

EQUALITY POLICY

(TPO/EO/01))

Associated Policies

- Admissions (TSP/ADM/01)
- Staff Training and Development (TPO/STA/18)
- Teaching Staff Performance Management TPO/STA/17)
- Non-Teaching Staff Performance Management (TPO/STA/05)
- Sexual Harassment (TPO/STA/42)
- Bullying & Harassment (TPO/STA/43)
- Safeguarding & Child Protection (TPO/HS/05)
- Student Care and Welfare (TPU/STU/06)
- Behaviour and Discipline (TPO/STU/03)
- Anti-Bullying (TPO/STU/01)
- Special Educational Needs & Inclusion (TPO/STU/05)

Review Periods

Last reviewed:	September 2025
Next review:	September 2028

Consulted on with recognised Trade Unions – January 2025
Adopted by the Trust following consultation – January 2025

Contents

Policy Statement 1

Scope 1

Roles and Responsibilities 2

Vision and Values 1

Legal Framework 2

 Protected Characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)..... 3

Policy Principles 3

Eliminating Discrimination 4

Equality of Opportunity 5

Fostering Good Relations 7

Equality in Decision Making 7

Data Collection and Reviews 8

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 9

Confidentiality 9

Monitoring arrangements 9

Document control..... 9

Policy Statement

Brooke Weston Trust is committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion across all its academies and central operations. We believe that every individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. This policy aims to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations, provide inclusive education and employment practices, and make reasonable adjustments regardless of individuals' protected characteristics. We actively oppose all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and strive to create an environment where everyone can thrive, contribute, and feel valued.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended from time to time. Any amendments will be done in consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Vision and Values

The Trust recognises that there are core values which underpin the ethos of the Trust and this Equality Policy. These are:

Fairness: no Trust or Academy policy will unfairly advantage or disadvantage any member of the Trust community

Trust: all members of the Trust will operate within a culture of trust and individual responsibility

Participation: all members of the Trust will be encouraged to participate in Trust activities, and no member of the Trust will be prevented from joining an activity which could be reasonably expected to be open to all

Consultation and negotiation: the Trust are committed to consultation and negotiation with all representative stakeholders over major policy decisions taken by the Trust

Collaboration: all members of the Trust will work together as a team in which every member has a view and a voice that will be valued

Transparency: the rationale behind decisions taken will be open and subject to scrutiny

The framework established by this policy will be central to all significant decisions taken by the Brooke Weston Trust, or any decisions taken by Principals on day-to-day matters.

Brooke Weston Trust's equality objectives for 2025/2026 are detailed in appendix 1.

Scope

This policy applies to the entire Brooke Weston Trust community; trustees, directors, governors, employees, students, parents and carers and anyone seeking to become a member of that community.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of trustees: will have strategic oversight of the equality objectives and policy for approval, holding leaders accountable for DEI outcomes and practices. They will ensure that the DEI information set out in this policy is communicated throughout the trust and is reviewed and updated at least once every 3 years.

CEO: will embed DEI into Trust-wide strategies and be responsible for resource allocation.

Principals/Heads of Profession: will embed DEI into school culture, curriculum and operations; promoting awareness and understanding, facilitating training for colleagues, monitoring the success in achieving the Equality Objectives, and ensuring student engagement in DEI-focussed learning.

Leaders: will ensure that all colleagues understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and will act upon behaviour falling below these standards. Leaders will ensure that this policy forms part of every new colleague's induction programme.

People Team: will set the DEI Strategy, ensure inclusive people policies and practices, source suitable DEI training, produce guidance, and support the Trust on DEI matters.

Employees: will review the policy and uphold it in their daily practices, challenge discriminatory behaviour or report it via proper channels, engage in DEI training and awareness activities, and contribute to the overall success of the Equality Objectives.

Students: will endeavour to treat peers and staff with respect, participate in diversity celebrations and inclusive activities, and report any concerns or discrimination.

SENCO: will ensure that specific aspects of this policy are implemented in respect of individual students on the SEN register.

Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Employment Rights Act 1996

Aligning with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance, we are also committed to meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and ensuring compliance with all relevant statutory requirements, including:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people from different backgrounds

Protected Characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)

We will not discriminate or allow other prohibited conduct based on:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Policy Principles

The Academy is committed to celebrating diversity in all its forms and will provide a supportive, inclusive and safe learning community for all students and adults, that fosters positive relationships and values diversity as a rich learning resource.

The Academy recognises that it must make special efforts to ensure that all potentially vulnerable groups of individuals are helped to fulfil their potential including:

- All gender groups
- All students, colleagues and others who identify as LGBTQ+
- All minority ethnic groups including Gypsy Roma Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers
- Students and others with Special Educational Needs
- Students, colleagues and others with a range of disabilities, including neurodiversity
- Students, colleagues and others with religious/cultural requirements
- Looked After Children and their carers
- Young Offenders
- Young Carers
- Children at risk of significant harm
- Children living with vulnerable adults
- Students with EAL

The Academy is committed to nurturing, in all colleagues and students, the personal qualities which we consider to be essential in a member of the Trust community, and as a citizen in the wider community, which promote and value diversity, equity and inclusion for all. These include:

- Thoughtfulness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Kindness
- Responsibility
- Humility

The Academy will ensure that, whilst adhering to the equalities law, and safer and fair recruitment practices, every attempt will be made to achieve diversity in the workforce and the governing body to ensure that it is representative of the local community.

The Academy is committed to regular monitoring and evaluation of the attainment and achievement of all students including those from vulnerable groups to enable us to identify areas where additional intervention and support may be required.

The Academy is committed to supporting wellbeing through inclusive pastoral care and colleague wellbeing toolkits and platforms.

Eliminating Discrimination

Anyone wishing to join the Trust has the right to be treated fairly and feel safe whilst visiting, learning or working in one of our Academies, and we are committed to preventing all forms of discrimination including:

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably than others because of a *protected characteristic*, whether this is known or perceived (e.g. not hiring someone because of their race, or not hiring someone because you *think* they are gay).

Indirect discrimination: applying a rule, policy, or practice that appears neutral but disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic (e.g. requiring all colleagues to work late evenings, which may disadvantage those with caring responsibilities).

Harassment: unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Victimisation: treating an individual unfairly because they've made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment (e.g. being excluded from meetings after raising a grievance).

The Trust will ensure that it has commonly understood processes for challenging inappropriate language, behaviour and prejudice towards others, and that any such incidents are reported and recorded. The Academy has an effective anti-bullying policy which is applied equally to all students, and Bullying & Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policies which are applied equally to all colleagues, that do not advantage or disadvantage any member of the Trust community.

The Academy recognises that the equality groups covered in this policy may be more vulnerable to bullying and harassment and that all incidents of reported bullying are acted upon swiftly and recorded accordingly, reporting to parents as necessary.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct, and we carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all relevant policies.

Trustees, Local Governors and colleagues will receive training on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion as part of their induction or as part of the Annual Governors Conference.

The Academy promotes an inclusive ethos in all aspects of its operation. Our approach to behaviour management is based upon creating strong relationships built on trust and individual responsibility. This positive approach to behaviour management enables all students in the Trust to develop positive behaviour patterns and for us to support those most vulnerable students more effectively.

Equality of Opportunity

We recognise that equality is not about treating everyone the same, but about giving everyone what they need to succeed. To advance equality of opportunity for students, we will:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected by a particular characteristic they have (e.g. students with disabilities, or gay students who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim students to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all students to be involved in the full range of school societies)
- Providing a range of extra-curricular activities to allow choice and access for all

We are particularly focused on addressing disparities in attainment, exclusion, attendance, and access to enrichment opportunities.

In addition, we will consider how our activities as an employer affect colleagues with protected characteristics. As a trust, we will:

- Publish information to show gender pay-gap reporting and other pay equality issues
- Shape policies and programmes to address equality concerns from colleagues
- Analyse and publish information from colleague surveys

We will make sure that with any data we publish to show how we meet our equality duties, individuals will not be identifiable. This means we may suppress some data if it relates to a very small number of people to preserve their confidentiality.

The Academy will seek to make reasonable adjustments to ensure the equality of opportunity of all members of the Academy community including students, colleagues, governors, parents and carers and other visitors to the Academy. These include:

- Ensuring the building is physically accessible to all including wheelchair users, the visually impaired and those with other physical disabilities
- Working closely with external support agencies to ensure the most effective support is in place
- Providing specific and targeted training to enable colleagues to meet the needs of individuals
- Sharing good practice in respect of teaching and learning to ensure equality of access for all
- Purchasing a range of specific equipment, software and resources to enhance learning and support for individuals, where reasonable.

The Academy is committed to ensuring that all members of the Academy are fully supported and recognises that some groups may have particular needs. These include:

- Arranging individual meetings with parents of students with a disability or special educational needs to determine the most appropriate strategy and intervention
- Providing one to one support for students with literacy and numeracy developmental difficulties
- Working closely with external agencies to provide support for students and families including mentoring and counselling
- Providing and regularly reviewing Individual Education Plans for students with special educational needs
- Providing individual academic targets for all students and reviewing progress against these targets identifying intervention strategies on an individual and/or group basis
- Ensuring appropriate access to translation services for parental meetings

The Academy is committed to providing a rich and relevant curriculum which celebrates diversity, actively promotes community cohesion and ensures their understanding and appreciation of faith, diversity and the common values which underpin society which is broader than the planned teaching in RE, PSHE and citizenship. These include opportunities for:

- Offering and listening to different viewpoints
- Understanding the different rights and beliefs of equality groups and developing greater individual tolerance as a member of the Academy
- Learning about and understanding the history of oppression and inequalities in society with particular reference to the equality groups in this policy
- A broad range of educational trips and visits for all students
- Participation for all students in all aspects of Academy life, including extra-curricular activities

The richness and breadth of the curriculum is reviewed regularly as part of the Academy's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Audit (SMSC).

The Academy is committed to the implementation across all of its schools to having a uniform which avoids the social or emotional pressures on students of choosing their own attire. The Academy will ensure that all uniform policies are reasonable and consider cultural and religious issues – while students are expected to adhere to a school's uniform policy, the Academy will be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions.

Accessibility Plans

As per paragraph 3 of schedule 10 of the Equality Act, each academy within the Trust has an accessibility plan which is reviewed on an annual basis. This set out actions to:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the academy's curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of the education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the academy
- Improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is not readily accessible to students who are not disabled.

The accessibility plans for each academy can be found on the academy website or can be requested from the school office.

Fostering Good Relations

We aim to build cohesive school communities where people from different backgrounds live, learn, and work together with mutual understanding and respect. 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 the 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
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues
- Making sure students work with their local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of students within each school. For example, school councils have representatives from different year groups and are formed of students from a range of backgrounds. All students are encouraged to participate in their schools' activities, such as sports clubs. Schools also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures

The Academy will ensure wherever possible that the equality groups represented in this policy are reflected in the images and languages of all Academy publications and that positive images of these equality groups are represented in learning resources and displays.

Schools develop links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop how they implement their approach. The Academy works in partnership and collaboration with a range of other schools, colleges, charities and organisations which also promote equality and can maximise equality of opportunity for all members of the Academy community.

Equality in Decision Making

The trust ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. In all our schools we will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether it will disrupt any religious holidays, is accessible to students with disabilities, and has equivalent facilities for all students irrespective of their gender.

The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the colleague organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment. See Appendix 2 for a template.

Data Collection and Reviews

The Academy will monitor the following data in respect of the equality groups identified in this policy and analyse this in comparison with the Academy community as a whole and national trends:

- Attainment
- Progress
- Attendance
- Exclusion
- Bullying

The Academy will subsequently identify appropriate interventions to minimise any discrepancies from the equality groups.

The Academy will ensure that all aspects of employment, including recruitment, disciplinary issues, complaints, grievances and allocation of responsibilities, professional development and other opportunities for all colleagues are monitored to ensure that equality is upheld.

The Equality Policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle by a representative working party consisting of the following stakeholders:

- Students
- Parents
- Colleagues
- Governors
- Community representatives

The effectiveness of the Equality Policy will be assessed using a self-evaluation framework and an assessment of progress against targets together with stakeholder views. This will be reported in the annual equality report.

Following this evaluation, recommendations will be made for changes to the policy and action planning for the future to continue to improve the culture of equality for all within the Trust.

The following information will demonstrate how we comply and achieve our PSED objectives:

- Reviewing student progress and attainment data. This data will be used to plan intervention
- Mentoring and enrichment programmes
- PSHE programmes, including tutor sessions, assemblies and celebrations involving students
- Data and information published on our websites, including; Student Premium and SEN reports
- Academy Improvement Plans, Governing Body reports and minutes
- School improvement officer, SENCo and Directors reports.
- Taking advice from relevant parties e.g. disability experts, HR professionals
- Information on SEN or specific support programmes
- Work profile data and recruitment monitoring information
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Policies that are in place across the Trust

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy

This policy aims to align with the People Team's DEI Strategy 2025-28 which aims to:

1. Embed DEI in organisational culture, raising awareness and understanding amongst colleagues
2. Diversify recruitment and talent pipelines
3. Ensure equity in career progression and pay
4. Foster inclusive leadership and accountability
5. Promote colleague wellbeing and psychological safety
6. Monitor, evaluate, and adapt DEI practices

Confidentiality

The Trust aims to deal with matters under this policy sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All employees must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this policy. Any breach of confidence may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

The employee and anyone accompanying the employee to any meeting in set out in this policy, including both formal and informal meetings, must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this procedure without consent.

Records will be kept no longer than necessary and in compliance with GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as part of the Academy's annual review process. Equality Objectives will be reviewed annually.

This policy will be approved by the Trust Board of Directors.

Document control

Date of last review:	September 2025	Author:	People Team
Date of next review:	September 2028	Version:	8
Approved by:	SDG/Board of Directors	Status:	Statutory

Summary of changes V8:

- This version simplifies the policy language, introduces Vision & Values and Legal Framework sections, clarifies discrimination definitions, links to the Trust's DEI Strategy, and adds the People Team to Roles & Responsibilities.
- Equality objectives have been revised and updated

Appendix 1: Brooke Weston Trust Equality Objectives 2025/2026

Objectives		Strategies	Success Criteria
Objective 1	Promote a DEI-centric culture across all areas of the trust by raising awareness and understanding of key topics.	Create a centrally driven calendar of awareness topics with a DEI focus, to launch in September 2025. Minimum of one event per half-term across the academic year. Collaborating with colleague's trust-wide to foster inclusion and engagement.	At least 6 awareness topics ran with a DEI focus. Engagement from colleagues demonstrated with sharing of own experiences, celebration of individuals, and colleague feedback. Improved employee engagement survey scores, specifically from within the Trust's minority groups.
Objective 2	Create safe and respectful environments, promoting a culture of recognition, inclusion and understanding, with a focus on promoting mental health awareness and support networks.	Complete MHFA 'train the trainer' in Term 1, and onward training of MHFA's (2 per academy) by the end of 2025/26. Establish an MHFA Network across the Trust, with training, leadership support, equitable access to MH support, and promoting open conversations about mental health.	Improved results in the 2025/26 engagement survey regarding mental health and feelings of psychological safety at work. Increased attendance overall, and a decrease in mental health-related sickness absences from 2024/25.
Objective 3	Enabling and encouraging everyone to have a voice to shape inclusive policies and practices.	Creation of at least two trust-wide DEI Networks with Champions, driving local actions, holding regular focus groups and facilitating regular feedback. To be developed and launched over the next 2 academic years.	Holding initial DEI focus groups in year 1. Launch of networks, including identification and training of DEI Champions in year 2.
Objective 4	Promote accessibility and inclusion trust-wide, taking a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments.	Review all people practices and policies and communications, to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. Development of toolkits to assist leaders in identifying and supporting the need for reasonable adjustments. Implement a system to monitor and review reasonable adjustments for colleagues with disabilities or long-term health conditions.	100% of policies reviewed within year 1. 100% of people processes and communications reviewed within year 2. Toolkits developed and rolled out within year 2. Implementation of tracker system by Term 3.

Objectives		Strategies	Success Criteria
Objective 5	Strengthen inclusive leadership & accountability by implementing mandatory DEI training trust wide.	Roll-out of DEI training for Leaders across the Trust in year 1. Roll-out of DEI training for all colleagues in year 2.	50% of leaders trained in year 1, with remainder being completed by the end of year 2. 75% of colleagues completed DEI training in year 2.
Objective 6	To actively close the gaps in attainment and overall achievement between students for all groups of students, especially disadvantaged students, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from minority ethnic groups.	Early identification of need through tracking of individual student performance. Provision of tailored support and intervention to enable access to the curriculum and other specialist support available.	Improved attendance and performance for all student groups. Regular challenge, support and monitoring of progress through Executive Principal meetings, Local Governing Body meetings, Education Standards Committee meetings and quality assured through external moderation.