to non-discrimination.

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975: This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in employment, education, and the provision of goods, services, and facilities.
- The Race Relations Act 1976: This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race in employment, education, and the provision of goods, services, and facilities.
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995: This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, education, and the provision of goods, services, and facilities.

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations between key equality strands. These include:

- Age (in employment)
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership (in employment)
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We strive to do more than just meet our statutory obligations. We promote equal opportunities and we respect and acknowledge the diversity of those who work within our organisation, our pupils/students/apprentices and other stakeholders.

The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'.

The **general equality duty** sets out the equality matters that OHC&AT needs to consider when making decisions that affect pupils/students/apprentices or staff with different protected characteristics. This duty has three elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have 'due regard', when making decisions and developing policies, to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

In order to help educational establishments in England meet the general equality duty, there are **two specific duties** that they are required to carry out. These are:

1. To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty, at least annually;
2. To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, at least every four years.

Equality objectives for each OHC&AT provision can be found on the relevant website.

From April 2018 organisations with more than 250 employees are required to report on gender pay gap data. OHC&AT reports on this data annually, for both OHC and OHCAT as employers, and there is a strategy in place to close any identified gaps.

## **PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY ACROSS OHC&AT**

### **Our commitment:**

- We will continue to build a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects and understands the sector that we serve.
- We will ensure all colleagues are valued and can contribute to our success.
- We will empower and enable all our pupils, students, staff and apprentices to thrive and prosper.
- We will continue to value wellbeing, mental health and different styles of thinking, communicating and working.
- We will continue to actively consider the impact of how we work and our working environment on our wellbeing by providing effective, timely and good quality support to those who need it.

### **Pupils, students and apprentices**

- All pupils, students and apprentices are entitled to the best possible education that respects and addresses their individual learning needs.
- All pupils, students and apprentices should be free from discrimination, harassment or bullying, particularly with regard to their protected characteristics.
- All pupils, students and apprentices are given the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns with regard to OHC&AT and its discharging of its responsibilities with regard to equality.
- All pupils, students and apprentices have equality of opportunity with regard to learning experiences within and outcomes beyond OHC&AT life.
- OHC&AT will make all reasonable adaptations to maximise accessibility for all pupils, students and apprentices to all aspects of the curriculum and environment.
- All pupils, students and apprentices are expected to work within OHC&AT's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Appropriate support will be put in place or, if necessary, sanctions taken in the event of a breach.
- OHC&AT will set, monitor and update targets and practices designed to narrow the achievement gap for all pupils, students and apprentices.
- The diversity within the pupil, student and apprentice population is recognised, valued and celebrated.

## **Staff**

- Every employee is entitled to a working environment which promotes dignity and respect to all. Bullying, harassment or intimidation of any groups or individuals will not be tolerated.
- All staff have equality of opportunity with regard to support, mentoring, training and career progression.
- All staff are expected to work within OHC&AT's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Appropriate support will be put in place or, if necessary, sanctions taken in the event of a breach.
- The diversity within the staff population is recognised, valued and celebrated and, as far as possible, utilised positively to the benefit of the OHC&AT community.
- Staff are expected to behave as role models for pupils, students and apprentices and to reflect the aims and expectations of this policy at all times.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to enable staff to carry out their role.

## **OHC&AT will:**

- Ensure that the promotion and embedding of equality, diversity and inclusion is at the forefront of our organisation and how we encourage our pupils, students and apprentices to work.
- Ensure that resources are utilised fairly for the equal benefit of all pupils, students and apprentices.
- Make all reasonable and permissible adjustments to the fabric of the building and surrounding grounds to ensure a safe and accessible environment for all pupils, students, apprentices, staff and visitors.
- Not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation of any groups or individuals, within our own organisation or towards our pupils, students, apprentices or staff.
- Recognise our role within the community of our pupils, students and apprentices and their homes and within the wider community to present a positive image of our pupils, students and apprentices, recognising their abilities and achievements, celebrating their diversity.
- Work to ensure that our strategies, systems, processes and materials are accessible and informed by a commitment to equality and diversity.
- Collect and analyse data to ensure it is effectively monitoring both the successes and the achievement gaps between individual pupils, students and apprentices but also between protected characteristics on an annual basis.
- Create a culture of inclusion. This means creating a workplace where everyone feels welcome and respected, regardless of their background or characteristics.
- Provide training on diversity and inclusion to help employees to understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and to develop skills for working with people from different backgrounds.
- Celebrate diversity, for example by recognising employees' achievements, celebrating cultural holidays, and providing opportunities for employees to learn about different cultures.
- Hold employees accountable for their behaviour. This means taking action against employees who engage in discriminatory or harassing behaviour.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **The OHC&AT Board of Trustees will:**

- Review and approve this policy on an annual basis
- Complete and report on an annual review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across OHC&AT.

### **The OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Ensure this policy is updated annually and is disseminated to all staff.
- Ensure that all pupils, students and apprentices are aware of OHC&AT's position on equality, diversity and inclusion and how it relates to them, through dissemination to Principals of OHC&AT provisions.
- Ensure all policies, documents and actions are assessed for their impact in terms of equality.
- Ensure this policy is adhered to at all times via regular quality monitoring of OHC&AT provisions.

### **Principals, Senior Leadership Teams and Directors/Heads of Central Teams will:**

- Ensure that equality and diversity are respected and celebrated within their Academy, College or staff team.
- Ensure that all staff in their Academy/College/team are aware of and abide by this policy.
- Publish equality objectives for their Academy or College at least every four years (Principals) or contribute to OHC&AT's overall equality objectives that are published every four years (Directors/Heads of Central Teams).
- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty at least annually (Principals) or contribute to the annual publication of OHC&AT's equality compliance information (Directors/Heads of Central Teams).
- Provide opportunities for staff to develop and maintain their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion through regular, high quality CPD.

### **All staff will:**

- Adhere to this policy at all times.
- Model best practice in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion at all times.
- Ensure that equality and diversity is an integral part of all activity planning and delivery.
- Participate in relevant CPD as required.
- Be open to challenging others, and being challenged, as necessary regarding equality, diversity and inclusion matters.

## POLICY REVIEW DETAILS

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Version:</i>                    | 1.7                          |
| <i>Reviewer:</i>                   | Lynn Barratt, Rachael Tucker |
| <i>Approval body:</i>              | Family Board                 |
| <i>Date this version approved:</i> | 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2023   |
| <i>Due for review:</i>             | Summer 2024                  |

## **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Admissions Policy  
Anti-bullying policies (Academies/OHC)  
Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
Complaints Policy and Procedure (Academies)  
Complaints Policy and Procedure (OHC)  
Dignity at Work Policy  
Disciplinary Policy and Procedures  
Family Friendly Policy and Procedures  
Flexible Working Policy  
Health & Safety Policy  
Mental Capacity and Consent Policy (Academies)  
Mental Capacity and Consent Policy (OHC)  
Behaviour policies (Academies/OHC)  
Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures  
Relationships and sex education policies (Academies/OHC)  
SEND policies and information reports (Academies/OHC)  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Staff Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy  
Student Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy  
Whistle-blowing Policy