

CMAT EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

[Approved by Cmat Board of Directors 9 March 2015]



This policy is based on the specific duties required by the Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

The Congleton Multi-Academy Trust is committed to building a caring community by ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all of its members, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion or faith or socio-economic status. We strive to develop an ethos of inclusion and appreciation of diversity in which everyone connected with CMAT is able to participate fully in its activities.

We recognise that we are part of an increasingly diverse society and believe it is important to actively promote equality and diversity so that our young people understand and celebrate the richness that accrues from living and working with people from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This will help to prepare them for adult life in a multicultural, multilingual Europe that is interdependent with the rest of the world.

In promoting equality and diversity, we wish to eliminate harassment, direct or indirect discrimination and bullying or victimisation for any reason, but particularly of sex, race, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and age (for employees or prospective employees, not students.) We understand that such discrimination is unlawful.

Legal Framework

We are aware of our specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate direct or indirect discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations

in relation to sex, age (for employees or prospective employees), race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity. (Protected characteristics).

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.

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations mentioned above, CMAT is guided by the following principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but should, nevertheless, take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to: disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made: ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised: gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised: religion, belief or faith background: sexual orientation: pregnancy or maternity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We wish to ensure that the CMAT is a happy and tolerant community. Incidents of bullying or harassment of staff or students are rare but should be dealt with swiftly. Our policies, procedures and activities should promote positive attitudes, mutual respect and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, and ensure an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents and sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good 'equalities practice' in staff recruitment, retention and development.

We endeavour to ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development regardless of disability *, ethnicity, culture, age, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, their gender and sexual orientation, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity

The CMAT encourages employees to disclose information that may present 'barriers' for them at work. There is a clear whistle blowing policy and staff are encouraged to bring to the attention of senior leaders within their institution, any improper conduct including harassment and discrimination.

(* Staff with temporary (short-term) or permanent disabilities)

On appointment

All steps required to enable the employee to work without exacerbating the condition are taken from the date of appointment. This may include, for example, a risk assessment carried out for working with VDU equipment.

Disability developed while employed

In all cases, staff are referred to the Occupational Health Unit with a specific request for feedback to include how to manage the disability in the workplace. This may include, for example, phased rehabilitation, purchase of specialist equipment e.g. ergonomic furniture, keyboards and other software to reduce strain on a damaged part of the body, etc.

Principle 5: We will review our Equality and Diversity Policy.

We will review the Equality and Diversity policy annually, with consultation and involvement of members of the CMAT community belonging to minority groups, to ensure that the policy continues to meet their needs.

Principle 6: We will base our practices on sound evidence.

Each school within the CMAT will maintain its own quantitative and qualitative information about progress towards greater equality in relation to disability, ethnicity, religion and gender. Some of this will be, for example, as part of RAISEonline.

Principle 7: We will set objectives to comply with the Equality Duty.

To comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, each school within the CMAT will:

- publish specific and measurable equality objectives* relating to the groups mentioned above, that best suit its individual circumstances and contribute to the welfare of its students and school community. (*One or more objective, as many as it believes appropriate to its size and circumstances to be set at least once every four years.)
- publish information (updating this annually) to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (for example, school policies, newsletters, the Equality and Diversity policy, the RAISEonline report, information about staff training on the Equality Act, etc.) Any steps taken / progress towards meeting equality objectives will be included here.

Teaching and Learning

We will ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles set out above. In essence, we endeavour to provide all our students with equal opportunities to reach the highest level of personal achievement by:

- monitoring achievement by ethnicity, gender, special educational needs (including disability in terms of medical needs), Free School Meals (and Pupil Premium) and vulnerable groups, identifying any gaps and taking appropriate action to narrow them, to improve the progress of those groups
- promoting attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice, and recording and monitoring any incidents of such behaviour
- providing opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and understand and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- including inclusive approaches to teaching and learning

Ethos and organisation

We will ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The CMAT is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above: prejudices around disability and special educational needs, racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum, prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia. There is guidance in each school on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

The CMAT Confidential Reporting ('Whistle blowing') policy

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Multi-Academy. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Multi-Academy. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. The CMAT Confidential Reporting ('Whistle blowing') policy makes it clear that this can be done without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage, providing them with a secure basis for reporting suspicions of impropriety, in the knowledge that if requested the matter will be treated confidentially.

Roles and responsibilities

The CMAT Board is responsible for ensuring that each school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures are implemented.

The Head Teacher of each school is responsible for implementing the policy in his / her school, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination. The day-to-day responsibility for implementing the policy may be delegated as appropriate.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles described above
- support students in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

