

May 2025

*Next Review date: May 2026*

# Equality Policy

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This policy applies to all academies managed by Wootton Academy Trust (WAT).



**Wootton  
Academy Trust**

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**Person responsible:** Executive Headteacher  
**Approved by:** Board of Trustees

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# 1. Introduction

WAT is committed to the principle that every child has an entitlement to access the full curriculum offer and be fully included in all aspects of the life of WAT, irrespective of ability, race, sex or need and should be respected and valued as individuals.

WAT will address the needs of different groups of learners and deliver high quality learning and teaching practices which will allow every learner to achieve their potential. Where required WAT will adapt the environment and equipment, as much as is practicably possible, as well as seeking specialist advice from outside the organisation to enhance its ability to support all learners. WAT will seek to remove all barriers to learning and achievement.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy and associated procedures are to ensure that WAT exists to provide a superb education for all our students putting their progress at the heart of everything we do. This means that we will always pursue excellence and shall focus upon achieving outstanding results by:

- ensuring that the curriculum offered delivers the best that has been thought and said, underpinned by a strong scholarly culture and with additional support and adaptations where needed;
- regularly measuring student progress and achievement so that their support can be adapted to better meet their needs;
- making available high-quality support to our staff so that they enable great learning by our students. These are consistent with the principles within the Equality Act 2010. The Directors of WAT, mindful of their legal responsibilities but also their wish that every student within the Trust receives a high-quality school experience will ensure that our policies and practices are fair and do not discriminate in relation to:
  - The way in which we provide education
  - The way we offer access to benefits, facilities or services
  - Admissions
  - Exclusions

The Equality Act 2010 makes various behaviours unlawful where there is a protected characteristic. The protected characteristics for schools in relation to its pupils are:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

As an employer, the protected characteristics also include:

- age
- marriage and civil partnership.

The unlawful behaviours are:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people
- Discrimination arising from disability
- Discrimination because a person is thought to have a protected characteristic

- Harassment related to a protected characteristic
- Victimisation of someone because they have made, or helped with, a complaint about discrimination.

For disabled pupils, schools have to make reasonable adjustments to prevent discrimination. This means:

- Where something a school does places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students then a school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- Schools are expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces in comparison to non-disabled students.

**WAT acknowledges its public sector duty to:**

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation that are prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

**To meet this duty, the schools within WAT will work to:**

- Remove or minimise disadvantages connected with a relevant protected characteristic
- Take steps to meet the different needs of those sharing a relevant characteristic
- Tackle prejudice such as bullying and promote understanding
- Consider the public sector duty as part of their decision making, including the development and review of policies and the delivery of services

## 3. Key Aspects for WAT and its schools.

The obligations under the Equality Act will affect many areas of school life and WAT and its schools will need to comply accordingly. Set out below are some specific areas that are considered.

### 3.1 Curriculum

The content of a school's curriculum is excluded from the Act. The schools' curricula within WAT are broad and balanced in line with the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. The delivery of the curriculum must comply with the Act. This relates to both how a particular subject or activity is taught and the availability of learning opportunities.

### 3.2 Acts of Worship

WAT is required to observe a daily act of collective worship which should be of a broadly Christian nature. Each school looks to celebrate diversity and will include within its curriculum planning and its Social, Moral, Spiritual and Culture policy opportunities to look at different faiths and cultures.

### 3.3 Uniform

Schools within WAT have a school uniform for students of compulsory school age and a dress code for post-16 students. Each school will be sensitive to the needs of different groups and will act reasonably in accommodating them.

### 3.4 Single Sex Classes and Sport

Sometimes the schools will decide to have single sex classes. This is allowed under the Act provided it does not result in the students in those classes having an unfair advantage or disadvantage when compared to students of the other sex in other classes. An example of discrimination would be catch up classes for one

sex but not the other.

The Act does give an exception in relation to single sex sports, meaning our schools can have single sex approach in relation to the participation in any sport or game, or other activity of a competitive nature, where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would put her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy. There are single sex sports teams within our schools; however, WAT is firmly committed to ensure boys and girls have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities.

### **3.5 School Trips and Visits**

The schools within WAT are committed to providing students with a range of activities to support their learning and their development as young people. Having a protected characteristic should not prevent a student being able to access these opportunities. In the case of disabled students, the schools will do their best to ensure they play as full a part as possible in school life in line with their obligations to make reasonable adjustments outlined above. However, there will be times when adjustments cannot be made because to do so would have a detrimental effect on other students and would therefore not be reasonable.

### **3.6 Bullying**

All the schools within WAT take any form of bullying very seriously. Where bullying relates to a protected characteristic this is logged by the school concerned. The promotion of tolerance and respect is a key feature of learning programmes within WAT and includes external resources.

### **3.7 Accessibility for Disabled Students**

All schools within WAT will implement accessibility plans for disabled students which are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of our schools to enable disadvantaged students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students

### **3.8 Monitoring**

All schools within WAT monitor and evaluate their practice and procedures. To ensure compliance with the Equality Act as well as securing the best outcomes for all students this will include:

- Close monitoring of the performance of groups, including those with protected characteristics
- Targeted intervention where necessary to help raise attainment
- Strong pastoral support
- Strong and effective action to counter bullying
- Creation and maintenance of strong parental links
- Establishment of effective links with the wider community

## **4. Equality Objectives**

- Barriers to participation are removed to enable all our staff and pupils to play a full part in the life of our schools.
- To reduce instances of bullying and harassment of any kind, and create a culture that supports reporting and resolution where it does happen.

- To promote a physical environment that is accessible (with assistance as necessary) to all students having regard to the curriculum and fabric of the school.

We will achieve these objectives by:

- Ensuring the active promotion of equality with all staff appointments, promotions and selection for training and development made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law, ensuring where possible that the staffing of the Trust reflects the diversity of our community.
- Developing a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that provides equality of opportunity and the holistic development for all students, to maximise their potential regardless of their protected characteristic.
- Promoting positive relationships with parents and members of the wider community, seeking to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement of all and take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.
- Tackling any form of discrimination and harassment towards all those within the Trust, and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of Trust life.
- Collecting and analysing data to ensure all student and staff groups are achieving and no group is subject to disadvantage, and use this data to support students and staff, raise standards, overcome barriers and ensure inclusive teaching.