



# Mulberry UTC Equality Policy

<b>Approval Body:</b>	Mulberry UTC LGB
<b>Approval Date:</b>	November 2025
<b>Implementation Date:</b>	November 2025
<b>Review Date:</b>	November 2026
<b>Policy Version:</b>	5

## Version control

Version	Reviewed	Changes since last version
1	Existing	
2	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brought into line with MST Equality Policy guidance</li> <li>• Requirements of the Equality Act 2010 made explicit</li> <li>• Ensured that the policy applies to staff as well as pupils</li> <li>• Detail included on implementation</li> <li>• Monitoring scope and arrangements added</li> <li>• Responsibilities clarified</li> <li>• Expectations re protected characteristics moved to Appendix; race section updated</li> <li>• Equality objectives removed as they are available elsewhere</li> </ul>

3	November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further updates required – policy carefully checked and is comprehensive.</li> </ul>
4	November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further changes</li> </ul>
5	November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further changes</li> </ul>

## Context

- Mulberry UTC is a vibrant, high-achieving inner city learning community where each individual can flourish. It is a community which believes that education is a life-chance and that every pupil is entitled by right to the fullest and richest educational experience. We aim to enable all pupils to aspire, to lead and to excel as young people who will make a positive, successful contribution to our community now and in their future lives.
- Every pupil and staff member is valued and respected equally, enjoying the highest standard of educational and professional opportunity and experience. The school is committed to enabling all members of its community to feel secure and confident, and to succeed to the best of their abilities.
- The school places the promotion of equality and diversity at the centre of every aspect of its work. This policy adheres fully to Mulberry School Trust's Equality Policy guidance (available on the MST website).
- We implement all legal and local requirements regarding racial, disability, sexual orientation, gender and age equality in an inclusive way in every aspect of school life, including classroom practice, the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, performance and celebration events, employment and staff management and policy development and implementation.
- This policy sets out how the school supports all pupils and staff in achieving their potential, academically, professionally and personally. The policy also confirms the expectation that all members of the school community, including pupils, staff, parents, governors, visitors, volunteers, uphold our Equality aims.
- In enacting this policy, the Local Governing Body acts in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The Public Sector Equality Duty included in the Equality Act 2010 requires schools to have due regard to equality considerations when significant decisions are being made or policies developed. schools must consider how their activities affect the people who share the protected characteristics and publish information to show how the activities:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - improve equality of opportunity between people with protected characteristics and those who do not;
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The Act defines protected characteristics as:
  - age<sup>1</sup>
  - disability
  - gender reassignment

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<sup>1</sup> Age and marriage/civil partnership are protected characteristics for adults in relation to employment. They do not apply to school pupils.

- marriage and civil partnership<sup>1</sup>
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

It is unlawful for the school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil, staff member or prospective staff member, by treating them less favourably because of one or more of these characteristics.

8. The Act's two specific duties require us to:

- a) publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty;
- b) publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

9. The Local Governing Body also recognises its responsibility to promote community cohesion, introduced in the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

10. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

## **Aims**

11. Mulberry UTC is an inclusive school in a diverse and thriving community. We are proud to celebrate this diversity and to champion equality. Every student, staff member, parent/carer and all other members of the UTC's community are valued and respected. We aim to embed the values and ethos that will develop individuals to become positive, respectful and successful citizens within the community and throughout their lives. We are committed to overcoming disadvantage, tackling discrimination and fostering positive relationships.

12. This policy sets out how Mulberry UTC meets these aims and supports all students and staff in achieving their potential academically, professionally and personally. It also explains how the school is meeting its Public Sector Duty to promote equality as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

## **Principles**

13. To achieve the ethos and aims set out above, the school has adopted Mulberry Schools Trust's Equalities principles:

- All pupils, staff and members of the school community are of equal value; we are proud of and celebrate our diversity.
- Inclusive practice, care and sensitivity are intrinsic to all our interactions.

- We foster and promote positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and community.
- We recognise and respect difference and challenge prejudice and discrimination.
- We uphold high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect towards all, inside and outside our community.
- We use all available information to set suitable learning and professional challenges for all, respond to diverse needs and overcome potential barriers to learning and progression.
- We collect and analyse data to ensure all groups of pupils and staff are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage through inequality.
- We recognise there is always more to learn and plan wider engagement and training to increase our understanding of equality and diversity.
- We are consultative in our practices, appropriately involving and engaging members of the Trust community in the development, review and evaluation of improvement plans, policies and procedures and when change is proposed.
- We publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community.
- We ensure we comply with equality legislation.

### **The school's commitment**

14. This policy requires commitment from each member of the school community to a code of conduct that:
- encourages respect for the individual;
  - encourages collective action to challenge prejudice, discrimination and structures which perpetuate it;
  - challenges stereotyped images and in their place promotes positive, diverse images
  - declares unacceptable any language, action or expressed belief that is prejudiced or which encourages prejudice in others;
  - challenges institutional structures which have prejudicial or discriminatory effects
15. It is the duty of all members of the school community to uphold this commitment even where it may be in conflict with their own beliefs.

### **Implementation**

16. To meet the school's aims and turn the principles into practice:
- UTC staff consider equality implications before they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they keep all policy under review on a continuing basis.
  - The Equality Duty is integrated into all the UTC's functions, and the monitoring and analysis necessary to comply with the duty is carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.

- Our admissions and recruitment arrangements are fair, transparent and informed by clear guidance so that there is no risk of discrimination. We maintain an accurate record, when possible and appropriate, of the protected characteristics of our students, employees, UTC Local Governing Body members, Trustees and applicants for jobs. This data ensures we know the needs of our school population well and informs our Equality Objectives, planning and monitoring focuses.
- We strive to narrow all gaps in achievement affecting students from particular cultural and ethnic backgrounds, those who belong to lower-income households, who have a disability or who have special educational needs. We aim to provide appropriate and varied learning, teaching and support to ensure all students make excellent progress regardless of their needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students, which prompts action to close any achievement gaps that become evident. We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage.
- We closely monitor data on absence from school and exclusions for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum, particularly through abroad and challenging Personal Social and Health Education programme. We endeavour to present diversity through our displays, resources, events, contributors and role models. We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions, empathise with different experiences and to engage in social action. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.
- Our focus extends beyond academic success. Our students participate in innovative challenges and projects and, whatever their interest, passion or talent, we strive to ensure all students take part in initiatives involving esteemed national and global partners, universities and businesses. Monitoring allows us to target under-participating groups.
- The UTC's annual plan for the use of Pupil Premium funding enables us to counter the effects of disadvantage on progress and participation and, in particular, creates opportunities for pupils without the privileges of others to broaden their experience;
- We ensure inclusion is at the heart of all our activities and we work in partnership with families, the local authority and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice. We recognise the different needs of those with disabilities and take them into account when developing and implementing decisions, policies and services and considering reasonable adjustments. A biennial Accessibility Audit helps us ensure the accessibility of our provision and facilities to pupils, staff and visitors. Our Special Educational Needs Policy aims to meet the needs of pupils with a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision;
- Our Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy and Staff Code of Conduct set our expectations of pupils and staff in their interactions with each other, set high expectations for respect towards all, inside and outside the school community and confirm our approach to challenging and tackling bullying, prejudice and discrimination, wherever and whenever it occurs. Prejudice-related incidents are

identified, recorded and dealt with, and reported to the Local Governing Body. Pupils are encouraged to model the school's positive values in their wider life outside school;

- Our professional development programme for staff has a strong focus on equalities issues and unconscious bias. The programme is designed to ensure equality of access and a profile of participation that reflects the full staff community, including through targeted leadership programmes for women and black and minority ethnic colleagues. We seek to ensure that all staff gain from professional development and do not experience blocks to employment or promotion opportunities;
- We adopt equal opportunities employment principles and use all available data to monitor and promote equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. We strive to eliminate discrimination and harassment. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and promotion. We are pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups and in increasing the extent to which staffing, in all roles and at all levels, reflects the diversity of our community. We have specific policies to address staff conduct, discipline and grievances;
- We plan systematically to improve our understanding of diversity, equality and discrimination. We regularly gather feedback and responses from pupils, staff and parents on their experience of the school's provision, practice and policy and endeavour to involve a wide-cross-section of our community in the school's development and improvement. Our staff and pupil Equality Working Groups ensure that we are all creative and proactive about issues of equality and responsive to concerns raised, so that the whole community feels they have equal visibility, value and voice.
- All instances of perceived discrimination and inequality are dealt with seriously and resolved as soon as possible. Staff are trained to recognise their own unconscious bias. Our Anti-bullying policy confirms the school as a listening school and pupils and staff know who they can talk to. Restorative approaches are used whenever possible to facilitate sustainable resolutions.
- Our Complaints Policy sets out the procedures through which we handle complaints, including those that relate to any experience or perception of inequality or discrimination, with the specific aim of prompt and, where possible, informal resolution that precludes the need for escalation.

## Responsibilities

17. We expect all members of the school community and all visitors to support our commitment to equality and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.
18. All staff are responsible for acting on this policy consistently in their day-to-day professional responsibilities and for supporting pupils and their families to share the school's commitment to equality.
19. The Local Governing Body (LGB) is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and related procedures and action plans are implemented, receiving annual reports. The LGB biennially reviews this Policy and its impact.
20. The Principal is responsible for maintaining an ethos in the school that upholds this policy and the Equality Duty. She is also responsible for ensuring this policy is understood and implemented by all staff and for making pupils, staff and parents aware of its commitments and expectations.
21. Leadership Team members are responsible for addressing the policy and relevant SIP/Equality objectives actively within their areas of responsibility and for collating and analysing relevant monitoring evidence.

22. The Equalities Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that equality remains a high priority for us all. S/he leads the Equality Working Groups; develops, plans, supports and monitors initiatives to further equality in the school; and proactively engages staff, pupils and parents with the aims and principles of this policy. S/he collates monitoring evidence and analysis into the annual report for SLT/LGB.
23. The Equality Working Groups (pupils and staff) support an inclusive school culture where the whole community feels equally visible, valued and has a voice. The groups are responsible for ensuring that issues of concern raised by pupils and staff are addressed

### **Equality Objectives**

24. The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to publish equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable. Mulberry Schools Trust has determined three over-arching equality objectives. The school's specific targets under these objectives, are drawn from evaluation of our work in relation to equalities and community cohesion and are identified each year in the school Improvement Plan (SIP). These targets are published in a discrete document on the website. Action, monitoring arrangements and evaluation mechanisms are identified within the SIP and are taken forward as part of the annual school improvement cycle.

### **Disseminating the policy**

25. We ensure our commitment to equality is evident to the whole school community through all communications, interactions, practice and policy uphold.
26. This policy, and our Equality Objectives, are available on the school website and in the staff handbook, electronically and in hard copy. Its principles, expectations and commitments are included in induction for new staff, pupils and parents. Pupils are reminded of it at the start of each academic year and it is built into curricular and extra-curricular activities for pupils, and professional development for staff, throughout the year.

### **Monitoring the policy's impact**

#### *On students*

27. As part of the UTC's Self Evaluation, we collect the following information on our students:
  - attainment and progress data,
  - attendance data,
  - exclusions,
  - sanctions and rewards,
  - involvement with extended learning opportunities,
  - involvement in intervention,
  - option choices,
  - parental engagement
  - progression from Y11 and Y13
28. Senior Leaders with responsibility for the above areas analyse this data routinely from an equality perspective in terms of:
  - eligibility for Pupil Premium – a measure of disadvantage
  - ethnicity
  - prior attainment

- SEN and disability,
  - sex
  - students with English as an additional language
  - Looked-After status
29. Analysis after each attainment/progress data collection leads to short term action to adjust learning and teaching plans or to target support and intervention. Analysis of end of year outcomes leads to specific areas for school-wide development built into the School Improvement Plan.
30. Analysis of the wider data sets above enables us to identify differences between groups, and over/under-represented groups. This leads to a review of possible causes and agreed action to address the issues. This may be short term action or school-wide action built into the School Improvement Plan.
31. The UTC monitors incidents of prejudice-related bullying or harassment amongst students through the procedures set out in the Anti-bullying Policy. Incidents that have their basis in any of the protected characteristics are recorded specifically and reported in an annual summary.
32. The UTC also invites focused discussion, with students, parents and staff, on the students' UTC experience in terms of their religion and belief, their sexual orientation and their gender identity.

#### *On staff*

33. In accordance with Employment Duty legislation, we collect equality information on:
- applicants for employment
  - staff in post and on different pay scales/ grades/ points/ levels of leadership
  - participation in training
  - pay progression
  - internal promotion
  - accessing flexible working
34. The HR department analyses this data routinely with respect to:
- age
  - disability
  - ethnicity
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - religion/belief
  - sex
35. This analysis enables us to remove any blocks to, and/or target, under-represented groups and to identify and remove potentially discriminatory practice.
36. The UTC also invites feedback from, and focussed discussion with, staff on their UTC experience in terms of their sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy/maternity.
37. The UTC monitors incidents of prejudice-related bullying or harassment of staff through the procedures set out in the Dignity at Work and Grievance policies.



*Reporting*

38. An annual summary of all equality monitoring and the actions that followed/will follow, including a review of the equality objectives in the SIP, is presented to the Senior Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body.
39. The Equality Act 2010 requires us to publish information to show the school's compliance with the Equality Duty. Appropriate parts of the annual summary, the objectives and this policy are published on the school website.

**Policy review**

40. This policy is reviewed by the LGB biennially. The monitoring report outlined above informs the review.
41. The review of all other policies takes account of this policy and wider equality considerations and objectives.

## **Appendix A:**

### **Expectations of the school community - human rights, inclusion and protected characteristics**

#### **Human Rights**

All perceived discriminatory attitudes, practices and behaviours, both direct and indirect, will be addressed by the school and it is the responsibility of each individual within the school community to ensure that this happens. The school acknowledges and respects the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are committed to upholding these at every level and to enhancing understanding of human rights with all stakeholders. We aim to develop and demonstrate leadership in responsible workplace practices and in providing educational opportunities and to explore solutions to real human rights issues in the global community. Mulberry UTC's core values and culture embody a commitment to equality in human rights and the active promotion of good citizenship.

#### **Inclusion**

Inclusive practice, care and sensitivity are intrinsic to all interactions at the school. Displays will encourage celebration of pupils' personal and social backgrounds, diversity and heritage, whilst also recognising and celebrating the diversity of wider society. Language use in the curriculum and in the wider school community does not stereotype a person or group but provides an opportunity to challenge bias and common negative stereotypes. First names of pupils are valued and respected, particularly with regards to pronunciation. Negative, exclusive attitudes to accent and dialect are always be challenged, alongside recognition of the power of Standard English within society. Pupils are provided with opportunities in the curriculum to hear and learn about diverse accents, languages and dialects. Language which carries negative connotations will be challenged and the use of inclusive language promoted. Inclusion in all aspects of school life, and particularly the curriculum, displays, resources and performance and celebrations will lead to a less divisive society in the wider school community and the world outside the sphere of education.

#### **Protected Characteristics**

##### **a) Age<sup>2</sup>**

Ageism, i.e. pre-judging or making assumptions about people on the basis of their age, is a major barrier to the well-being, participation and citizenship of older and younger people alike. At Mulberry UTC, we actively challenge age-related stereotypes, and comply with the spirit and letter of anti-discriminatory age equality legislation. Our extra-curricular programme provides regular and varied opportunities for pupils to interact with and learn from older role models within an outside their own communities. All members of the school community respect every individual regardless of age, and the progress and achievement of every individual will not be determined by age-related constraints.

##### **b) Disability**

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight or hearing), learning difficulties, and certain medical conditions which have a substantial and long-term effect on everyday lives. At Mulberry UTC we will

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<sup>2</sup> Age is a protected characteristic for adults in relation to employment. It does not apply to school pupils.

ensure that members of the school community with a disability are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery. We will positively develop opportunities for the inclusion and equal access to a high-quality education for all pupils. We will also ensure the implementation of any provision to enable pupils or staff with a disability, full access to their school curriculum/duties. We will not tolerate harassment of people with any form of impairment and will also give special consideration to pupils who are carers of disabled parents. In addition, we will actively develop positive attitudes towards disability in the wider community through opportunities for exploration of the issue in both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

#### **c) Gender re-assignment**

The Equality Act 2010's prohibition of discrimination against a person on the basis of their gender includes transgender people who do not identify within the gender binary. The Act also protects those who are undergoing the process of gender re-assignment (sometimes referred to as gender affirmation). A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment in law, if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning or affirming the person's gender by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. In order to be protected under the Act, a person will not necessarily have to be undertaking a medical procedure to change physiological or other aspects of their sex, but must be taking steps to live as an opposite gender, or proposing to do so.

Mulberry UTC ensures that all transgender pupils and staff (whether binary trans or gender non-conforming), or the children of transgender parents, do not receive less favourable treatment than others. All pupils will be given opportunities to learn about transgender issues, gender diversity, and gender reassignment as part of the curriculum. The school will take steps to tackle transphobia should this arise. This includes tackling overt and deliberate transphobic bullying, but also challenging language and behaviour which may implicitly convey harmful stereotypes.

#### **d) Marriage and civil partnership<sup>3</sup>**

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 redefined marriage in the law of England and Wales. It is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman, but now includes a marriage involving a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples may also choose to have their relationships legally recognised as a 'civil partnership'.

Although the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnership does not apply to schools in relation to their provision for pupils, it does apply to schools as employers. Mulberry UTC will ensure that members of our school community are never disadvantaged or discriminated against because of their marital status and that those who are civil partners are treated in the same way as those who are married. We demonstrate our commitment to equality in this respect in the exercise of our duties as employers.

#### **e) Pregnancy and maternity**

A person who is pregnant, has recently given birth or is breast-feeding is protected against discrimination or unfair treatment by the Equality Act (2010). In the terms of the act, pregnancy is the condition of being

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<sup>3</sup> Marriage/civil partnership are protected characteristics for adults in relation to employment. They do not apply to school pupils.

pregnant and maternity is the period after giving birth. In a work context, maternity discrimination includes treating a woman less favourably than her colleagues because she is breast-feeding.

As an equal opportunities employer, Mulberry UTC is committed to ensuring that no member of the school community is disadvantaged or otherwise treated unfairly because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. The health and well-being of our staff and pupils is of paramount importance and we therefore have systems in place to support and protect staff during pregnancy and maternity. We will also ensure that our policies and practice prevents discrimination in professional matters during pregnancy and maternity, such as in recruitment, determining pay, training and development and selection for promotion.

#### **f) Race**

Mulberry UTC actively promotes race equality and celebrates diversity. Racism is made explicit, examined and challenged appropriately at all levels, with the goal of empowering pupils and staff to understand and accept the principles of equality in order to effect this change in society.

Education at Mulberry UTC promotes cultural awareness, diversity and bilingualism, strengthens positive self-image and identity for all and teaches aspects of racial equality in a positive, affirming way.

An anti-racist strategy sits at the heart of the taught and extended curriculum for all pupils. All staff and pupils are supported to find effective strategies to challenge stereotypes, prejudices and unconscious bias around race. Racist incidents are dealt with restoratively wherever possible.

We value the rich and diverse cultural heritage of our families and pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop as responsible community members and active global citizens. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is the backbone of our learning ethos around race.

#### **g) Religion and belief**

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people because they are (or are not) of a particular religion; hold (or do not hold) a particular philosophical belief; or someone thinks they are of a particular religion or hold a particular belief. The Act says that a philosophical belief must be genuinely held and more than an opinion. It must be cogent, serious and apply to an important aspect of human life or behaviour. It must also be worthy of respect in a democratic society and not affect other people's fundamental rights.

The freedom to choose and live within a faith, and tolerance of a wide diversity of religious faiths as well as having no faith, is important to the culture of the school. Curriculum opportunities inform and celebrate faith-related events and beliefs. No faith takes precedence, and all instances of religious intolerance will be addressed by the school with the intention of creating opportunities for peaceful negotiation and dialogue.

#### **h) Sex**

We recognise the positive advantages of being a single-sex school, aiming to create an open and supportive atmosphere for learning with sensitivity to the personal values, cultural traditions and religious beliefs of all members of the school community. We provide pupils with opportunities to learn about and discuss sexism and sexist discrimination. The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to discuss gender roles in society and the means and tools to challenge stereotypes which may be conveyed implicitly. Everyone in the school community commits to using books, resources and materials which reflect non-sexist imagery and to challenge the portrayal of stereotypical roles. Each department develops positive, anti-sexist resources that provide positive role-models, reflecting both traditional and non-traditional roles of women and men. Extra-curricular programmes are offered which focus on challenging sexist stereotypes and championing gender equality. The school recognises that sex does not pre-determine gender identity: a person assigned female

at birth may not identify as female, and some people do not identify within the gender binary at all. Pupils will be given opportunities to learn about gender diversity within the curriculum.

#### **i) Sexual orientation**

The Equality Act 2010 protects a person from direct discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation; from discrimination that happens because someone thinks they have a particular sexual orientation (discrimination by perception); and from discrimination on the basis of association with someone else who has a particular sexual orientation (discrimination by association). The Act also protects people from discrimination on the basis of the way they choose to express their sexual orientation, for example the way they dress.

The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about LGBTQ identities and rights. Pupils and staff are encouraged to challenge language which has negative connotations for sexual orientation: this includes language which conveys implicit stereotypes, as well as more overt use of homophobic language, including language which is used in a more casual, but no less harmful, way – for example, use of the phrase ‘that’s so gay’. Staff are supported with appropriate training in supporting LGBTQ pupils and challenging language and attitudes which may be construed as homophobic. LGBTQ pupils, and the children of LGBTQ parents, will be treated no less favourably than other pupils.