# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy

This policy is effective in all Academies within the Learning without Limits Academy Trust and the Trust Central Team. Where the term 'Trust' is used in this policy, it covers all Academies and the Trust Offices.

| **Associated Trust Policies:** | |
|---|---|
| Data Protection Policy | Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy |
| Equality Objectives | Staff Expectations Policy |
| Grievance Procedure | Whistleblowing Policy |
| Recruitment Policy | Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy |

| **Version: V2.0** | **Status: DRAFT** |
|---|---|
| **Date: February 2026** | **Next Review: February 2027** |

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. The review date indicates when the policy is scheduled for evaluation and updating, not when it expires. The policy continues to apply until it is formally revised or replaced.

| Version | Date | Author | Changes – Current version |
|---|---|---|---|
| V2.1 | February 2026 | MH | Policy Review<br><br>Amendment made to list of protected characteristics at 1.3 to correctly reflect the list of nine as per the Equality Act. Clarification added at 1.7 regarding additional protections which are covered within the characteristics.<br>Previously approved equality objectives added at section 4<br>Para 5.2 - additional text clarifies the use of single-sex facilities, in line with current Equality Act interpretation.<br>Other minor amendments made throughout document, included amended contact details at 3.4 and 3.5<br><br>The Policy was reviewed in consultation with recognised trade unions ahead of approval by the Trust Board on the 7th May 2026. |

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. The Learning without Limits Academy Trust is committed to providing high quality teaching and learning for our learners. We recognise that by valuing and promoting equal opportunities in employment for all workers and volunteers and job applicants and avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and delivery of services, we will be able to deliver first class education and value the differences our workforce brings to the Trust.

1.2. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We also 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 which will add value to what we do. We acknowledge intersectionality and the impact that a wide variety of differences will have on the individual and the workplace. While not a separate legal category, intersectionality helps the Trust understand how overlapping protected characteristics may compound disadvantage

1.3. We will ensure that we do not discriminate against staff on the basis of any or a combination of the nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marital or civil partner status
- pregnancy or maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

1.4. The principles of non-discrimination also apply to how we expect our staff to treat colleagues, learners, parents and carers, visitors, contractors, suppliers and former staff regardless of whether the legal protection of having a protected characteristic applies.

1.5. This policy complies with the requirements of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010. Under the general public sector equality duty of the Equality Act 2010, our Trust must have due regard to and are committed to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- set equality objectives
- identify a senior level champion for leading the diversity strategy
- secure top-level ownership and sponsorship
- develop and cascade a diversity vision statement
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

1.6. The duty covers the protected characteristics as listed at 1.3 above.. The first part of the duty - the duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation - also applies to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership. As part of our duty we publish on our website:

- Our equality objectives; and
- Information that demonstrates our compliance with this duty.
- Gender pay gap reporting in line with the regulations.

1.7. In accordance with the 2025 UK Supreme Court ruling, references to the protected characteristic of 'sex' within this policy apply to biological sex. Protection for trans, non-binary and intersex people continues to be provided through the characteristic of gender reassignment and other relevant provisions whilst gender related protections fall under the characteristics of sex and gender reassignment.

1.8. As part of the application of this policy, the Trust may collect, process and store personal data and special categories of data in accordance with our data protection policy. We will comply with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time, in relation to how we collect, hold and share personal data.

1.9. This policy has been implemented following consultation with recognised Trade Unions. It has been formally adopted by the Trust Board.

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

## 2. Scope and purpose

2.1. This policy covers all individuals working in the Trust, including Principals, senior leadership, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers (including trustees and governors), casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as workers and volunteers in this policy, where appropriate).

2.2. This policy applies to all aspects of the employment/volunteer relationship and covers job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, appraisals, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. It also applies to former employees for example, in the provision of employment references. This policy focuses on employment and does not cover the provision of services to our learners.

2.3. The purpose of this policy is to set out the Trust's approach to equal opportunities, how we will tackle discrimination and how we will put our commitment into action and comply with the law, to ensure that equality and diversity is promoted in the workplace and our workers and volunteers are not subject to and do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The Trust Board has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with equality legislation. Day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy has been delegated to the Trust CEO/Academy Principal. The Local Governing Body will be provided with updates concerning how the Academy adheres to the Policy and

promotes the Trust's agreed equality objectives.

3.2. All senior leaders must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Equality and Diversity training for Managers is available via the Trust's online training portal.

3.3. All workers and volunteers must be aware of this policy and have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and not to discriminate against or harass other people including workers and volunteers, former employees and job applicants treating them with dignity at all times. This also applies to work-related trips or events including social events. 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.

3.4. If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact HR@lwlat.org.uk for further information.

3.5. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by emailing HR@lwlat.org.uk

## 4. Equality Objectives

4.1. In line with its duties under the PSED, the Trust prepares and publishes a set of equality objectives every three years. The Board agreed upon 5 objectives in January 2024 as follows

- Develop a people strategy that promotes diversity, equity and inclusion across the Trust particularly in relation to staff recruitment.
- Ensure all our sites are fully accessible to those who are disabled or have SEN.
- Ensure all our curriculum is fully accessible; to actively close the gaps in attainment and overall achievement between learners for all groups of learners, especially disadvantaged learners , learners with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and learners from minority ethnic groups.
- Promote mental health awareness and develop appropriate interventions where necessary
- Further embed robust consideration of equalities with Trust governance and decision making

4.2. The Trust Board considers progress made against the objectives each year with Local Governing Bodies considering how their Academy promotes and delivers against the objectives.

## 5. Forms of discrimination

5.1. Discrimination by or against a worker and volunteer is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

5.2. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics as set out above. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their age. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an 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 for example, where the sex of an employee may be specified as a requirement for their role and would involve working in the changing rooms for individuals of the same sex. Where single-sex facilities or occupational requirements apply, these will be determined based on biological sex, in line with current Equality Act interpretation.

5.3. Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. Such a requirement would be unreasonable without objective justification. For example, requiring a job to be carried out full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be indirect discrimination unless it can be objectively justified.

5.4. 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. Pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership are not protected directly under the harassment provisions. However, pregnancy and maternity harassment would amount to harassment related to sex, and harassment related to civil partnership would amount to harassment related to sexual orientation. Harassment is dealt with further in our Staff Expectations Policy. An example of harassment related to race would be where an employee is subject to jokes and mockery about their ethnicity.

5.5. 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. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the victim has complained, given information or supported someone else's complaint. An example of victimisation is if a person is treated less favourably due to being a witness and providing evidence in an investigation regarding discrimination allegations.

5.6. Discrimination by association is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic. An example of discrimination by association would be where an employer does not recruit a prospective employee due to them having a disabled child.

5.7. Discrimination by perception is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that a person has a particular protected characteristic irrespective of whether they do have that protected characteristic (this does not include marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity). An example of discrimination by perception is if a person is ridiculed by another person who thinks they are gay.

5.8. Third-party harassment occurs where an employee or volunteer is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity), by someone other than their employer, so could include clients, contractors, visitors and parents. An example of third party

harassment is if a person is subjected to less favourable treatment by a parent due to having gone through gender reassignment.

5.9. Part-time and fixed-term staff must be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified. For example, if a part time member of staff did not receive the same amount of holidays pro-rata, comparable to full time staff.

## 6. Applying our policy to recruitment and selection

6.1. We will aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. When recruiting or on promotion, we will aim to take steps to improve the diversity of our workforce and provide equality of opportunity. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant skills and abilities. All applicants will be provided with a copy of our Privacy Notice for Applicants which sets out how we will gather, process and hold personal data of individuals during the recruitment process. Our recruitment processes are set out in our Recruitment Policy.

6.2. Job selection criteria as set out in the person specification will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and reflective of, and appropriate to, the pay grade. Short listing of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible and will be carried out objectively against the requirements of the job.

6.3. Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. For example, wording in an advert which asks for young and dynamic could be seen as age discrimination, 'active' and 'athletic' could be considered disability discrimination. The Trust's HR Lead will monitor job advertisements for compliance.

6.4. This policy will be made available to applicants upon request and can also be found on the Trust website.

6.5. We will take reasonable steps, where appropriate depending on the situation, to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

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

6.6.1. establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).[i]

6.6.2. establish if any reasonable adjustments need to be made to enable an applicant to have a fair interview or assessment.

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

6.7. Job offers will be conditional upon a satisfactory medical check in accordance with our obligation under Keeping Learners Safe in Education[ii], where a school must verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities in accordance with the Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

6.8. Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy or gender identity or history. Applicants will not be asked about matters which may suggest an intention to discriminate on ground of a protected characteristic. Applicants will be asked to clarify which pronoun they would prefer to be referred to.

6.9. We are required by law to ensure that all workers and volunteers are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance, name or apparent nationality. All prospective workers and volunteers, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original specified documents before employment starts to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from your Academy Operations Manager/HR Manager.

6.10. To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our Trust, we monitor diversity data as part of the recruitment process and as set out in our Staff Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's success at recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is kept separate from applications, not included in short listing, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

## 7. Applying our policy to training, promotion, pay decisions and conditions of service

7.1. All workers and volunteers will be provided with a copy of our Staff Privacy Notice which sets out how we will collect, hold and share personal data of individuals during their employment.

7.2. Employees' training needs will be identified through the Professional Development Review process. All employees will be given appropriate access to training for their job and in order to enable them to progress within the Trust.

7.3. For teaching staff, pay and promotion decisions will be based on their performance (where relevant), skills and experience.

7.4. Our benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all employees who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them. See the LwLAT Website for how to access these services, and to access the Trust's Managing Stress and Promoting Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy.

7.5. Relevant national and local conditions of service within our Trust as applied to our employees, will meet the requirements of equal opportunities.

## 8. Applying our policy when terminating employment

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

8.2. We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## 9. Disability discrimination

9.1. Disability discrimination includes direct or indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate the effects caused by a disability.

9.2. If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

9.3. If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager, Academy Operations Manager/HR Manager or Principal/CEO to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager, Academy Operations Manager/HR Manager or Principal/CEO may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully, will refer you to Occupational Health where necessary and try to accommodate your 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.

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

## 10. Breaches of this policy

10.1. If you believe that you may have been discriminated against or you have witnessed discrimination you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you are uncertain which policy applies or need advice on how to proceed you should speak to your line manager, Academy Operations Manager/HR Manager or Principal/CEO.

10.2. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers and volunteers and who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result, as referenced in point 4.5 above. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

10.3. Any member of staff 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.

## 11. LwLAT Wellbeing Statement

11.1. The Trust will always put the effective education of our learners at the heart of any decision that we make. In doing so, we recognise that the requirement to adhere to policies and procedures may be time consuming and can impact on workload. For this reason the Trust and its Academies will always endeavour to support staff when policies and procedures are being actioned.

## 12. Review of policy

12.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust in consultation with the recognised trade unions. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

12.2. We will also monitor and review the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved and workforce training is targeted where needed.

## 13. Archived Previous Policy Changes

| Version | Date | Author | Changes |
|---|---|---|---|
| V1.0 | November 2023 | AE | New Trust policy, to replace the Trust Equality Policy. This policy has been implemented following consultation with recognised trade unions.<br>Policy formally ratified at the Trust Board Meeting 25th January 2024. |
| V2.0 | March 2025 | AE | Policy name updated to emphasise equity. Archived previous policy changes moved to end of document. Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy added to the list of associated Trust Policies.<br>Review in consultation with recognised trade unions. Policy approval at Trust Board Meeting 1st May 2025. |

[i] Section 60 of the Equality Act 2010
[ii] Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025