UNITED SCHOOLS FEDERATION

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Equality and Diversity Policy

United Schools Federation	
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1. Equality Statement

We are committed to ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity for all children, staff, parents, and guardians irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, sex/gender identity (including gender reassignment), and age.

Our aim is to develop a culture of diversity and inclusion in which all those within the establishment's community can celebrate their identity and participate fully in experiences and learning. Enabling our children to take part as fully as possible, in every part of the establishment's life, by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising their strengths, and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

We challenge discrimination through the positive promotion of equality through learning, tackling bullying, racism, and stereotyping, and by creating a safe welcoming environment that champions respect for all.

Our establishment has a firm belief that diversity is a strength that must be respected and celebrated by all of those who learn with us and visit us.

2. Scope and Purpose

This Policy covers all individuals working at all levels, including staff, consultants, contractors, trainees, home-workers, part-time and fixed-term staff, volunteers, the governing board, casual workers, and agency staff. It also applies to the wider community such as children, job applicants, ambassadors, and parents/guardians.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to promoting equality and diversity and how we will tackle discrimination and challenge social exclusion. It explains how we will put our commitment into action and comply with the law to ensure that equality and diversity are promoted in our establishment and that our staff, children, and community are not subject to, and do not commit, unlawful acts of discrimination.

3. Guiding Principles

This policy is a single policy that harmonises our aims to ensure equality for all those with protected characteristics, and the education and awareness for our establishment's community.

This unites our policies on

- English as an additional language
- Attendance
- Relational approaches and/or behaviour
- Anti-racism
- Accessibility
- Anti-bullying
- PSE and/or citizenship
- Pupil premium
- Relationships and sex education
- Safeguarding

This policy also combines previous establishment policies on

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- Race
- Disability
- Gender

We are committed to developing cohesive communities both within our establishment's physical boundaries and within our local, national, and global environments. Our establishment embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's outcomes, both educational and well-being, with the rights of the child in mind.

Our policy is inclusive of our whole establishment community; children, staff, governors, parents/guardians, visitors, and partner agencies whom we have engaged with, and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity and,
- foster good relations between groups

as outlined in the Equality Act 2010

It explains how we will listen to and involve children, staff, parents/guardians, and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children.

Our establishment within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, race and ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and social deprivation.

4. Legislation and our duties

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination and harassment. If someone thinks they have been discriminated against they may take their complaint to a court or Employment Tribunal (if they are an employee). The act also places duties on public authorities (including establishments) to be pro-active about addressing inequalities. The Public Sector General Duty (Section 149) states that a public authority must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people.

'Advance equality of opportunity' means to remove or minimise disadvantage, meet people's needs, take account of disabilities, and encourage participation in public life.

Failure to observe these public sector duties could result in a judicial review, but also put establishments at risk of discriminatory practice.

These duties apply to eight **protected characteristics**:

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- **Age -** A person of a particular age (e.g. 32 year old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds). Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Disability -** A person has a disability if they have, or has had, a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions. HIV, multiple sclerosis, and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
- **Gender reassignment –** Transgender people may have the body of one gender but feel that they are the opposite gender. The word transgender is sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as gender-variant but usually has a narrower meaning and different connotations than gender variant, including non-identification with the gender assigned at birth.

  This relates to a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any establishment environment.
- **Marriage and civil partnership –** Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to staff and other adults.
- **Pregnancy and maternity -** Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including stillbirths), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of Additional Maternity Leave. Within education it also protects children who are pregnant.
- **Race -** A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- **Religion and belief -** Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent an establishment from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- **Sex –** Sex refers to a person's understanding and experience of their own gender identity, it is their internal sense of self. Everyone has a gender identity; for some people, it corresponds with the gender assigned at birth, and for some others, it does not. Gender identities are expansive and do not need to be confined within one collectively agreed-upon term. An individual's appearance may not inform you or their gender identity. It is important to understand that one's gender identity does not direct the way we are or the clothing we choose to wear.
- **Sexual orientation -** A person's sexual orientation, is the part of their identity that relates to who they find attractive. Although it is in the name, the attraction to other people does not have to be sexual, it could be romantic, or connection-based. Some people are attracted to a particular gender or genders, some people are attracted to who the person is (their morals, values, humour, intelligence, etc.) and for some it is a combination of the two. Sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'questioning' or disclosing at any age. Establishments with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against non-heterosexual children or parents/guardians.

We understand that an individual's gender identity and sexual orientation is individual to them.

The legal duties to eliminate harassment and foster good relations make it clear that establishments must address bullying and prejudice-related incidents, based on a protected characteristic, such as racism or homophobic bullying.

The expectation in law is not only for establishments to respond when an incident occurs, but to also

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take steps to prevent those incidents from occurring or escalating.

Because of its relevance to the duty to eliminate harassment and foster good relations, this means that establishments should report incidents to the local authority, publish information on performance, and set objectives about bullying and prejudice-related incidents. What is published will vary according to establishment size, but it could include publishing basic data, supported by a narrative, about the number and type of incidents reported and dealt with.

We will take care not to publish any details that could identify specific individuals. An establishment can include relevant objectives in its development plan, and it should also refresh its equality objectives at least every four years.

For more information, please familiarise yourself with the DfE's Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

There are a number of statutory obligations on establishments with regards to behaviour which establish clear responsibilities to respond to bullying. In particular, section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

- states that every establishment must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst children. These measures should be part of the establishment's behaviour or relational policy which must be communicated to all children, staff and parents/guardians.
- the headteacher can determine measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the establishment and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the establishment. These incidents should be reported to the local authority.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

The DfE's guidance reiterates the expectations and obligations of establishments:

- All staff should be aware of systems within their establishment which support safeguarding and these should be explained as part of staff induction. This should include a behaviour policy that should outline measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.

- To focus on key issues of concern and how to improve children's outcomes. Some children may be more at risk of harm from specific issues such as sexual violence, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or racial discrimination. Such concerns will differ between establishments, but it is important establishments are conscious of disproportionate vulnerabilities and integrate this into their safeguarding policies and procedures.

- It is important that establishments consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

It also reminds us to recognise, by providing suitable CPD, the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from bullying, grooming and radicalisation, and are confident they have the capability to support children.

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Additional key points to note are that this guidance puts emphasis on having an online safety policy, LGBTQ+ inclusion policy and working closely with the local authority.

To familiarise yourself with the current guidance, please visit the DfE's website.

Criminal Law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications, could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the Police. For example, under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

5. Responsibilities

Governing Board

- Ensure that the establishment complies with equality-related legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the headteacher.
- Ensure all other establishment policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

Headteacher

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties. Establishments no longer require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire. Neither should they seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.
- Ensure that all staff and children are aware of the process for reporting and following up on bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

All staff

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and the responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.

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- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

Specific Staff

(As above)

Children

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)

- To be aware of, and comply with, the establishment's equality policy.
- To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) on establishment premises.

6. Equality Objectives

Our establishment has two specific duties to assist us in meeting our general duty set out by the Equality Act 2010.

They are:

• To publish information to show how we are complying with the Equality Duty. This must be updated at least **annually.**
• To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every **four years.**

Objective 1 To narrow the gap in attainment between groups of children

Objective 2 To improve the attendance between groups of children

Objective 3 Increase the participation of a particular group in establishment activities

7. Our Commitments

The primary aim is to enable all children and young people to take part as fully as possible in every part of the establishment's daily life.

Within our establishment we will take steps to promote and celebrate equality of opportunity, foster good relations, and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation) within the establishment community.

We will achieve this by taking the following measures.

Culture and Ethos

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- Our establishment ethos will clearly celebrate equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards children and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- Staff will model respect and healthy relationships for the children, through their professional approach.
- The establishment will encourage Cultural Exchange through visitors, workshops, visits, trips and celebrating key cultural dates.
- Our establishment will take the approach of a Growth Mindset.
- We will ensure that all content on our website, parental/guardian newsletters, and letters are accessible, by embedding a translation app, such as Google Translate or Translate Press on our website and translating/adjusting correspondence to families.
- Our publications, website, and graphics will reflect all of our establishment's community.
- We will ensure that children develop an understanding of emotional literacy and how to manage conflict.

Relational Approaches

- The establishment with have a zero-tolerance approach to any racism, bullying and prejudice.
- The assailant of any such incident will receive intervention/education regarding the incident, including gaining an understanding of the nature of the incident, its impacts on their peers and the wider community, and learning how to apologise.
- All incidents of bullying, prejudice and racism, including prejudice towards sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and belief, disability, sexual harassment/sexism will be reported to the local authority.
- We expect that all staff will be role models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, we will plan ongoing events to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, anti-homophobia/gay pride, gender equality, developing community cohesion, and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- We will ensure children, parents/guardians, and staff are consulted in the development and review of this policy and our equality objectives.
- We will regularly seek the views of children, parents/guardians, advisory staff and visitors to the establishment, to ensure that the establishment environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all users.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice and the different forms of discrimination such as:
  - Direct discrimination
  - Indirect discrimination
  - Harassment
  - Victimisation
  - Unconscious bias
  - Third-party harassment
  - Discrimination by association
  - Discrimination by perception.
- All allegations of discrimination and prejudice against staff and other adults that meet the harm threshold, as outlined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, will be dealt with appropriately, by contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and reporting a BPRI to the local authority once the investigation has been completed.

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- We will maintain and update an equality page on our website to show how we are complying our public sector equality duty.
- When drawing up policies, we will carry out an equality impact assessment (EIA) to ensure a policy does not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups with protected characteristics.

Reasonable adjustments

- We will ensure that all the following is clearly outlined an our disability access plan:
- We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet children's needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs and disabilities. Enabling our children to take as full a part as possible in all activities.
- Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for children, where reasonable adjustments are required.
- We will seek the views of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other establishments where support is needed.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the establishment's environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for children, staff, and visitors to the establishment.
- We are also committed to ensuring staff with additional needs or a disability have equality of opportunity.
- We will provide a suitable space and time for prayer for Salat (Muslim daily prayer).
- Children in our establishment will not be disadvantaged in assessments and examinations due to their disability, additional need, or language barrier. We will ensure that appropriate access arrangements are in place.

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Curriculum

- We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- We expect all staff to have high standards of attainment and aspirations for our children, promote common values, help children understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- We will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those for whom English is not their first language.
- Through proactive planning, we will ensure that all children are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and we will monitor the uptake of these to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic or socioeconomics.
- When planning the curriculum and resources, we will take every opportunity to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Our whole curriculum will reflect our establishment's community. Each subject department will outline the steps they take to meet this commitment to the establishment annually, through their subject improvement plan.
- Our assemblies, literary programmes, and PSHE will explore
- Racism
- Discrimination and prejudice
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Healthy relationships

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- Disability (including 'invisible' disabilities)
- Mental health
- Religion and belief,

ensuring a balanced approach to learning to inform children.

- We will ensure all our curriculum content is empathetic to children and staff of different backgrounds by:
- Ensuring we discuss sex education and mental health curriculum content with parents/guardians from certain religious backgrounds and Travellers before it is delivered and providing alternatives if requested by families.
- Understanding that parents/guardians have the right to withdraw their children from sex education and religious studies and we will work with parents/guardians in supporting their request. We will, however, arrange for learning to be sent home so that parents/guardians can deliver this content if they wish.
- Outlining our curriculum and intent through our website.
- Providing information to parents/guardians on key content that will be delivered. This is to ensure parents/guardians are able to confidently answer any questions their child might ask, following new learning.
- Ensuring staff feel comfortable delivering content.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- We will ensure that a welcome/induction meeting has been arranged for any new EAL children.
- We will arrange for a **professional** interpreter for all meetings and parent evenings, for parents/guardians whose home language is not English. We will not use a child to interpret as key messages may not be relayed.
- We will ensure that we have discussions with new parents/guardians on what **safeguarding** and good **attendance** look like in our establishment.
- Our establishment will have a clear strategy on how EAL parents/guardians and children can make a disclosure to the establishment – through their home language.
- Promote equality by ensuring curriculum content is accessible and scaffolded, by providing pre-teaching and/or intervention, and technology if suitable.
- We will use EAL proficiency assessments, to be reviewed at least termly, to monitor language acquisition progress and set targets.
- Complete an EAL Information Collection form, to alert the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) of a new arrival and to arrange for a Bilingual induction programme.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman (GRTS)

- The Head of School is the establishment's GRTS ambassador and the key contact for parents/guardians and children.
- The establishment will clearly identify and publicise the support available to GRTS children.
- We will monitor the attendance and attainment of GRTS children, engaging with the local authorities EMTAS for support for children whose attendance and attainment is causing concern.
- We will work with our communities primary schools to ensure that all GRTS children are on an **enhanced transition** plan and hold parent forums for year 5 and 6 GRTS parents/guardians to discuss any concerns. *(if secondary)*

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- We will work with our communities secondary schools to ensure that GRTS children are on **enhanced transition** plans and arrange for secondary schools to hold forums for year 5 and 6 GRTS parents/guardians to discuss any concerns. *(if primary)*
- Our establishment will actively build relationships with GRTS communities through
- Celebrating Traveller history month in June.
- Arranging Traveller awareness workshops for our children.
- Contacting EMTAS to deliver Aspirational workshops to GRTS children.
- Creating a communication plan with parents/guardians for all GRTS children. Ensuring that families know what to expect from the establishment and who they can contact easily.
- Ensuring our curriculum is flexible to support the broad skill sets of GRTS children.
- Our establishment has zero-tolerance for any GRTS racism, including the use of words such as 'chav', 'pikey' and 'gypsy' (in a derogatory manner).

Training

- All staff will receive training and awareness of:
- Bullying, prejudice and racism incidents
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Understanding gender identity and sexual orientation
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) children
- All new staff inductions will include training on equality, diversity, and inclusion – with a planned itinerary of when other training content will be delivered.

Monitoring

- We will monitor the progress and achievement of children by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information will help the establishment to ensure that individual children are achieving their potential, the establishment is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified which inform the setting of our equality objectives in the establishment improvement plan and Equality duty review.
- We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities, and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the work they do.
- We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our staff with disabilities or additional needs.
- Bullying, prejudice and racism related Incidents will be carefully monitored. Any common themes will be addressed in our curriculum, assemblies, and through workshops or intervention. We will engage with the local authority if they request our data as part of their county-wide audit.
- We will publish our data and reviews in line with our Equality Duty mentioned above.

8. Appendix

Definitions

BPRI	Bullying, prejudice and racism incidents

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Cohesion	People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
Community	From the establishment's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings: • The establishment community – the students we serve, their families and the establishment's staff. • The community within which the establishment is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area. • The community of Britain – all establishments by definition are part of it. • The global community – formed by European and international links.
Cultural exchange	The sharing of different ideas, traditions, and knowledge with someone who may be coming from a completely different background than your own.
DfE	Department for Education
Direct discrimination	Treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others.
Discrimination by association	When a person is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with a protected characteristic.
Discrimination by perception	When someone is discriminated against because it is believed they have a protected characteristic, whether or not they actually do.
Diversity	Recognising that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion
EAL	English as an additional language - a pupil whose home language is not English or who lives in a bilingual family.
Equality	This is more clearly defined as equality of opportunity and outcome, rather than equality of treatment. This means treating people fairly and according to their needs as some people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve an equal outcome.
Gender Dysphoria	Gender dysphoria is a recognised condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. Biological sex is assigned at birth, depending on the appearance of the infant. Gender identity is the gender that a person "identifies" with, or feels themselves to be.
Growth mindset	That there is always scope for learning, improving, and understanding.
Harassment	unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them.
Inclusive	Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances. Ensuring everyone can experience the same experiences as any other child.

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