

Diversity Statement

Date: September 2020

Review date: September 2023

At Lime Trust, we are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all our workforce, regardless of class, disability, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, family make-up, belief (religious or non-religious), or any other individual special need.

Introduction

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive Trust, where we celebrate diversity and difference, and acknowledge the richness that this brings to our school communities. We aim to provide opportunities for all employees and job applicants, regardless of sex, gender, gender identity and reassignment, sexual orientation, race, age, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy/maternity and marital/partnership status.

Each of our academies is led by the following Lime Trust values: **Respect, Equality, Self-worth, Partnership, Enjoyment, Communication (a voice for all) and Trust**. Our values encourage all stakeholders to display the behaviours expected of a member of our workforce. All members of our community are of equal worth.

This policy statement is an umbrella policy statement, which covers, and is inseparably linked to, every other Trust/school policy, including equal opportunities, safeguarding, health and safety, recruitment and selection policies.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards, as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 5 key principles:

- 1. All employees are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled; whatever their age; whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status; whatever their sex, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation; whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background.
- 2. We recognise, respect and value difference, and understand and promote the idea that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to disability, age, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief or faith. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn at, teach at and visit our schools.
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our workforce to feel a sense of belonging within the Trust, its schools and wider community. Also, to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully within the Trust and our schools.
- 5. We observe good equality and diversity practice for our staff.** We ensure that our policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which our staff and Governors treat visitors, volunteers, contractors and former staff members.

This policy statement covers all individuals working at all levels and grades within our Trust, including senior managers, full/part-time and permanent/fixed-term employees, trainees, volunteers, casual workers, agency staff (collectively referred to as 'employees', 'staff' or 'workers' in this policy statement) and all our Governors from all tiers within our Trust governance structure (i.e. Members, Trustees, Academy Councils).

Lime Trust is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

Our Trust policy is to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for all staff in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate against anyone on the basis of the Equality Act protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and the discipline, dismissal, redundancy of employees, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

The Trust is also committed to:

- Encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as they are good practice and make business sense
- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination; promoting dignity and respect for all; and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- The Trust - in providing goods and/or services and/or facilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers or the public

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the Trust Equality and Diversity Policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves in a way that helps the Trust to provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. All staff should understand that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for such acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination in the course of their employment against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

We take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic, is a criminal offence.

The Trust will:

- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- Take decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- Monitor the make-up of our workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability. Monitoring will also include assessing how our Trust Equality and Diversity Policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues
- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion to meet the aims and commitments set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy