Equality information and objectives policy

Policy owner:	Chief Operating Officer
Approved by:	Trust Leadership Team
Ratified by:	Finance and Resources Committee
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Coastal Collaborative Trust is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and study aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

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

    - Age (DfE note that age is not a protected characteristic for students, only staff)
    - Disability
    - Gender reassignment
    - Marriage or civil partnership
    - Pregnancy and maternity
    - Race
    - Religion or belief
    - Sex
    - Sexual orientation

The Trust will pay due regard to selection, recruitment, training, and development processes to ensure candidates are selected for their aptitude and ability. We will mitigate against unconscious bias through training and create a culture where discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation is totally unacceptable. Any problems will be dealt with quickly, thoroughly, and confidentiality.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The policy is applicable to all students, staff, trustees, governing body members, contractors, parents, applicants, and other visitors or users of the Trust's facilities.

The policy covers all aspects of Trust activity including employment, education, governance, admissions, curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding, procurement and engagement with the wider community.

3. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND OUR VALUES

Our Trust aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our values. Promoting, celebrating, and valuing diversity and ensuring equality are at the heart of the Trust's core values, and will benefit the Trust in all aspects of its members' performance. These encompass aspiration with integrity, inclusion and opportunity, enthusiasm for excellence, respect and kindness and collaboration and community.

We recognise the diversity of our settings and are committed to:

- A culture where everyone feels a sense of belonging
- Approaches that reflect the varied needs of our academies
- Ensuring that no policy, practice or decision creates unfair disadvantage
- Responding to lived experiences and feedback from staff, students and stakeholders

4. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools, the technical guidance for schools from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and guidance from the Government Equalities Office on meeting the specific duties that support the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The board of Trustees and local governing bodies will be expected to:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the Trust, including to staff, students and parents/carers
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Trust Leader/Headteachers/Principal

The Trust Leadership and Headteachers/Principal will be expected to:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to Trustees and Governors
- Have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action to whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics

Staff will be expected to:

- Uphold our core values at all times
- Challenge and report all instances of bullying, harassment, and discrimination in the Trust community
- Lead by example in demonstrating understanding of, and respect for differences in diversity groups
- Be courteous, respectful and treat without discrimination all members of the Trust community

- Contribute to the development of a learning environment free from discrimination, victimisation harassment
- Promote, model and educate our students in the British Values—democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance—in daily practice

Staff can expect:

- To have equal chances of staff development, career development and promotion opportunities
- Appropriate induction training and subsequent staff development on equality and diversity issues where appropriate
- Inappropriate behaviour from any member of the Trust community to be challenged, with appropriate disciplinary action taken
- To be treated fairly at all times, in an environment which respects individual differences and challenges discrimination
- All staff members to take responsibility for promoting a fair, inclusive and supportive environment, where discriminatory practices are challenged.

Students will be expected to:

- Uphold our core values at all times
- Not engage in or accept any bullying or harassment
- Respect, recognise, and acknowledge varying needs of all members of the Trust community
- Be prepared to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour
- Act with due consideration and respect towards all members of the Trust community at all times.
- Treat all staff, fellow students and visitors with courtesy and respect at all times, and without discrimination.
- Demonstrate British Values—democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance—through all conduct and interactions

Students can expect:

- Inclusive quality first teaching, which acknowledges differences in students' ways of learning and their abilities.
- Learning materials free from bias, which celebrate diversity and challenge stereotyping
- All instances of bullying, harassment, or discrimination to be taken seriously and fully investigated, with appropriate action taken.
- To be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.
- A learning environment where differences are not only respected but are celebrated
- Equality of opportunity to participate in Trust organised events, where appropriate
- Reasonable adjustments and support in helping students meet their learning aims
- To have clear and consistent approaches and policies to support behaviour

Visitors will be expected to and agree to:

- Uphold our core values at all times
- Challenge and report all instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination in the Trust community.

- Lead by example in demonstrating understanding of, and respect for differences.
- Be courteous, respectful and treat without discrimination all members of the Trust community
- Contribute to the development of a learning environment free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment

6. ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION

The Trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct. The Trust recognises that discriminatory behaviour, prejudice-based bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence can constitute safeguarding concerns and will be addressed appropriately.

We believe that a greater level of success from students and staff can be achieved by realising the uniqueness of individuals. Creating an inclusive environment where individuals feel confident and at ease is a commitment of the Trust. This environment will be achieved by:

- Being respectful.
- Always treating all members of the Trust community fairly.
- Developing an understanding of diversity and inclusion and the benefits it can have.
- Adopting an inclusive attitude and ensuring that the whole community understands what inclusive behaviour looks like in the school and how this aligns with the academy's values.
- Adopting an inclusive curriculum that is accessible to all.
- Encouraging compassion and open-mindedness.
- Challenging bias and calling it out in order to move the conversation forward.

We are committed to having a balanced, diverse and fair curriculum. We believe that our students should be exposed to ideas and concepts that may challenge their understanding, to help ensure that students learn to become more accepting and inclusive of others. Challenging and controversial concepts will be delivered in a way that prevents discrimination and promotes inclusive attitudes.

Staff, Trustees and Governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings and in training.

7. DEFINITIONS

- **Direct discrimination** – treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** – a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages a particular group.
- **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.
- **Victimisation** – treating someone badly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination.
- **Reasonable adjustments** – changes made to reduce disadvantage for disabled students or staff.
- **Positive action** – lawful measures to support under-represented or disadvantaged groups (not the same as positive discrimination, which is unlawful).

8. ADVANCING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the Trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the Trust will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year
- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups

9. FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS

The Trust aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Making students aware of our behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- Holding assemblies/tutorial sessions dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies/tutorial sessions, and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of students within the Trust. For example, student representative bodies such as student councils or student unions include members from diverse backgrounds. Students are also encouraged to participate in the full range of the Trust's extracurricular clubs and activities.
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.
- Promoting respectful behaviour both online and offline.

10. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS IN DECISION-MAKING

The Trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. We consider equality implications before and at the time that we develop policy and make decisions and continue to review these on a continuing basis.

The Trust always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a visit or activity is being planned, the Trust considers whether the visit:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to students with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for all

The Trust will keep a written record to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded as part of the risk assessment when planning visits and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored within the completed risk assessment.

11. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

As a Trust, we are required to publish equality information every year (this will be available on the Trust website):

- We must report gender pay gap information
- We must report on at least one equality objective once every 4 years

We have defined three equality objectives:

Objective 1

Foster an inclusive culture where all staff and students feel valued, respected and able to be themselves.

Why we have chosen this objective:

As a newly established Trust bringing together diverse settings (high schools, a sixth form college and PRUs), it is important to develop a shared culture that promotes belonging, psychological safety and positive relationships for everyone.

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Provide staff awareness on inclusive practice, respectful language and unconscious bias.
- Strengthen student and staff voice structures across all settings and provide regular feedback.
- Promote representation in curriculum content, tutorial sessions, assemblies, communications, and workplace practices.
- Review and adapt our physical environments to ensure they are welcoming, safe, and accessible to all members of the Trust community and visitors.

Objective 2

Reduce inequalities in outcomes, opportunities and experience for all groups across the Trust

Why we have chosen this objective:

To ensure that we are aware of any differences in access and outcomes for certain student groups (SEND, disadvantaged, ethnic minority groups, care-experienced students those with long-term mental health conditions etc.) and staff groups (gender, ethnicity, disability etc.). Addressing inequity is a key part of our trust ensuring all students succeed and that staff thrive.

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Establish Trust-wide data to monitor patterns for key groups of staff and students.
- Set clear expectations for early intervention, reasonable adjustments and targeted support.
- Review recruitment, appraisal and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) processes to identify and reduce barriers for under-represented staff.
- Support academies to narrow gaps in attendance, behaviour and attainment.
- The Trust will monitor outcomes and experiences of vulnerable groups, including children with SEND, children in need, children subject to child protection plans, looked after and previously

looked after children, young carers and other students who may face barriers to participation, safety or achievement.

Objective 3

Ensure fair and consistent policies, systems and procedures across the Trust for both staff and students.

Why we have chosen this objective:

As a new Trust, policies and procedures vary across different settings. Consistency ensures fairness, transparency and equitable treatment for all.

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Develop and implement Trust-wide policies (HR, behaviour, special education needs and disability (SEND), safeguarding, recruitment) using an equality lens.
- Ensure clear communication and training for staff so practice is consistent and legally compliant.
- Monitor the impact of this policy impact by using both quantitative data and qualitative feedback, to ensure consistency and equitable treatment for all

12. CURRICULUM AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Trust will ensure:

- A broad, balanced and diverse curriculum reflecting global perspectives
- Resources that avoid stereotypes and celebrate diversity
- PSHE, RSE and citizenship curricula that promote respect, understanding, inclusion, online safety and safeguarding awareness.
- Adaptations to enable access for SEND students
- Enrichment opportunities for all
- Inclusive Quality First teaching and learning methods are used, allowing all students, regardless of background or characteristic, to access and succeed in the learning

13. COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Concerns relating to equality, discrimination or harassment will be managed under the Trust Complaints Policy, Staff Grievance Policy, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies, Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

Where concerns involve a child or vulnerable adult, they will also be considered under the Trust's safeguarding procedures and dealt with in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The Board of Trustees will update the equality information we publish at least every year.

Any academy-specific equality objectives will be reviewed by the Headteacher/Principal and shared with the governing board at least every 4 years.

This document will be reviewed by the Trust Leadership Team in consultation with the Quality of Education Board annually, to ensure continued compliance with the PSED.