

We are an **ambitious** and **inclusive** Trust of schools
strengthening communities through excellent education.



Equality Policy

Responsibility for approval: Trust Board
Date of approval: 3 December 2025
Next review: December to February 2027

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1.0 Policy statement

We are an ambitious and inclusive Trust of schools, strengthening our communities through excellent education. We recognise that by valuing and promoting equity and diversity for all employees and job applicants and avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and delivery of services, we will be able to deliver an excellent education for the young people in our schools.

We believe it is our duty to ensure our workforce reflects the diverse nature of both the communities we serve, and wider society. We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive Trust that nurtures and develops talent for all, in an inclusive environment, so that it is attractive to people from all backgrounds. We value diversity and recognise the varied contributions that a diverse workforce brings to an organisation. We are committed to drawing on different perspectives and experiences of individuals. This will add real value to what we do and will better enable us to deliver our mission.

At the Ted Wragg Trust, we welcome and are committed to our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We aim to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination 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 it; and foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against any member of the Ted Wragg Trust community based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics).

2.0 Scope and purpose

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels, in the Ted Wragg Trust, including all employed staff (full-time, part-time and fixed term), Trustees, Governors, consultants, contractors, trainees, volunteers, casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship and covers job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures and termination of employment. It also applies to former staff, for example in the provision of employment references.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will put our commitment into action and comply with the law, to ensure that equality and diversity is promoted across the Trust and our staff are not subject to, and do not commit, unlawful acts of discrimination.

3.0 Legal framework

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 policy is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: *'The Equality Act 2010 and Schools'* and complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

This policy will be published on the Trust website and Staff Hub and will be included in the Trust's Policy Monitoring Schedule

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

Our Trust Board, along with the CEO, has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with equality legislation. Day-to-day school operational responsibility has been delegated to our Headteachers. Regular review in line with legislation and Trust need is the responsibility of the Senior Executive Team.

All leaders must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our mission, values and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Senior leaders will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness, and recruitment and selection best practice.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and not to discriminate against or harass others, treating them with dignity and respect at all times. They should also apply this to how they treat members of the public in the provision of services and should support the Trust in meeting its commitment to provide equal opportunities for all and promoting diversity in the workplace.

We provide regular opportunities for staff voice, both through surveys, collaborative discussion and line management meetings, with the intention to improve the experience and representation of all staff and identify gaps in provision for staff from underrepresented groups.

In line with legislation, we produce a gender pay gap report annually which is published on our Trust website.

5.0 Forms of discrimination

The Ted Wragg 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, harassment and other prohibited conduct.

Discrimination by or against any member of staff is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and can occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics as set out above. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is a genuine occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. It will only be exceptional circumstances that this will apply in our Trust. An example of this may be advertising for a female teacher of PE and this may be necessary for monitoring of the changing rooms.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by a provision, criterion or practice that also puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

6.0 Recruitment

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant skills and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed when needed to ensure that they are

relevant to the job. Short listing of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible.

POTENTIAL ADDITION – for discussion:

Positive Action and Equal Merit Appointments

Our organisation is committed to attracting the best talent from the widest possible pool and building a workforce that reflects the diverse communities we serve. As such, we may use **positive action** measures, permitted under the Equality Act 2010, to encourage job applications from people with protected characteristics who are currently under-represented in our workforce or in specific roles where we have identified a disadvantage.

Examples of such actions might include targeted advertising, open days, or mentoring schemes aimed at encouraging applications from underrepresented groups, alongside our standard, mainstream recruitment channels.

Positive discrimination is unlawful and will not be practiced; all applicants will be assessed strictly on individual merit against objective and agreed selection criteria.

In the specific circumstance where two or more candidates are assessed to be of **equal merit** for a role, and we have evidence of underrepresentation for a particular protected characteristic in that area of our workforce, we may use the "tie-breaker" provision (Section 159 of the Equality Act 2010). This allows us to choose a candidate from the underrepresented group, provided this action is a proportionate means of achieving a more diverse workforce. This provision will only be applied where candidates are genuinely as qualified for the specific job, and we will not have a general policy of automatically favouring any one group. All recruitment decisions are documented to ensure fairness and transparency.

All aspects of the selection process are objectively considered, and decisions are made based on clear criteria in the person specifications.

Job advertisements will be reviewed to avoid stereotyping or use wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a wide labour market.

Applicants may be asked for protected characteristic information to aid in demographic monitoring and to support provision of reasonable adjustments to enable a fair recruitment process.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, other than where it is necessary to:

- establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments)
- establish if any reasonable adjustments need to be made to enable an applicant to have a fair interview or assessment.

carry out equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process)

Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants will not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Our selection process is designed to adopt a values- based approach to interviews. All applicants are offered feedback on how they did not meet the criteria for appointment.

We are required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance, name, or apparent nationality. All prospective staff, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original specified documents before employment starts to satisfy current immigration legislation.

7.0 Training, pay and conditions of service

Staff training needs will be identified through the planning for success process, our coaching model and through discussion with line managers. All staff, through both our Ted Wragg Institute career development offer, and school-level offers, will be given appropriate access to training for their current role and future aspirations.

Pay progression will be based on experience and meeting the relevant standards for the post. This is explained in detail in our Pay Policy.

Our conditions of service and benefits are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are appropriate for all staff.

We provide free access to an independent and confidential Employee Assistance Programme for all staff.

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and sanctions are applied without discrimination.

8.0 Disability discrimination

If any member of staff is disabled or becomes disabled, we encourage them to tell us about their condition so that we can support them as appropriate.

If any member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they should contact their line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. They may wish the member of staff to consult with a medical professional about possible adjustments, or they may recommend a referral to Occupational Health.

The Trust will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate an individual's needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled staff or job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for staff who have a disability.

9.0 Equality objectives

As a public body the Ted Wragg Trust complies with The Equality Act (2010), which protects individuals against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on the nine protected characteristics. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Act (2010) consolidates and replaces all previous equalities legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Public Sector Equality Duty places additional duties on public sector organisations such as Multi-Academy Trusts. The duties include working proactively to eliminate discrimination based on the nine protected characteristics. The duties also require public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act (2010).
- advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups.
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

10.0 Our equality objectives for 2023-2027

Objective 1

To maximise the attendance, attainment, and inclusion of students vulnerable to disadvantage, including those with Special Educational Needs, disabilities, and protected characteristics enabling all students to experience an excellent education.

Objective 2

To implement broad, balanced and ambitious curricula ensuring all students experience equity and fairness in relation to access and engagement for learning, enrichment, and extracurricular opportunities. This curriculum should reflect and celebrate the diversity of our communities and beyond, to ensure we are fully inclusive of all our young people, to maximise their attainment, aspirations and future employability.

Objective 3

To improve, by reference to protected characteristics, the recruitment, retention, progression, career development and experience of all employees in the Ted Wragg Trust, so that staff performance is further enhanced, staff satisfaction increases and the staff team reflects the diversity of the local population at all levels. We aim to become the inclusive employer of choice.

Objective 4

To maintain and build links between schools and parents, carers, service partners and wider stakeholders to strengthen relationships, increase access to support and nurture a greater sense of belonging within and across our school communities.

Objective 5

To develop and deliver a Trust-wide charter which accelerates and further raises our ambition of being an inclusive Trust committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all students and staff, especially those with protected characteristics and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, addressing inequalities where found.

11.0 Review of policy

This policy is reviewed every year by the Trust Board, objectives are reviewed every four years. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.