Orchard Lea Federation

Employment Equality Policy

Date agreed: March 2026

Date for review: March 2028

No changes from personnel regarding this policy

1. Introduction

The Governing body of the Federation recognises its responsibilities in the employment of staff in the Federation. In accordance with those responsibilities, it wishes to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all of its staff, all those who are applicants to work in the Federation and those individuals who undertake work on Federation premises. This policy sets out the principles under which the Governing body of the Federation will operate to meet these aims.

The policy has been discussed and agreed with all staff representatives and with the trade unions and professional associations. It is available to all staff in the Federation and to any prospective applicant. The Governing body welcomes any comments or contributions to the policy document. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Federation's pupil focused equality policy.

2. Statement of Intent

The Governing body of the Federation is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the Federation. This policy focuses specifically on the employment of staff in the Federation. The Governing body recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce. The Governing body and Leaders of the Federation will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions. All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and

fair assessment of Federation requirements. The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.

All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

3. Statutory requirements

The Governing body is bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the "protected characteristics" that qualify for protection from discrimination as: -

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

There are some exemptions from this legislation in situations where the essential nature of a job calls for a man, woman, or a person from a particular religion or racial group. The governing body will not normally seek to use exemptions from the above Acts.

The Governing body will consider requests for time off or for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs, such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the Federation.

The Governing body will, wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.

The Governing body acknowledges these areas of regulation and confirms its

commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the Federation.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, by all governors and staff in the Federation, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

4. Advertising of vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the Federation to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

5. Selection for appointment or promotion

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

i. A detailed role profile will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post.
ii. An objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the role profile.
iii. From the role profile and person specification a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up.
iv. Role profiles, person specifications and selection criteria will be available to all candidates.
v. Shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria and a written record retained of the assessment of each candidate.
vi. Selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria and no other criteria will be used.
vii. A written record of the selection decision relating to the agreed criteria will be retained.
viii. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the Federation.

6. Specific Issues

i. Age

The Governing body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.

ii. Disability

The Governing body is opposed to any discrimination against people with disabilities based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the Federation. Where a candidate who has a disability is appointed to a post in the Federation, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or environment where this is practicable.

iii. Gender reassignment

The Governing body is opposed to any discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's gender.

iv. Marital status or civil partnership

The Governing body is opposed to any discrimination against individuals who are married or in a civil partnership.

v. Pregnancy and maternity

The Governing body is opposed to any discrimination against a woman because of her pregnancy and/or maternity leave.

vi. Race

The Governing body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, ethnicity or national origin. There may be situations in the Federation which require special consideration and where an occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

vii. Religion or Belief

The Governing body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief.

viii **Sex**

The Governing body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on sex. There may be situations in the Federation which require special consideration and where a genuine and determining occupational requirement may apply

to justify the employment of someone of a particular sex. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

viii. Sexual Orientation

The Governing body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation.

ix. Harassment or bullying

The Governing body is opposed to any unwanted conduct relating 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. The Governing body is further opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff either by an employee or third party based on assumptions about their status in the above categories or any other grounds. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the Federation's procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.

x. Non-statutory aspects

Although there is no statutory requirement not to discriminate against other groups, or characteristics of staff, the Governing body wishes to state that it will not in any way discriminate against members of staff or applicants for posts on the grounds of their political affiliation.

7. Positive Action

The Governing body recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the Federation. The Governing body will therefore consider measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

The Governing body will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action which supports members of those groups to compete on an equal basis. Positive action measures may include:

- Encouraging applications from specific groups which are under-represented in the Federation.
- Encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts.
- Advertisements which encourage applications from individuals of a particular sexual orientation, or religion or belief, but make it clear that selection will be on merit.
- Flexible working –use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible.

- Language/literacy training.
- Supporting training for under-represented groups.
- Assistance with applications for candidates with language problems.
- Provision of childcare facilities or support with the costs of childcare facilities for staff.
- Exploring the possibility of career breaks for staff to assist with family commitments.
- Commitments to interviewing disabled people who meet the desirable criteria for the post.
- Encouraging staff to become representatives of trade unions/associations.

8. Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them or harassment because of perception or association.

The Governing body is committed to the principles of dignity at work for all of its staff in the Federation. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all leaders and colleagues. The Governing body will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the Federation. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

The Federation has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. The Governing body is committed to investigate any such complaint. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. The first point of contact for any such complaint should be the Executive Headteacher or if the complaint is about her then the Chair of Governors. In addition, all staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support.

9. Monitoring the Policy

An Equality policy can only be shown to be effective if its implementation is properly monitored. Given the scope of our policy, this means monitoring both the existing

staff of the Federation and all applications from outside of the Federation. The Federation will therefore keep records of existing staff and new applicants which can be analysed to provide data to assess whether this policy is working in practice.

The Governing body will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy by the following methods:

i. All applicants for posts will be asked to complete a monitoring form to enable monitoring of our selection decisions against the principles of this policy.
ii. All applicants for posts will be invited to indicate whether they have any special requirements or require reasonable adjustments to enable them to submit an application, attend an interview or carry out the duties of that post. Responses to this question and appropriate actions taken by the Federation to accommodate people with disabilities will also be monitored as part of this process.
iii. Staff and governors will be invited to give feedback from time to time, and to make suggestions for improvements.
iv. The incidence of complaints under the above procedures and any other aspect of this policy will also be monitored, and figures published on a regular basis.
v. The Governing body will ensure that information is stored in an appropriate and confidential format in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

10. Non-employment aspects of equality

This policy relates only to the employment aspects of the activities of the Federation. The principles outlined here by the Governing body of fair and equal treatment apply equally to our approach to pupils and parents of the Federation and to our dealings with members of the local community and all outside agencies. The Federation's policy on equality in the curriculum and the treatment of pupils is set out in a separate policy document.

11. Training

The principles outlined above in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the Federation's operational priorities, based on the Federation's overall development plan and budget allocations.

12. General statement

The policy will also be made available to potential applicants for vacant positions in the Federation.