

LEARNING ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP
Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (EEDI)

This policy supersedes all previous Equality and Diversity policies

Policy Reference No	PT014
Review Frequency	Annually
Reviewed	September 2026
Next Review Date	Autumn 2027

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Amendments

Policy Date	New Version Number	Summary of change	Comments
Sep 24	V1.7	Whole policy updated to reflect Equality, equity, diversity & inclusion identity harm based on backgrounds, cultures and or protected characteristics real or perceived	
Sep 25	V1.8	Comprehensive review of the entire policy to ensure more modern, inclusive, and considered language that is clearer and more concise, reflecting our organisational values around equality, diversity, and respect.	
Sep 25	V1.8	Accessibility & Language Support section added (1)	
Sep 25	V1.8	EEDI statement updated (3)	
Sep 25	V1.8	Wellbeing considerations section added (5)	
Sep 26	V1.9	Full policy review to modernise language and improve clarity, consistency, legislative and EEDI alignment.	

Union Consultation/External Review

Date	Action (meeting, email etc.)	Comments	Attendance
20/11/18	Draft policy sent to all unions and staff for comment	30 day consultation period	

**** Colleagues – Refers to employees***
****For the avoidance of doubt, where this policy refers to a 'Senior Leader', this includes members of the Trust Leadership Team (TLT) and other senior leaders as defined within the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, including for the purposes of decision-making, panels and appeals.***

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1. Accessibility and Language Support

1.1 If you require this policy in an alternative format or language, please contact the People Team or your Headteacher/Manager. We are committed to ensuring our policies are accessible to everyone, and we will work with you to provide appropriate support or resources.

2. Use of language

2.1 If In this policy, the terms "we", "us" and "our" refer to the Learning Academy Partnership (South West). These terms are used for clarity and ease of reading and should be interpreted as applying to the Trust at all times.

3. Introduction

3.1 We are underpinned by our core beliefs and we believe '***in a sense of belonging***' for all colleagues – everyone has a place in our organisation.

3.2 We have diverse workforce and communities and we recognise every individual for their uniqueness and aim to create and inclusive culture where people can be their genuine selves in accordance with our values. We believe we are '***stronger together'*** and will achieve our greatest success as an organisation when every person feels included and is able to flourish. We are dedicated to taking proactive steps to advance a culture of non- discrimination and equity.

3.3 As an organisation we do **not** accept or tolerate any behaviours which cause harm based on identity, backgrounds, cultures and or protected characteristics real or perceived.

3.4 We believe that it is only through advancing equity and embracing diversity and inclusion that we can truly embody our organisational values.

3.5 This policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

4. Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI)

4.1 We value the uniqueness of every individual and are committed to creating an inclusive culture where everyone can be their authentic selves. Rooted in the diverse communities we serve, we believe we are stronger together and achieve our best when all colleagues feel included, respected and able to thrive.

4.2 We have zero tolerance for behaviours that cause harm related to identity, background, culture, neurodivergence, or protected characteristics whether real or perceived. Identity-based harm, including discrimination, harassment, microaggressions, hate speech, or violence, is unacceptable and undermines our values and inclusive culture.

4.3 We encourage all colleagues to report any incidents of identity-based harm they experience or witness. Reports will be handled sensitively, and anyone raising concerns in good faith will be supported and protected from victimisation or retaliation.

4.4 Our commitments are grounded in the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from unlawful discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity across all protected characteristics.

5. Definitions

5.1 Protected Characteristics

People are legally protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status;
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race including racial group,
- Ethnic or national origin, or nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex; sexual orientation
- Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)

5.2 Identity based harm

Identify based harm refers to harm that is inflicted on an individual or group due to their actual or perceived identity.

The harm can manifest in many forms, including but **not** limited to:

- **Microaggressions** – These are subtle, often unintentional, discriminatory comments or behaviours directed at a member of a marginalised group.
- **Hate speech** – This involves communication that vilifies a person or a group on the basis of a protected attribute such as race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or gender.
- **Online harassment** – This involves the use of digital media to stalk, threaten, or intimidate an individual. This includes the use of social media to share and distribute messages relating to identify including those arising from culture, background and protected characteristics. This could include the use of memes, videos, chat groups and GIFS etc.
- **Physical violence** – This involves causing physical harm or injury to a person.
- **Social exclusion** – This involves excluding or rejecting an individual or group from social interactions, activities, or privileges.
- **Verbal comments** – This may include perceived humour comment generalisations relating to identity including those arising from culture, background and or protected characteristics. We **do no**t accept 'banter' as a defence for comments that cause harm real or perceived.

6. Policy statement

Purpose

6.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) and how we will create a safe and inclusive organisation that

learns and grows to proactively dismantle barriers, eliminate discrimination, and create equity for our people and those we serve.

This policy aims to ensure we:

- Treat everyone with dignity, fairness and respect and recognise individual uniqueness and identity regardless of any protected characteristic, combination of protected characteristics, or any other characteristic(s), socio-economic or demographic factors and/or cultural traits that may expose them to unfair disadvantage.

- Challenge all forms of unequal, offensive and unlawful treatment behaviours that target identity including those arising from culture, background and or protected characteristics.

- Have the leadership, effective management practices and resources in place so that everyone understands the barriers to EEDI and the consequences of discrimination ensuring a shared understanding.

- Develop a culture which attracts and retains people from the widest possible range of backgrounds, cultures and experiences including those with protected characteristics to create an organisation where everyone flourishes and belongs at all levels of the organisation and create a positive experience for all.

- Design and provide services which promote diversity and ensures inclusion and equity for colleagues that represent all backgrounds, cultures and protected characteristics.

7. Scope

7.1 It is expected that stakeholders at all levels and grades, including, Board Members, Trustees, leaders, colleagues, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed-term colleagues, volunteers, casual workers and agency colleagues (collectively referred to as colleagues in this policy) adhere to this policy.

7.2 Specifically, to protect people who are subject to identify based harm related to culture, background and or protected characteristics.

8. Standards

We will:

- Not accept harm based on identity, culture, background and or protected characteristics from any individual, colleague or pupil.
- Create a culture that is free from identify based harm including those arising from culture, background and or protected characteristics.
- Educate our people on their responsibilities to champion EEDI, promoting inclusive language, and respectful behaviour, and ensuring any breaches are appropriately dealt with.

- Provide support and take complaints of discrimination, unequal, unlawful, or offensive treatment seriously. Including, ensuring those who witness, or experience it, know how, and where, to make complaints and seek support.
- Proactively uphold and advance the rights of individuals belonging to the legally recognised characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as those who may experience discrimination and marginalisation outside the Act's scope.
- Consult and engage with our people, to enhance our understanding of the needs of, and obstacles faced, including those arising from identity, culture, background and or protected characteristics.
- Ensure that our recruitment, selection, development, and progression processes are transparent, merit based, fair and accessible to all and remove barriers to progression.
- Make jobs at all levels accessible, available on a flexible basis, where possible, and proactively make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of our people.
- Ensure any new and reviewed policies, programmes, decisions that will affect our people will undergo an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that any negative impact is mitigated wherever possible.

9. Laws and regulations

9.1 This policy supports our compliance with the requirements of relevant UK legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. Where legislation outside of the UK is contrary to the commitments of this policy, we aim to apply the highest standard.

9.2 However other aspects of a person's identify, background and circumstance can cause them to experience discrimination for example a person's socio-economic status, class or background. We are committed to advancing equality, equity and eliminating discrimination on these and other grounds.

9.3 The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination including associative and perception discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Discrimination arising from disability

10. Training and support

10.1 To ensure compliance with the policy, our people will complete mandatory training as required.

11. Church Schools

11.1 We are inclusive with a Christian foundation. In line with the Equality Act 2010 we do not discriminate based on protected characteristics including religion.

11.2 Therefore, we do not require colleagues to submit a statement of faith. As an inclusive organisation, in line with the Church of England vision for education we welcome children, colleagues and families from all faith and none.

11.3 We do ask colleagues to be supportive of the Christian foundation and uphold the Christian character of our church schools.

11.4 If any member of our community experiences harm or discrimination based on the protected characteristics, they are encouraged to report this.

12. Reporting/Breaches

12.1 If you believe that you may have experienced harm or been a witness to harm including that arising from culture, background and or protected characteristics you should speak to your Headteacher, Senior Leader or Trust Leader (as appropriate) in the first instance. Should you feel unable to discuss this with your Headteacher, Senior Leader or Trust Leader (as appropriate) please contact the Trust People Team.

12.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Colleagues who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure. It is important to note that the perception of the victim, **not** the aggressor, remains important and underpins actions that are taken.

12.3 Any colleague who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

13. Confidentiality, monitoring and data protection

13.1 The We are committed to ensuring that this policy is applied fairly, consistently, and in a way that supports an inclusive, respectful, and legally compliant working environment including where digital systems and education technology (EdTech) are used.

13.2 Personal data, including special category data, may be collected, processed and stored where necessary to apply this policy. This will be done in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection legislation, including the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

13.3 All personal data will be handled securely and in line with our Workforce Privacy Notice, Records Management and Retention Policy, and Information Security requirements.

13.4 Any actual or suspected loss, breach or compromise of personal data must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer to allow timely assessment, mitigation and, where required, notification to the Information Commissioner's Office.

13.5 Colleagues are expected to treat all personal and sensitive information with strict confidentiality, sharing it only where authorised and on a need-to-know basis. Failure to do so may be managed in line with our procedures.

13.6 Colleagues must ensure that all personal data and sensitive information they access in the course of their work whether in paper form, electronic systems, or EdTech platforms is treated with strict confidentiality. Such information should only be shared with authorised individuals on a need-to-know basis. Any suspected or actual breach of confidentiality must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer. Breaches may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with our procedures.

14. Review of policy

14.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there are changes in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, or internal practice.

14.2 We will monitor the application and impact of this policy to ensure it remains effective, equitable and aligned with our values.

14.3 Reviews will take account of colleague feedback, emerging best practice and any identified issues relating to fairness, inclusion or consistency, with updates made where appropriate to support continuous improvement.

Appendix 1: Related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Disciplinary policy and procedure (Staff)	Ensures that we operate effectively, and to promote and support the value that we place upon expected behaviors and conduct at work. The procedure is fair and transparent, ensuring equitable treatment and a consistent approach.
Whistleblowing Policy (Staff)	Ensures colleagues who whistle blow are protected from detrimental treatment or victimisation. Ensure a safe and equitable reporting process for all colleagues.
Flexible Working Policy (Staff)	Outline process for colleagues who want to work flexibly. Enabling all colleagues to have access to flexible opportunities to provide an inclusive and supportive work environment.
Grievance Policy (Staff)	Provides a mechanism for colleagues to raise genuine concerns about work, our conduct, or any policy/practice. Promotes fairness, transparency, and accountability. Ensure that grievance procedures are accessible to all colleagues, regardless of background or identity.
Recruitment & Selection Policy (Staff)	Details the process to ensure an unbiased and inclusive recruitment and selections process.
Harassment Policy	Details how to recognize, report and deal with sexual harassment and harassment.
Managing allegations of abuse against colleagues	Provides a fair, non-biased and consistent approach in dealing with allegations made against colleagues/volunteers, while ensuring effective protection for the child and person who is subject to the allegation.
Induction	Ensures colleagues feel welcome, supported and have all the tools and understanding they require to flourish in their role regardless of their background or role.

Perimenopause & Menopause Policy	Ensures that colleagues have equal opportunities and are not treated unfairly due to perimenopause/menopause symptoms. Educating all colleagues regardless of role, of the impacts of perimenopause/ menopause in the workplace and how every colleague can support in mitigating barriers.
Career Break	Supports colleagues to take time away from work while providing job security on their return. The policy creates an inclusive working environment where every colleague feels safe, belongs, and can achieve their full potential.
Sickness Absence	Promotes inclusivity and fair treatment for all colleagues regardless of their health conditions. Provides a transparent process and guidance to leaders to ensure colleagues have the support required to enable them to flourish in their role.
Risk Assessments	Identification of and mitigation of barriers to provide an inclusive working environment to colleagues regardless of their role in health conditions.
Maternity/PAT/Adoption/SPL	The policy ensures it provides fair treatment, guidance and support for all parents during significant life transitions.
Health and safety policy	Outline our written policy for health and safety in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
Code of conduct	This sets out how we expect colleagues to behave both in and out of the workplace, to foster a respectful and equitable environment for all.
Leave of Absence	Outlines the procedures to colleagues taking time off for other absences, while ensuring equitable support for all colleagues regarding their health or personal circumstances.

Appendix 3: Definitions

Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion

- **Equality** – the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.
- **Equity** – refers to fairness and justice and recognising that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances.
- **Diversity** – the existence of variations of different characteristics in a group of people. These characteristics could be everything that makes us unique, such as our cognitive skills and personality traits, along with the things that shape our identity (e.g. race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, cultural background).
- **Inclusion** – actively embracing people with diverse perspectives, backgrounds. and experiences.

Unlawful discrimination

When a person or group of people is treated less favorably than another person or group of people would be treated based on their protected characteristic or religious or political opinion*. **Only in Northern Ireland*

Types of discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** – treating someone unfairly because of their protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** – A practice, policy or rule applied to everyone that may at first appear fair or neutral but puts people of a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- **Discrimination by association** – a person is treated unfavourably because of another person's protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by perception** – when someone is treated unfairly because others believe they have a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** – a person is treated less favourably because they have or is expected to complain about discrimination.
- **Harassment** – unwanted conduct that has the purpose of effect of violating a person's dignity of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- **Bullying** – as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair sanctions which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermines their self- confidence, and which may cause them to suffer stress.

Each of the above, are grounds covered by current anti-discrimination legislation in the UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

Equality Impact Assessment

An evidence based approach designed to help ensure that policies, practices, events, and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

People/Colleagues

Our people include employees (whether part time, full time, fixed term or permanent); casual workers, agency workers, contractors, international delegates, delegates on secondment, volunteers, interns, apprentices, job applicants, service users, donors, third-party providers, partners and supporters.

Prejudice

A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Reasonable Adjustments

Under anti-discrimination legislation (*Equality Act 2010*) employers are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. This means making changes to a disabled person's environment or the way their employment is structured to mitigate any disadvantages and allows them to work safely and productively. This may include, removing physical barriers, providing extra support, and providing flexibility.