



*'Stronger Together'*

# **The Leicester Academies Charitable Trust (LACT)**

## **Equality Policy**

**LEICESTER ACADEMIES CHARITABLE TRUST**  
**EQUALITY POLICY**

**Introduction**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), part of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in April 2011. It requires organisations to consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in all that they do. It aims to put fairness at the heart of public bodies' work and to ensure that public services meet the needs of different groups. It covers a range of public bodies, including academies, schools, NHS organisations, government departments, local authorities and police authorities.

Under previous legislation, public bodies were required to take into account gender, race and disability equality both as employers and when making policy decisions and delivering services. The new duty standardises this requirement and also extends it to cover religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. Age, marriage and civil partnership are also protected characteristics but the legal duty here does not apply to schools.

**The general equality duty**

Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010 puts various requirements on academies when exercising their functions. The general duty requires academies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the PSED as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by academies, such as:

- how they act as employers
- how they develop, evaluate and review policy
- how they design, deliver and evaluate services
- how they commission and procure from others.

### **The specific equality duties**

To help public bodies perform the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) more effectively, regulations were approved in Parliament requiring academies to:

- publish information to demonstrate compliance with the PSED at least annually starting from 31 January 2012
- prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years starting from 6 April 2012.

### **The Leicester Academies Charitable Trust and its schools**

The Leicester Academies Charitable Trust (LACT) was set up by the Leicester Diocesan Board of Education in 2013 as the Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust, to allow church schools to convert to academy status while retaining their church school distinctiveness. The LACT is also open to other non-church schools in Leicestershire and Leicester who are in sympathy with the LACT's ethos and approach.

The LACT currently comprises six church primary schools across Leicestershire, with a further five schools joining in Autumn 2014 and two others joining later. A list of the LACT schools can be found on the LACT website:

[www.lact-academies.com](http://www.lact-academies.com) .

Our approach to education is rooted in the Christian gospel, and principles of equality and social justice are integral to this. We believe that:

- all people are created by God, in His image
- God sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world to save everyone, regardless of their background. In his ministry, Jesus did not discriminate against those with physical disability, or on account of age, race, gender, marital status or other “protected characteristic”, but sought out the marginalised and those deemed less worthy by society at large
- as His church on earth, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit with many different gifts to serve one another and to build a more just society; we do this through our relationship with one another and with the communities around us

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Our approach to equality is based on the four attributes of church schools highlighted in the recent National Society report “The Church School of the Future”:**

**1. Distinctiveness**

The Christian values of tolerance, respect, social justice, valuing people equally and building community should run through every aspect of the work in our schools and in the LACT organisation itself. These values should pervade our policies, processes, structures, staffing and governance, as well as our approach to the curriculum, collective worship and to our pastoral care. We will consider the equalities implications of any key decisions that we take and will provide training and support for decision-makers to identify potential issues.

## **2. Effectiveness**

Education is about fulfilling human potential, which we see as a gift from God, given to all people regardless of their background. We will seek to ensure high-quality teaching and excellent progress and attainment for all our children, regardless of background, and we will actively seek to remove barriers to learning, particularly among children with protected characteristics. We will do this by monitoring achievement and by directing resources to overcome obstacles, supporting those with special educational needs and adapting our approach to meet individual need.

Behaviour and attendance make a significant contribution to effective teaching and learning. We will ensure that our policies and systems for managing behaviour and attendance take sensitive account of protected characteristics. We will not allow bullying or harassment, especially on the basis of perceived differences between people (adults or children), and we will encourage positive attitudes and relationships and a sense of belonging. We will monitor the impact and effectiveness of behaviour and attendance systems across different groups of pupils.

Effective teaching and learning also requires effective leadership and management. We will support our headteachers, senior leaders and governors to create and maintain school environments in which our pupils can thrive, regardless of their background.

## **3. Inclusiveness**

Our church schools stand at the heart of their local communities. In seeking to meet the needs of society, we will be mindful of the needs of disadvantaged groups. In consulting with local communities on proposals, we will listen to all views. We will ensure that our policies for school admission, our structures for participation in school life and the physical environment of the school do not cause unlawful

discrimination but promote equal opportunities and foster good relations between different groups of people.

#### **4. Being Rooted**

Our mission as a Multi-Academy Trust and at individual school level is rooted in the Anglican Christian tradition, a tradition which values diversity and promotes equality. We will support individual schools to understand and promote these values at all levels of school life, and will regularly reflect on how far we are achieving these aims.

This policy describes how the LACT and its schools meet the statutory equality duties and comply with national guidance. It includes guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

**Appendix 1** is a checklist of key equality considerations.

**Appendix 2** shows the LACT's Equality Objectives for 2014-2018 in an Equality Action Plan.

#### **Development of the policy**

This policy was developed by the LACT Chief Executive and Directors in consultation with key stakeholders. As a part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing distinctive, effective, rooted and inclusive schools, we will continue to review this policy/action plan with a range of key stake holders including staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors.

When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the current Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs. We also note that the Diocesan SIAMS inspection regime

takes account of the extent to which church schools are inclusive of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities.

### **Links to other policies and documentation**

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we will ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act is also included in school development plans, self-evaluation reviews, promotional material, the LACT and school websites and newsletters.

There are also references in the behaviour, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies, as well as minutes of meetings involving Directors and governors, central and school staff, senior leadership teams and school council.

The Equality Act also applies to academy trusts in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy.

### **What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services. We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Chief Executive and Headteachers ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against unlawfully when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities. We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity. As church schools, we are legally entitled to take account of religion and belief in our admissions arrangements, but we regularly review the impact of these provisions.

### **Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance**

Our policies on Behaviour take full account of the duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying. The LACT and its schools challenge all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to local governing bodies about the numbers, types and seriousness of



prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

### **What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups**

We know the needs of our school populations and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements. We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.

We collect, analyse and publish data:

- on the school population by gender and ethnicity
- on the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability
- by year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English
- on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English

We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage, including the following groups:

- Free School Meals/Pupil Premium
- EAL
- Ethnic group
- Looked after Children
- All SEND

- SEND statements/EHCP plans
- Gifted & Talented

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups. This data will be available from the relevant school office.

We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future pupils – we will for example, be sufficiently prepared if a Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired or Gypsy Roma Traveller pupil joins our school.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils

- We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

### **Positive Action**

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the LACT's Equality Objectives.

### **What we are doing to foster good relations**

We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.

We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and citizenship and across the curriculum.

We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.

We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.

We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people.

We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events e.g. Black History Month and Deaf Awareness week.

We include Equalities matters in our Newsletters to parents and carers.

### **Other ways we will address equality issues**

We maintain records of all training relating to Equalities. Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of Equalities.

We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and well-being of our pupils.

The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of whole school communities, we:

- review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires, parents' evening, parent-school forum and/or focus meetings or governors/parent consultation meetings
- secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events
- review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school;
- analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans, mentoring and support

- ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and from the governing body's working groups

### **Publishing Equality Objectives (see Equality Action Plan/School Development Plans)**

The objectives which we identify represent our priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups. We produce equality data analysis which inform our discussions about the Equality Objectives.

We produce an Equality Action Plan that shows how we will achieve our objectives: see Appendix 2. This includes both LACT-wide and school-level objectives.

### **Monitoring and reviewing objectives**

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the Directors and to local governing bodies on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers.

We publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives for parents and carers, on the LACT website.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of our school communities and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

### **LACT Directors**

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the LACT as a whole complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer and takes the lead on equalities issues.

The Pay & Personnel Committee has particular responsibility for equalities issues in relation to staffing matters, while the Ethos & Standards Committee oversees equalities issues in relation to the curriculum, attainment and progress, and for admissions/exclusions and discipline. Buildings and environmental issues are overseen by the Finance & Audit Committee. The main Board of Directors will maintain an overview of compliance with this policy and progress in achieving targets.

### **Local Governing Bodies**

Each school's local governing body is responsible for ensuring that its school complies with legislation, that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented, and that it develops and monitors its own school-level objectives. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every local governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually evaluate the success of the school's Equalities Work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

### **Chief Executive and Leadership Teams**

The Chief Executive and headteachers are responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are

given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of school staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have received training in relation to the Equality Act.

### **Teaching and Support Staff**

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the LACT's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

## **Visitors**

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

## **Equal Opportunities for staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.

We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our communities.

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

## **Disseminating the policy**

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available:

- on the LACT website and individual school websites



- as paper copies in each school office
- in the staff handbook
- on display for visitors, including parents and carers
- as part of induction for new staff
- as a summary in any school brochure

We ensure that each whole school community (and all central staff) know about the policy, objectives and data through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the LACT website and school websites copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

**Monitoring, evaluation and review:**

Headteachers will report to their local governing bodies and to the LACT Chief Executive on the effectiveness of the policy at school level. The Chief Executive will report on the effectiveness of the policy to the LACT Board of Directors as appropriate.

The LACT Board of Directors will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the LACT and its schools.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Check list for LACT staff and governors**

- The LACT and its schools collect information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the LACT and its schools provide
- The Equality Policy & Plan have been shaped by the views, input & involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils & other stakeholders
- The LACT and its schools publish information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties
- The LACT & its schools analyse Pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need
- The LACT sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes
- The LACT ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- LACT schools ensure that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy

- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies, pupil voice
- The LACT and its schools monitor bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and assemblies
- The LACT and its schools take part in annual events to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender
- The school environments are increasingly accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- The Local Governing Body Procedures for the election of parent and staff governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled

## APPENDIX 2

Equality Action Plan (Including accessibility plan) 2014 - 2018

Public Sector Equality Duty	Equality Objectives	Actions	How impact of the action will be monitored	Person Responsible	Time Frames	Progress commentary
Advance equality of opportunity	Improve learning outcomes and remove barriers to learning for vulnerable groups	Establish & embed trust-wide monitoring of progress & attainment for vulnerable groups  Identify & disseminate best practice in curriculum & interventions  Revise SEND policy & procedures				

<p>Eliminate discrimination</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Provide an education available to all (the witness of inclusivity), within available resources</p>	<p>Review admission arrangements</p> <p>Review behaviour &amp; discipline policies</p> <p>Monitor admissions &amp; exclusions data for vulnerable groups</p>				
--	---	--	--	--	--	--

<p>Eliminate discrimination</p> <p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>Foster good relations</p>	<p>Embed equality considerations in corporate decision-making</p>	<p>Include equalities impact within all reports to Directors, Committees &amp; LGBs</p> <p>Review policies &amp; procedures with equalities impact in mind.</p> <p>Provide equalities training to all relevant staff employed centrally and in schools, and to Directors &amp; governors</p>				
---	---	--	--	--	--	--

Foster good relations	Promote pupils' understanding of equal worth and non-discrimination	<p>Embed teaching of equal worth &amp; non-discrimination within curriculum</p> <p>Celebrate diversity through curriculum and special events (e.g. Black History month; Paralympics)</p>				
-----------------------	---	--	--	--	--	--

**School Level Objectives**

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>	<b>Equality Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>How impact of the action will be monitored</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Time Frames</b>	<b>Progress commentary</b>

**LACT Accessibility Plan**

<p>Eliminate discrimination; Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Improve the accessibility of LACT school buildings &amp; environment</p>	<p>Audit accessibility of LACT school buildings &amp; environment  Devise accessibility improvement plan  Make appropriate EFA funding bids for capital improvements  Implement improvements</p>				
--	---	--	--	--	--	--

**School Level Accessibility Improvement Plan**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--