



Equality Statement, Objectives and Equal Opportunities Policy

2026-27

Policy name	Equality Statement, Objectives and Equal Opportunities Policy
Version	2.2
Status	Live
Author	Academy Business Leader
Policy owner	Director of Inclusion
Approval body	Curriculum & Pupils Committee
Date approved	October 2026
Review cycle	Annual. Equality objectives renewed at least every four years
Next review due	Autumn 2027. Objectives renewal due Autumn 2028
Published on	Both (Trust website and National College)
Applies to	Trust-wide

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This statement describes how The Cedars Academy Trust (the Trust) meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It applies to all staff, pupils and volunteers at both sites: Cedars Academy: Low Fell and Cedars Academy: High Heworth.
- 1.2** The Trust aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
 - foster good relations across all characteristics: between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 1.3** This statement also sets out the Trust's equality objectives (section 9) and the equality information it publishes each year (Appendix 1). It replaces the Trust's separate Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.
- 1.4** Every pupil at the academy has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, and many also meet the Act's definition of disability. The disability duties, including reasonable adjustments, are therefore central to this statement.

2. Legislation and guidance

- 2.1** This statement meets the requirements of:
- the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination and sets out the PSED in section 149
 - the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017, which require the Trust to publish equality information at least once a year, and specific, measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
- 2.2** It is also based on the Department for Education (DfE) advice 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools' (last updated June 2018), the DfE Academy Trust Governance Guide, the DfE guidance on what academies must publish online, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which includes guidance on gender questioning children. It complies with our funding agreement and articles of association, and reflects Article 23 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the rights of disabled children).
- 2.3** In April 2025 the Supreme Court ruled (For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers) that 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 means biological sex. The Trust applies the Act on that basis.
- 2.4** The Act protects nine characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. For pupils, the parts of the Act that cover schools apply to all of these except age and marriage and civil partnership.

3. Aims and values

- 3.1** At Cedars Academy we aim to promote equality, tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of academy life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We aim to give every pupil a sense of belonging, value the contribution of all families, provide positive information about different groups of people that avoids stereotypes, and make inclusion a thread that runs through all our activities. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.
- 3.2** Cedars Academy is a welcoming place, on both sites, where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum gives all pupils equal opportunity to maximise their potential, regardless of sex, race, religion, disability or any other protected characteristic.
- 3.3** Pupils are entitled to be valued equally, to be safeguarded and protected, and to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that promotes their personal development and meets their individual needs. The 'curriculum' means everything pupils experience at the academy. No pupil will be treated less favourably because of the behaviour of their parents or siblings.
- 3.4** Adults at the academy are entitled to be valued equally, and the Trust values diversity amongst staff, parents, volunteers and helpers. In staff appointments, the best candidate is appointed on strict professional criteria. The Trust Board opposes discrimination in employment: recruitment, selection, training and promotion of staff are based solely on merit and ability. No job applicant or employee will be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or because of trade union membership or activities. The Dignity at Work Policy sets out how staff are protected from harassment and bullying.

4. Eliminating discrimination

- 4.1** The Trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with the non-discrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies refer to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.
- 4.2** Staff and trustees are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Act, for example during meetings. Where this is discussed at a meeting, it is recorded in the minutes.
- 4.3** New staff receive training on the Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every year.
- 4.4** The Director of Inclusion is the designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and makes senior leaders and trustees aware of issues as appropriate. Equality is the responsibility of the whole Trust Board.
- 4.5** The Trust must make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, including providing auxiliary aids and services, and must plan to improve access for disabled pupils over time. The Accessibility Plan 2025-28 sets out how.

- 4.6** The Trust must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of its staff. From 30 October 2026 this becomes a duty to take all reasonable steps, and the Trust can also be liable if staff are harassed by third parties such as visitors or contractors. The Dignity at Work Policy sets out how the Trust meets these duties.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

- 5.1** As set out in the DfE advice, the Trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (for example, pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (for example, enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to take part fully in activities (for example, encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of clubs and activities).

- 5.2** To do this, the Trust will:

- analyse progress data each academic year to see how pupils with different characteristics are performing, identify strengths and areas for improvement, act on what it finds and share this information
- make evidence available that shows improvements for particular groups (for example, a fall in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying), and publish equality information each year (Appendix 1).

6. Fostering good relations

- 6.1** The Trust aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through the curriculum at both sites, including Beliefs and Values, Citizenship, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and Personal Development time, and through literature from a range of cultures in English and reading
- holding assemblies on relevant issues, led by pupils where possible, with external speakers including leaders of local faith groups
- working with our local community, including trips and activities based around it
- encouraging initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils, such as Student Voice at both sites, with representatives from different key stages and backgrounds, and all pupils taking part in activities such as sports clubs
- working with parents at both sites to promote understanding of different cultures through our Family Learning initiatives.

- 6.2** We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which help inform and develop our approach.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

- 7.1** The Trust has due regard to equality whenever significant decisions are made, and considers the impact of those decisions on particular groups. For example, when a trip or activity is planned, staff consider whether it:
- clashes with any religious festivals
 - is accessible to pupils with disabilities
 - has suitable toilet, changing and personal care facilities, separate for boys and girls where the law requires, that protect every pupil's privacy and dignity.
- 7.2** Requests relating to gender questioning pupils are handled under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- 7.3** When recruiting staff, health-related questions are not asked until after a job offer is made, and then only if necessary for the role. The exception is asking whether an applicant needs reasonable adjustments for the selection process.
- 7.4** The Trust may use the positive action provisions of the Act. These allow targeted support or activities for a group that shares a protected characteristic where that group is disadvantaged, has different needs or takes part less than others. Treating a disabled pupil more favourably than a pupil who is not disabled is not unlawful discrimination.
- 7.5** Everyone in the Trust is expected to make a positive contribution to this statement: all staff, whether paid or voluntary, all visitors and all pupils. The Trust will make its services accessible to all, provide information in formats people can access, supply specialist aids and facilities to enable disabled people, and fully support anyone who faces prejudice or discrimination. Breaches are taken seriously (see section 11).

8. Roles and responsibilities

- 8.1** The Trust Board must:
- make sure the Trust complies with equality legislation, and that the equality information and objectives are published and communicated to staff, pupils and parents
 - make sure the equality information is updated at least every year, and the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every four years
 - make sure there is equal opportunity in staff recruitment, professional development and membership of the Trust Board, and be proactive in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups
 - be involved in dealing with serious breaches.

The Trust Board delegates day-to-day monitoring of the objectives to the co-headteachers and the Director of Inclusion. The Curriculum & Pupils Committee approves this statement on the Board's behalf.

- 8.2** The senior leadership team (SLT) promotes understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils, monitors progress against the objectives and reports to trustees, challenges and acts on any discriminatory practice, deals with reported

harassment or bullying in line with the Trust's own Anti-Bullying Policy, and makes sure visitors and contractors know about and follow this statement.

- 8.3** The Director of Inclusion owns this statement. They support the site Headteachers in promoting the objectives, report progress against the objectives to the Curriculum & Pupils Committee each year, and identify staff training needs and deliver training as necessary.
- 8.4** The Academy Business Leader compiles and publishes the equality information each year (Appendix 1), checks the staff headcount at each annual review (see 10.4), and publishes this statement on the Trust website and National College so that staff know where to find it.
- 8.5** All staff must have regard to this statement and work to achieve the objectives in section 9. All staff must:
- be vigilant for any type of harassment and bullying, and deal effectively with all incidents, from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences
 - identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum and in the academy's culture
 - promote equality, good relations and an inclusive curriculum, and not discriminate because of any protected characteristic
 - keep up to date with equality legislation and issues through training and other appropriate sources.

9. Equality objectives 2024-28

- 9.1** These are our specific and measurable equality objectives. They are based on our analysis of data and other evidence, and focus on the areas where we have agreed to take action to improve equality and tackle disadvantage.
- 9.2** The objectives were adopted by the Curriculum & Pupils Committee on 4 December 2024 and run until Autumn 2028, when they must be renewed. Progress is reviewed every year. Any objective added or retired between renewals is marked with the term in which that happened.

9.3 Objective 1

Objective	To ensure that the curriculum celebrates the diversity not only in our community but across the UK. To develop a curriculum where all children and young people are represented and that they develop a greater understanding of diversity through the texts that they read and the experiences they encounter throughout the curriculum.
Why we have chosen this objective	Cedars Academy has a predominantly white, British pupil population, staff and Trust Board. We have a growing number of children with English as an additional language or from families of different ethnicity, and we also have a number of LGBTQ+ families in our community. We aim to increase our pupils' understanding of diversity, ensuring that children from all backgrounds are represented.
To achieve this objective, we plan to	Review the curriculum alongside representatives from a range of cultures and backgrounds, ensuring a good range of representation.

Progress to Autumn 2024	We have reviewed the diversity represented in class texts and mini-libraries, and subject leaders have reviewed the curriculum offer.
Progress to Autumn 2026	The review of class texts, mini-libraries and subject provision reported in 2024 provides a foundation for further work on representation across the curriculum. Our updated academy ethos places emphasis on every child and young person being seen, heard and celebrated, alongside respect, inclusion and equality of opportunity. The next stage is to check how consistently curriculum resources and experiences across Low Fell and High Heworth reflect different cultures, backgrounds and family circumstances. This will include identifying gaps in representation and opportunities to involve pupils and families in shaping provision.

9.4 Objective 2

Objective	To review and further develop the provision of the PSHE and RSE curriculum in order to embed the explicit teaching of the protected characteristics at a level appropriate to the stage of development.
Why we have chosen this objective	To ensure that our pupils are well prepared for an ever-changing and diverse society, and that they consistently display our core value of 'respect' in their interactions with other people.
To achieve this objective, we plan to	Embed the equality values throughout the curriculum and our wider provision.
Progress to Autumn 2024	Opportunities to discuss the protected characteristics have been identified in the long-term PSHE planning. At Cedars Academy: Low Fell, Evidence for Learning is used to keep evidence of discussions in these lessons. Regular opportunities are planned for discussion around the protected characteristics in Personal Development time in class groups.
Progress to Autumn 2026	Further development of this objective is underway through the review of RSE policies and provision at Low Fell and High Heworth. Site-specific policies and parent and carer consultation provide opportunities to ensure that content reflects pupils' ages, developmental stages and learning needs, within a shared academy commitment to equality and respect. This builds on the opportunities to explore protected characteristics identified in earlier PSHE planning. Further staff training is planned for October 2026. The next stage is to confirm that teaching about difference, relationships and respect is explicit, accessible and consistently reflected in curriculum delivery, and to strengthen evidence of pupils' understanding and application in everyday interactions.

9.5 Objective 3 (completed; retired Autumn 2026)

Objective	Have in place a reasonable adjustment agreement for all staff with disabilities in 2023-24, to meet their needs better and make sure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed.
Why we have chosen this objective	We have a growing number of staff with a neurodivergent diagnosis and/or presentation.
To achieve this objective, we plan to	Work with our staff team and guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission to establish effective policy that is clear and accessible to everyone.

Progress	Completed. All staff with disabilities have been met with and reasonable adjustments agreed as required. Processes in place to support new staff or existing staff should their be a change in any requirement, support need, or asjustment.
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9.6 Objective 4

Objective	Train all members of staff and trustees involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination by the beginning of the next academic year. Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those attending have a good understanding of the legal requirements.
Why we have chosen this objective	Cedars Academy has a predominantly white, British staff and Trust Board that do not reflect the growing number of children with English as an additional language, or from families of different ethnicity or LGBTQ+ backgrounds. Training will ensure we are able to take into consideration all backgrounds and cultures when making decisions for the whole academy.
To achieve this objective, we plan to	Use National College materials to ensure ease and consistency of training across the Trust.
Progress to Autumn 2024	We identified the key training packages and shared these with staff. We will now share them with trustees.
Progress to Autumn 2026	All staff involved in recruitment and selection have completed the identified training on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Completion has not yet been confirmed for all trustees who may join recruitment panels, so this objective remains open. The focus for the coming year is to ensure that any trustee participating in recruitment completes the relevant training before joining a panel. Training records and evaluation feedback will be reviewed to confirm completion and understanding, with training included as part of preparation for new panel members.

10. Equality information, monitoring and review

- 10.1** Each year the Trust publishes equality information showing how it meets the PSED (Appendix 1). The Academy Business Leader compiles it from the academy's management information system (MIS) and other records.
- 10.2** The Trust monitors pupils' progress, attendance and suspensions by sex, ethnicity and other characteristics where these are recorded, and checks that no group is over-represented or falling behind. The results inform planning, target-setting and decision-making, including each site's Development Plan. When developing policies and plans, the Trust consults stakeholders and considers the likely impact on different groups.
- 10.3** To protect pupils' privacy, the Trust does not publish figures for any group of fewer than 3 people. Equality data is special category personal data and is handled in line with the Trust's data protection policy and privacy notices.
- 10.4** Only employers with 150 or more employees must publish equality information about their staff. The Trust has 143 (headcount, September 2026), so it does not. The Academy Business Leader must check the headcount at each annual review.
- 10.5** The Director of Inclusion reviews this statement and the equality information every year, for approval by the Curriculum & Pupils Committee.

11. Concerns, complaints and breaches

11.1 Anyone who experiences, witnesses or believes there has been discrimination, harassment or victimisation should tell a member of SLT. Breaches are followed up under the relevant procedure and reported to the Trust Board as required:

- by pupils: the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy. Staff take account of each pupil's needs and understanding
- by staff: the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. A breach by a member of staff may be treated as misconduct
- concerns raised by staff: the Grievance Policy and Procedure and the Dignity at Work Policy
- concerns raised by parents or others: the Complaints Policy.

11.2 A claim that a pupil has been discriminated against because of disability can also be made to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

12. Linked policies and documents

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| • Accessibility Plan 2025-28 | • Grievance Policy and Procedure |
| • Anti-Bullying Policy | • Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy |
| • Behaviour Policy | • Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy |
| • Complaints Policy | • SEND Information Report |
| • Dignity at Work Policy | • Staff Code of Conduct |
| • Disciplinary Policy and Procedure | |

Appendix 1: Equality information 2026-27

This information is updated every year. Groups of fewer than 5 people are not shown and are marked 'x'. The Trust has fewer than 150 employees, so it does not publish staff equality information (see 10.4).

Pupils by site and sex

	Low Fell	High Heworth	Trust
Boys	97	117	214
Girls	37	46	46
Total	134	163	297

Pupils by ethnicity (Trust)

Ethnic group	Number	%
White British	251	85
White, other	9	3
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	8	3
Asian or Asian British	3	1
Black or Black British	9	3
Any other ethnic group	14	4
Not known or refused	3	1

Other characteristics (Trust)

	Number	%
Pupils with an EHC plan	297	100
Pupils with English as an additional language	29	9

Attendance and suspensions, 2025-26 (Trust)

Group	Attendance %	Pupils suspended
Boys	90.42	X
Girls	90.14	X
White British	89.9	X
All other ethnic groups	92.95	X
All pupils	90.34	5

How the Trust has had due regard to the duty in 2025-26

- The Accessibility Plan 2025-28 was approved by the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee on 17 June 2026.
- New staff received Equality Act training at induction, and all staff received annual refresher training.