



# **Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

**September 2023**

DATE FOR REVIEW: September 2024



## **James Montgomery Academy Trust Overarching Vision**

Our schools are child centred, inclusive and distinctive, delivering excellence in education, sharing best practice and building aspiration. Our schools learning environments are supportive safe and welcoming to all operating with the aim of reducing stigma and improving educational integration for all individuals. JMAT are committed to valuing, respecting and understanding individuals' differences.

## **James Montgomery Academy Trust Core Principles**

Together we will:

- Consistently put children at the heart of decision making
- Champion school individuality
- Continually improve through innovative and research driven practice

## **Statement of intent**

The James Montgomery Academy Trust understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, its schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

The term Trust refers to all schools in the James Montgomery Academy Trust. Our Trust's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our pupils. We are committed to supporting and celebrating all pupils' individual identities. Our schools learning environments are supportive safe and welcoming to all operating with the aim of reducing stigma and improving educational integration for all individuals.

## **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017

This policy has due regard to statutory and good practice guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- SEND Regulations (2014)
- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Gender separation in mixed schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and Trusts'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- LAC Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy: Pupils
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as 'the Act'. The Trust fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities. Protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a Trust to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

JMAT schools aim to:

- Create and foster a learning environment that is free from any harassment and discrimination.
- Promote healthy communication between staff, pupils and parents to support successful education, development and wellbeing of pupils.
- Adhere to all relevant statutory legislation concerning bullying and harassment.
- Adhere to the Church of England's education vision: wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration; community and living well together; dignity and respect including the updated vision of "valuing all gods children" which offers guidance on support to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic issues.

JMAT are committed to valuing, respecting and understanding individuals' differences providing continuous support to embrace positive role models building a community where everyone feels valued, respected, safe and loved. JMAT take a 'do no harm' approach to ensuring children's experiencing identity issues are fully included and supported in their education and safeguarding.

The Trust's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the Trust, but will apply to subsequent actions connected to the previous relationship between Trust and pupil, such as the provision of references on former pupils or access to "old pupils" communications and activities.

The disability provisions in this Act are different from those for other protected characteristics in a number of ways, including a more complex definition of what constitutes discrimination. Schools may, and often must, treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils by making reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled pupil can benefit from what they offer to the same extent that a pupil without a disability can.

The schools in the JMAT implement their individual accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Provision for disabled pupils is closely linked with the existing provisions for pupils with special educational needs. These are the same duties as previously existed under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010. We will provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled pupil's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, so they can integrate wholly in all parts of school life.

## Principles and Aims

JMAT was established in 2016 as a group of primary schools working in collaboration as one charitable entity, to improve and maintain high educational standards and offer life opportunities for our children and the community as a whole. Our schools all share the belief that a nurturing approach is at the heart of success.

### We believe that:

- happy children learn
- happy staff thrive
- happy parents build a community

### We promise that children in JMAT will:

- feel welcome, valued and **safe**
- develop outstanding academic and social **skills**
- have **fun** whilst fostering an intrinsic love of learning
- **respect** and celebrate everyone's similarities and differences
- build lasting, healthy **relationships** and support networks
- engage with and contribute substantially to their local **community**

### To do this we will:

- **Listen** to the child, their parents, carers and siblings wherever possible follow their lead and preferences.
- **Avoid** where possible gender **segregated activities** and where this is not possible allow the pupil to access the activity that corresponds to their identity.
- Challenge bullying and discrimination.
- Promote **positive attitudes** to diversity including gender issues through inclusion, SRE and PSHE.
- Ensure all staff and governors deal with discrimination and or identity matters inclusively and sensitively providing an **inclusive** environment for all pupils in line with the expectations in the code of conduct.

We actively seek to eradicate all discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, race, disability, religious or cultural background, sexual orientation or appearance. Although this list of the areas of potential discrimination is wide ranging, it is not exhaustive and incidents of discrimination on any other grounds will be taken equally seriously. We are fully committed to these principles and we have identified practical priorities and plans of specific action in order to promote equality in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief, age and socio-economic circumstances. In fulfilling our legal obligations, we are guided by the following principles:

- We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents, as of equal value, regardless of any protected characteristic.
- Our policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences in life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to any protected characteristic.
- The Trust will promote race equality and have due regard to eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.
- The Trust will promote disability equality, ensuring equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and disability-related harassment and encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.
- The Trust will promote gender equality by eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment, and promote the equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.
- Transgender people are explicitly covered by the PSED. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'transgender' refers to an individual whose gender expression or identity is different from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- The Trust will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within the community.
- The Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice and recognises that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice-related discrimination may fare less well in the education system.
- The Trust will ensure that all staff comply with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- The Trust's Admissions Policy will not discriminate against any protected characteristic in any way.

**The Trust will:**

- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, a shared sense of cohesion and belonging, and ensure this is promoted in our policies, procedures and activities.
- Reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.
- Engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy, procedure or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- Ensure that policies, procedures and activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in the public life of everyone, regardless of any protected characteristic.
- Ensure staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the Trust, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and showing appropriate support for pupils with additional needs, maintaining a good level of awareness of issues surrounding equality.

## Who is responsible for this policy?

The **Local Governing Body (LGB)** has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring:

- compliance with discrimination law
- pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to admissions, education provision, pupil's access to benefits, facilities and services, and lastly exclusions.

Day-to-day operational responsibility, including regular review of this policy, has been delegated to the Headteacher. The **Headteacher** will ensure they implement and champion this policy and is responsible for ensuring:

- All employees are aware of the requirements of this policy and their individual responsibilities.
- Any concerns raised within the scope of this policy are treated seriously and sensitively.
- Regular training sessions are in place to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Necessary and appropriate changes to the support available to ensure the mental health and wellbeing and development of the pupil is safeguarded.
- Feedback is gained from pupils and their parents on specific support in place with consent from the pupil for organised meetings when linked to identity. Schools will ensure parents are aware how they can seek additional support.
- Staff and pupils use the correct names and pronouns etc. terms for each individual aligned to parental agreement.
- Appropriate counselling is made available to individuals where appropriate or signposting to appropriate channels.
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***The DSL will ensure staff understand how to react to instances of gender-based prejudices and related bullying.***

**All pupils and staff will be made aware of designated safe spaces within school where they can discuss gender, sexuality and all other matters without fear of discrimination.**

All members of the **senior leadership team** within the James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT) and its schools 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.

**Staff will:**

- Be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment and/or discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities and inclusivity, and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole school community.
- Not unlawfully discriminate in any employment practice or process.
- Raise with management any suspected discriminatory acts or practice.
- Refrain from harassment or intimidation of others.
- Refrain from victimising an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who has provided information about such discrimination.

## Curriculum

Trust schools will deliver an inclusive curriculum which fosters good practice in educating pupils about equality, the development of personal, social and cultural identities in all pupils and teaches pupils respect and value for diversity as well as celebrating cultural diversity. This is done through:

- teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them
- A PSHE and RHSE scheme to provide opportunity for learning about the protected characteristics
- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and challenge prejudice and stereotyping
- A programme of curriculum-based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities
- Teaching strategies for pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.

We will ensure that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

### **Promoting equality**

The Trust will promote inclusion and equality at its schools through:

- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing board and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extracurricular activities and the curriculum.
- Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.
- Ensuring admission arrangements will not unfairly disadvantage a pupil from a particular social or racial group, or with SEND.

As well as the specific actions set out above all Trust schools operate equality of opportunity in their day to day practice in the following ways:

### **Pupils' Attitudes, Values and Personal Development**

In Trust schools we celebrate diversity and ensure we:

- Enable our pupils and staff to develop a critical awareness of diversity and equality
- Enable our pupils and staff to have the confidence and skills to challenge instances of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination
- Equip our pupils and staff to understand that reason, logic and sensitivity have to underpin the means of resolving arguments and conflicts
- Value the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Ensure a willingness by pupils and staff to learn from different cultures, backgrounds, faiths and beliefs
- Recognise the importance of language to a person's sense of identity and belonging and consider pupils' language abilities as a teaching and learning resource and a strength
- Ensure that pupils have the opportunity to receive the support and guidance they need on an individual basis and take account of the personal and cultural needs specific to that individual
- Ensure that pupils have the skills to communicate effectively (including the ability to listen and discuss) and to defend their own opinions.

### **Teaching and Learning**

We ensure that:

- Teaching methods and styles take full account of the needs of pupils' background experiences

- Teaching methods encourage positive attitudes to difference, cultural diversity and equality
- The diversity of cultures and backgrounds represented in the school is seen as a positive resource for teaching and learning
- We provide a variety of educational and residential visits that expose pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences
- Take care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that school staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- All pupils are fully aware that staff have very high expectations of them and are continually challenged to reach higher standards
- A positive ethos of mutual respect and trust is fostered amongst pupils and staff, in which all members of the school community feel valued and safe
- Classrooms and other common spaces in the school, where work is displayed present positive and challenging images that are non-stereotypical and reflect the multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural society and world
- Learning is a collaborative and co-operative enterprise.

### **Bullying and Discrimination**

The JMAT Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services and/or the police of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Procedures Policy.

### **Staff Training**

New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction. Whole-school staff equalities training will be delivered on an annual basis and will include:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.

### **Admissions and Exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors. Exclusions will always be based on the school's behaviour policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.



## **The Public Sector Duty (PSED)**

We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the PSED, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

## **Collecting and using information**

Any personal data the school collects will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and in line with the requirements of the PSED. The school will collect equality information for the purpose of:

- Identifying key issues, e.g. unlawful discrimination in teaching methods.
- Assessing performance, e.g. benchmarking against similar organisations locally or nationally.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the **Trust DSL**.

Any changes made to this policy by the above will be communicated to all members of staff. The policy is available for public view on the JMAT website. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2024**.