

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy – 2nd July 2021.

Jay Mercer
Chair of OHCAT Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Mercer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Lauener
Chair of OHC Board

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Equality & Diversity Policy

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils, students and apprentices. OHC&AT is a 'family' of providers, comprising Orchard Hill College (OHC) and Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT), which works for mutual benefit. OHC&AT is proud of its diverse community of pupils/students, apprentices, staff and stakeholders and is committed to maintaining excellence in teaching and learning by ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all, fostered in an environment of mutual respect and dignity.

As used within this policy, equality means ensuring everyone is able to participate in all our activities. Diversity acknowledges there are differences between people, which should be recognised, respected and celebrated.

CONTEXT

On 6 April 2012 public bodies were required to publish information showing how they comply with the new equality duty and setting equality objectives. The published information must be updated at least annually and there is an additional requirement to publish objectives at least once every four years.

Equality

This extends to all the aspects of a person's identity – known as 'protected characteristics' – that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'.

The **general equality duty** sets out the equality matters that OHC&AT needs to consider when making decisions that affect pupils/students/apprentices or staff with different protected characteristics. This duty has three elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have 'due regard', when making decisions and developing policies, to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

In order to help educational establishments in England meet the general equality duty, there are **two specific duties** that they are required to carry out. These are:

1. To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty, at least annually;
2. To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, at least every four years.

Equality objectives for each OHC&AT provision can be found on the relevant website.

From April 2018 organisations with more than 250 employees are required to report on gender pay gap data. OHC&AT reports on this data annually, for OHC&AT as employers, and there is a strategy in place to close any identified gaps. OHC staff count has now increased to above 250 so the College will be included in the next report in April 2022.

PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY ACROSS OHC&AT

Pupils, students and apprentices

- All pupils, students and apprentices are entitled to the best possible education that respects and addresses their individual learning needs.
- All pupils, students and apprentices should be free from discrimination, harassment or bullying, particularly with regard to their protected characteristics.
- All pupils, students and apprentices are given the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns with regard to OHC&AT and its discharging of its responsibilities with regard to equality.
- All pupils, students and apprentices have equality of opportunity with regard to learning experiences within and outcomes beyond OHC&AT life.
- OHC&AT will make all reasonable adaptations to maximise accessibility for all pupils, students and apprentices to all aspects of the curriculum and environment.
- All pupils, students and apprentices are expected to work within OHC&AT's Equality & Diversity Policy. Appropriate support will be put in place or, if necessary, sanctions taken in the event of a breach.
- OHC&AT will set, monitor and update targets and practices designed to narrow the achievement gap for all pupils, students and apprentices.
- The diversity within the pupil, student and apprentice population is recognised, valued and celebrated.

Staff

- All staff have equality of opportunity with regard to support, mentoring, training and career progression.
- All staff are expected to work within OHC&AT's Equality & Diversity Policy. Appropriate support will be put in place or, if necessary, sanctions taken in the event of a breach.
- The diversity within the staff population is recognised, valued and celebrated and, as far as possible, utilised positively to the benefit of that individual, pupils, students and apprentices and OHC&AT.
- Staff will be expected to behave as role models for pupils, students and apprentices and to reflect the aims and expectations of this policy at all times.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to enable staff to carry out their role.

OHC&AT will:

- Ensure that resources are utilised fairly for the equal benefit of all pupils, students and apprentices;
- Make all reasonable and permissible adjustments to the fabric of the building and surrounding grounds to ensure a safe and accessible environment for all pupils, students, apprentices, staff and visitors;
- Actively challenge all discrimination (racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise), harassment or bullying;
- Recognise its role within the community of its pupils, students and apprentices and their homes and within the wider community to present a positive image of its pupils, students and apprentices, recognising their abilities and achievements, celebrating their diversity;
- Work to ensure that its processes and materials are accessible and informed by a commitment to equality and diversity;
- Collect and analyse data to ensure it is effectively monitoring both the successes and the achievement gaps between individual pupils, students and apprentices but also between protected characteristics on an annual basis.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The OHC&AT Board of Trustees will:

- Review and approve this policy on an annual basis.

The OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure this policy is updated annually and is disseminated to all staff.
- Ensure that all pupils, students and apprentices are aware of OHC&AT's position on equality and how it relates to them, through dissemination to Principals of OHC&AT provisions.
- Ensure all policies, documents and actions are assessed for their impact in terms of equality.
- Ensure this policy is adhered to at all times via regular quality monitoring of OHC&AT provisions.

Principals, Senior Leadership Teams and Service Directors/Heads will:

- Ensure that equality and diversity are respected and celebrated within their Academy, College or staff team.
- Ensure that all staff in their Academy or /College/team are aware of and abide by this policy.
- Publish equality objectives for their Academy or College at least every four years (Principals) or contribute to OHC&AT's overall equality objectives that are published every four years (Service Directors/Heads).
- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty at least annually (Principals) or contribute to the annual publication of OHC&AT's equality compliance information (Service Directors/Heads).

All staff will:

- Adhere to this policy at all times.
- Model best practice in terms of equality at all times.
- Ensure that equality and diversity is an integral part of all activity planning and delivery.

POLICY REVIEW DETAILS

<i>Version:</i>	1.5
<i>Reviewer:</i>	Janet Sherborne
<i>Approval body:</i>	Family Board
<i>Date this version approved:</i>	2 nd July 2021
<i>Due for review:</i>	Summer 2022

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Complaints Policy and Procedure (Academies)
Complaints Policy and Procedure (OHC)
Dignity at Work Policy
Mental Capacity and Consent Policy (Academies)
Mental Capacity and Consent Policy (OHC)
Positive Behaviour Policy (Academies)
Positive Behaviour Policy (OHC)
Relationships and Sex Education Policy (Academies)
Relationships and Sex Education Policy (OHC)
SEND Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Staff Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy
Student Mental Wealth, Health and Wellbeing Policy
Whistleblowing Policy