

Commitment to individuals with a disability policy



Education is for improving lives and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Approved by the Staffing and Remuneration Committee: June 2024

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1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Community Academies Trust (CAT) is committed to fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of disability. The trust is committed to prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of disability in all employment matters, to increase employment opportunities and to ensure that recruitment and selection processes are fully accessible. The trust welcomes applications from disabled people to join the trust as pupils and staff.
- 1.1.2 Community Academies Trust is committed to its responsibilities towards disabled people under the Equality Act 2010. Full accessibility for pupils and staff includes access to the built environment as well as information and methods of working and learning.
- 1.1.3 The trust expects all pupils and staff with a disability to be treated with dignity and respect by all staff, pupils, visitors and contractors.
- 1.1.4 Our schools form a mixed estate that have been built and expanded over the last 150 years. Some of the newer schools and buildings have been designed and built to be accessible for disabled people; others have local adaptations as necessary.

1.2 Aims

For the purpose of this document a person is disabled if they satisfy the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010, namely that they have 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.

1.2.1 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- i. applications for admission from all potential pupils are considered in line with the published admission arrangements and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010;
- ii. applications for employment are considered and assessed on the basis of the applicants' aptitudes, abilities and qualifications;
- iii. disabled staff and pupils have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to play a full part in school and trust life;
- iv. the views of individual disabled pupils or staff are taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed;
- v. all disabled pupils are fully integrated into the school, individual needs are assessed and adjustments are made where reasonable.
- vi. staff working with disabled colleagues or pupils have appropriate information, support and training to enable them to work effectively with

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- and alongside their colleagues and pupils;
- vii. Community Academies Trust takes steps to enable staff and pupils who become disabled during their time at the schools in the trust to continue in their chosen career or course of study as far as is practicable;
 - viii. disabled members of the public can fully participate in public events held within the schools in the trust; and
 - ix. no disabled pupil or staff member is treated less favourably or unfavourably as a result of their disability.

1.3 Equality and Diversity Definitions

1.3.1 Disability

The Equality Act states ‘that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and, long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

1.3.2 Impairment

The Equality Act 2010 states “Whether a person is disabled for the purposes of the Act is generally determined by reference to the **effect** that an impairment has on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. An exception to this is a person with severe disfigurement”

Physical or mental impairments include sensory impairments such as those affecting sight and hearing. It also covers mental impairments, including learning disabilities and mental health conditions, when the condition is recognised by the medical profession and progressive conditions such as MND or muscular dystrophy.

The Act covers a number of impairments which are seldom thought of as disabling, such as heart disease, diabetes, and dyslexia.

Where an impairment is controlled, for example by medication, the person is still considered disabled for the purposes of the Act. While some impairments, particularly visible ones, are easy to identify, there are many which are not so immediately obvious, for example some mental health conditions and learning disabilities.

1.3.3 Long-term

"Long-term means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the affected person's life."

1.3.4 Substantial

This means “more than **a** minor or trivial effect”

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1.4 Complaints or concerns

- 1.4.1 Any pupil who is concerned about any form of discrimination, including disability discrimination, should raise the issue with any adult in school in accordance with the Equality policy for pupils.
- 1.4.2 Incidents of bullying, harassment and abuse are monitored and recorded in schools. Difficult or sensitive issues are dealt with carefully and an appropriate response by staff recognised and encouraged.
- 1.4.3 Inappropriate behaviour which relates to any of the Protected Characteristics (including physical and verbal abuse) is dealt with very seriously in accordance with each school's Anti-Bullying policy.
- 1.4.4 Offensive comments, whether made intentionally or not, are dealt with firmly. Staff members may not ignore any form of abuse. Steps must be taken to explain fully to the perpetrator and the victim that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 1.4.5 The trust ensures that its procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and equitable to all pupils. Staff members operate consistent and clear systems and sanctions which the school community are aware of. Please refer to each school's behaviour policies in this regard.
- 1.4.6 Any suspected child abuse must be reported to the school's appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (please refer to the school's separate Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy in this regard).
- 1.4.7 Parents of pupils (including anyone with parental responsibility for the pupil) have the opportunity to lodge complaints if they are concerned about any form of unlawful discrimination. Such complaints should be made in accordance with the trust Complaints Procedure.
- 1.4.8 Complaints will be noted, and any action taken recorded.

1.5 Implementation

- 1.5.1 The cooperation of all trust employees, pupils, contractors, and visitors is essential to ensure the success of this policy. All adults are accountable for their actions and behaviour in cases of complaints of disability discrimination.
- 1.5.1 The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) will be responsible for ensuring that staff and parents/carers in each school are made aware of this policy and that the Disability Code of Practice set out below is followed.

(Throughout this policy, the term "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

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1.5.2 The Chief Executive Officer and the Main Trust Board will have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy statement is implemented. Day to day implementation is delegated to each school's Headteacher and is monitored by the School Standard Committee.

1.6 Disability Code of Practice

Environment

1.6.1 Any future building projects will be considered at the planning stage for accessibility and usability by disabled people and will be informed by consultation with disabled users.

1.6.2 Evacuation procedures and escape routes for disabled pupils and staff will be carefully planned in line with current regulations and published.

Pupils

1.6.3 Disabled pupils, including those who become disabled whilst studying at a school in the trust, will be given appropriate support from staff to enable them to have equal access to the curriculum. Individual needs will be considered and addressed by all curriculum areas in collaboration with the pupil, the SENDCo and an Education Health and Care Plan.

1.6.4 The trust recognises that special arrangements may be required to enable disabled pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, to exhibit their capabilities and knowledge. Special arrangements will be made to enable such pupils to perform to the best of their ability by meeting their individual needs. Each school within the trust will liaise with the relevant Examination Boards in such instances. Both the school and the Examination Boards have duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards disabled pupils. Pupils and parents will be made fully aware of the process for making special arrangements for assessment and examinations by the SENDCo in liaison with specific Curriculum Leaders and the school's Examinations Officer.

Staff

1.6.5 The Trust will:

- consider and seek to employ disabled people in jobs suited to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications in line with the Equality Act 2010 (see References section below).
- ensure that disabled employees are considered for promotion according to their aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged when the renewal of fixed-term contracts is being considered.

1.6.6 Members of staff who become disabled, so far as is practicable, should continue to remain employed by the trust. An assessment to consider the best course of action will be made involving discussion between the individual, the Headteacher and Trust

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HR on their ability to carry out the duties of their post. Help from related professional organisations should be sought when considering not only the possible effects of the disability but also other consequential disadvantages, such as loss of status or financial loss.

- 1.6.7 In cases where a disability is a degenerative, progressive condition that develops over time, careful consideration should be given to the selection of the most appropriate option(s).
- 1.6.8 Each school in the trust will make reasonable adjustments to work practices and, where possible, the workplace to enable disabled people to work successfully, including those members of staff who become disabled whilst employed.
- 1.6.9 Each school in the trust will ensure that a program of training is offered to staff to increase their awareness of the needs of disabled pupils and inform them of appropriate action to be taken when delivering the curriculum. Teaching Assistants will support teaching staff as required to help ensure that disabled pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

1.7 Useful Organisations

Equality and Human Rights Commission - www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Council for Disabled Children - www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

ACAS - www.acas.org.uk

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