



Brontë Academy Trust
Great schools. Inspirational people. Strong foundations.

Bronte Academy Trust

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

**Bronte Academy Trust has adopted the PACT HR recommended model
procedure as agreed by Trade Unions**

Reviewed By	Approved By	Date of Approval	Version Approved	Next Review Date
Working Party	JB	4 March 19		4 March 21
DH	SC	15 Feb 22		16 Feb 24
DH	Trustees	12 May 25		12 May 26
DH	Trustees	12 May 26		12 May 27

POLICY DETAILS

Bronte Academy Trust has adopted the PACTHR recommended model procedure as agreed by the following Trade Unions;

- ASCL*
- Unison
- GMB
- NASUWT
- NEU
- NAHT

*ASCL recognises that meaningful consultation took place prior to the adoption and implementation of this policy.

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Introduction

Bronte Academy Trust (The Trust) recognises its responsibilities to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of everyone employed and those individuals who undertake work on the premises.

This policy sets out the principles that guide the Trust in achieving its equality objectives. It consolidates all previous policies, schemes and action plans related to equality into a single framework. The policy covers all protected characteristics under the current Equality Act being [The Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk) and other educational setting frameworks including [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) and [The Equality Act 2010 and Schools](#), as well as other factors that could lead to discrimination or diminish the value of individuals who work within our Trust

1.2 Scope

The principles of fairness and equitable treatment outlined by the Trustees apply to our interactions with pupils, parents, members of the local community and external agencies. Please note that equality in the curriculum and the treatment of pupils will need to be addressed in a separate policy document.

The policy is applicable to all employees and workers of the Trust and is accessible to prospective applicants.

1.3 PACT HR Linked Policies

By implementing this policy, Bronte Academy Trust, has also implemented the following PACT HR policies enabling a comprehensive framework in its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Preventing Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy

The above policies and any subsequent amendments can be obtained from the Trust website.

1.4 Commitments

The Board of Trustees is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the work environment, resources and communications are as accessible and inclusive as possible. They are committed to ensuring that no employee or worker experiences discrimination in the workplace because of any protected characteristic.

Leadership Team have the responsibility for implementing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy with the support of the Board of Trustees, ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of the policy. They will ensure that all recruitment panels are trained and have due regard for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to ensure equal opportunity for employment, promotion or training opportunities.

Workers (Employees, Contractors and Volunteers) at all levels are expected to comply with this policy ensuring that others are treated fairly, equitably and with respect. Employees who are subjected to or are witness to unacceptable behaviour or less favourable treatment, prejudice or discrimination, will be able to bring their concerns to the attention of Senior Leaders or the Chair of the Governing Body or Board of

Trustees (in the case of incidents involving a Senior Leader). The Trust recognises that this may be a difficult process for individuals. Support and confidentiality, ensuring that the individual's protected characteristics are protected, will be offered by the person who the individual is raising a concern to.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

Schools, Academies and Trusts must ensure that all strategies, policies, services and functions, both current and proposed, have considered equality, diversity and inclusion. It is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form is used in conjunction with PACT HR Policies. An EIA template is attached to this policy, or a word version can be found within the SLA Advisory Information Hub on the PACT HR website.

2 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

2.1 Introduction

Bronte Academy Trust aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the 'protected characteristics' that refer to specific aspects of a person's identity that are protected from either direct or indirect discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Re-assignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Gender / Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Care experienced*

*Bronte Academy Trust recognises Care experienced as a protected characteristic in line with best practice.

2.2 Key Legal Definitions

Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics as set out above. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but individuals with a protected characteristic are at a particular disadvantage. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified. For example; Indirect Age Discrimination – Requiring applicants to have ten years' experience to apply for a Senior Leadership position could be discriminating indirectly based on age because the requirement could exclude younger people who may have the qualification and skills to apply for the role.

Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, usually on a repeated basis.

Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and is defined in the legislation as any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment and unlawful harassment under the Equality Act 2010 must be related to a relevant protected characteristic, which means it may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment) or be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Victimisation: When someone is treated less favourably because of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint – defined by law as 'suffering a detriment' because an employee has either done or intends to do a 'protected act'. For example: A worker gives evidence to the employment tribunal which supports his colleague's claim of sexual orientation discrimination. As a result, the worker is denied a promotion. The worker has been subjected to a detriment because of a protected act – giving evidence in connection with a claim under the Equality Act. This is victimisation. The worker's sexual orientation is irrelevant to whether he has been victimised or not.

Any employee or worker who feels they have been subject to bullying or either direct or indirect discrimination because of a protected characteristic by another employee or worker should refer to the Preventing Sexual Harassment and/or Bullying and Harassment Policy which can be found on the Trust website.

2.3 Creating an Inclusive Culture

Bronte Academy Trust is opposed to any act of direct or indirect discrimination and offers all employees a variety of inclusive HR policies to support employees in their roles including health and well-being, flexible working, family related and support for recruitment, promotion and training. Any deviation from complying with protected characteristics would be discriminatory (either direct or indirect) unless it can be objectively justified through the need of being a legitimate aim; either a genuine school, academy or Trust need or a health and safety need. PACT HR advice must always be sought on matters where a school, academy or Trust is seeking to use a legitimate aim to deviate from protected characteristics of this policy.

2.3.1 Disability

The Trust will give regard to employees who have a disability (existing or new), and consider whether their working arrangements, the physical aspects of work or the work environment disadvantage the employee. The Trust will seek to remove or reduce any disadvantages the disabled employee faces ensuring reasonable adjustments are considered. If deemed appropriate the Trust will remove the disadvantage through engaging with the employee to ascertain what reasonable adjustments are required and reviewing any agreed reasonable adjustments in line with the employees' changing needs.

Reasonableness is determined based on practicality, cost, impact, level of potential disruption to the Trust and the availability of external support, for example, funding or advice through schemes

such as [Access to Work](#); ([GOV.UK website for employers and employees](#))

Neurodivergence

Many neurodivergent conditions qualify as a disability as they are deemed to meet the following definition: “A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the individual’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”

For example:

- Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and ADHD often affect concentration, communication and memory
- Dyslexia may affect reading, processing information, or time management
- Tourette’s Syndrome can manifest in physical tics that affect workplace interactions

A formal medical diagnosis is not required for protection under the Equality Act 2010, though evidence of impairment is usually necessary with each case being considered on an individual basis.

The Trust will give regard to employees who have a neurodivergence disability in line with paragraph 2.3.1 above.

2.3.2 Religion and Belief

The Trust is committed to respecting the religious and philosophical beliefs of all stakeholders through recognition of the importance of allowing individuals to observe their faith or belief. Reasonable accommodations will be made wherever practicable to ensure an inclusive environment in which people of all faiths feel valued, supported and able to contribute fully.

2.3.3 Time off for Religious Observance

The Trust is committed to supporting individuals in observing their faith whilst maintaining fairness and consistency across the workforce. Requests for time off for religious observation will be considered in the context of being able to maintain an effective delivery of service and without impact to the learning environment and pupil safety

Employees wishing to request time off for religious observance will need to refer to the Trust Leave of Absence Policy.

2.3.4 Observance of Prayer Times at Work

The Trust will make reasonable attempts to accommodate employees and workers who wish to pray at certain times during the day for religious reasons. However, Senior Leaders retain the right to ensure appropriate cover and cannot guarantee all requests will be granted.

Where reasonably practicable to do so, a designated prayer room will be available on the premises. In circumstances where a dedicated space for religious observance is not practical, reasonable efforts will be made to provide a suitably quiet area for employees and workers to undertake religious observance without interference and disruption from others.

2.3.5 Cultural Dress

The Trust welcomes cultural dress providing it does not detrimentally impact a staff member's capacity to perform their job role and does not contravene Health and Safety requirements rendering the dress unsafe. For example, loose fitting garments within kitchen and food preparation areas.

Any concerns regarding the appropriateness of clothing should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, as the first point of contact.

2.3.6 Pregnancy and Maternity

The Trust will ensure that employees are not disadvantaged, discriminated against, or treated unfavourably during pregnancy and maternity. Where applicable, reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be provided to enable continued participation in work. An individual pregnancy risk assessment will be completed as required to ensure safety and wellbeing in consideration of the employee's specific needs. This will be in addition to the general workplace risk assessment which considers risks to pregnant employees and new mothers.

Further information can be found in the Trust's Work and Families Policy.

2.3.7 Gender Reassignment / Recognition

The Trust is committed to supporting employees and workers who are transgender, recognising that there are possible differences between physical sex and gender identity. At no time will individuals be discriminated against on the grounds of any form or process of gender re-assignment or the recognition of their gender. The Trust recognises the term 'transgender' as an umbrella term and acknowledges the variants that exist within the associated terminology of identity.

The Trust recognises and commits to the principles as outlined in [The Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and [Gender Recognition Act 2004](#) and will at all times seek to ensure that:

- All transgender individuals' rights are met in line with the applicable legislation
- All transgender individuals are treated in accordance with their gender identity and referred to using their preferred or chosen title and / or pronoun
- All transgender individuals are afforded equal access to all forms of training, promotional opportunities and staff development
- Transgender individuals are not discriminated against in all employment practices as outlined below

The above applies to all individuals who are transitioning at work or who have transitioned.

The Trust will support employees stating an intention to transition at work. The employee's line manager will discuss the individual's preference regarding informing others, including colleagues, pupils, parents and wider stakeholders. The employee may wish to inform others personally, in conjunction with their line manager or member of the Senior Leadership team, or a combination of approaches.

Express written permission must be gained from the employee surrounding disclosure including; when and how the information should be shared, who the information should be shared with, and the level of information given according to the stakeholder group.

Any disclosure of transitioning or intention to transition will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Single Sex toilet facilities

The Trust will provide gender-neutral facilities accessible to all employees / workers or single-occupant lockable facilities where a need is identified. No employee will be left without appropriate access to facilities.

To ensure the equal dignity and comfort of all employees and workers, facilities designate as single sex must only be used by individuals of corresponding biological sex.

Dress code – All Employees

Where a uniform is required for a role, managers must ensure that transgender employees have access to the uniform that best aligns with their gender identity. In some cases, a transgender employee may request access to both male and female uniform options. Managers should remain flexible and accommodate these preferences wherever reasonably possible.

Transgender employees have the right to comply with any dress code in a manner that reflects their gender identity and gender expression. Managers are expected to support this right and foster an inclusive environment.

2.3.8 Care Experienced

The Trust will ensure that employees who have been in care are not disadvantaged, discriminated against, or treated less favourably than other employees regarding recruitment, pay and conditions of service, training and career development and termination of employment.

2.4 Awareness, training and accountability

The Trust is committed to fostering an inclusive working environment in which all individuals are respected, valued, and able to reach their full potential. To achieve this, the Trust recognises that awareness, education, and accountability are essential components for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

2.4.1 Accountability

The Board of Trustees recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the workplace and will therefore consider measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of disadvantaged groups.

Positive action will be taken to ensure the workforce is reflective of the community and area it supports to enable those groups to compete on an equal basis.

Positive action measures may include:

- Encouraging applications from specific groups which are underrepresented in the workforce
- Encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts
- Promoting the use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible
- Supporting training measures for under-represented groups
- Exploring the possibility of career breaks for staff to assist with family commitments
- Commitments to interviewing disabled people who meet the essential criteria for a role
- Supporting employees who wish to become representatives of trade unions for associations
- Appointment of an Equality Diversity and Inclusion Governor / Trustee where feasible
- The development of a Governing Body / Board of Trustees Agenda to include an item on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Senior Leaders will ensure their behaviour is in line with this policy; ensuring that they are embedding a learning and workforce culture which promotes equality, diversity and inclusivity.

All employees and workers must be aware of this policy and have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and not to discriminate against or harass other people including employees, workers, former employees and job applicants. Always treating them with dignity. This applies to work-related trips or events including social events. All employees and workers should adopt this approach when interacting with pupils, parents and members of the public whilst they are representing the Trust.

2.4.2 Awareness and training

Induction programmes for Senior Leaders will include EDI and unconscious bias training where required. Refresher training will be undertaken at regular intervals to ensure Senior Leaders are well informed on updates to the legislative elements of equality. All Senior Leaders and Line Managers should receive awareness training on how to identify, assess and mitigate the risks of bullying, harassment, and victimisation in the workplace, in addition to understanding and applying inclusive practices.

Induction training for members of the Governing Body / Board of Trustees will also include EDI and unconscious bias training.

As part of training or INSET days, all staff should receive EDI training and briefings annually at a minimum. Training will include unconscious bias training as required.

Pupils should be provided with understanding and awareness of bullying, harassment and victimisation in line with curriculum guidance and expectations. Any incidents must be addressed in accordance with pupil policies, such as, behaviour or safeguarding.

PACT HR SLA customers can access EDI training programmes, developed in conjunction with EDI specialists, for employees and Senior Leaders by contacting your named PACT HRBP or the PACT HR website.

2.5 Staff Surveys / Exit Interviews

It is recommended that schools/academies/Trusts regularly undertake confidential and anonymous staff surveys to inform the risk assessment process and ensure that preventative measures are in place to reduce the risk of bullying, harassment or victimisation in the workplace.

Please refer to PACT HR's Staff Surveys or your named PACT HRBP should you require further support.

It is recommended that questions pertaining to behaviours are included in exit interview and exit questionnaires. Exit interviews offer a valuable data source to inform risk assessments and measures against bullying, harassment and victimisation. Resigning employees may feel better equipped to share candid feedback on undesirable behaviours. Pattern analysis and recurring themes related to discriminatory practices can assist School Leaders to proactively address vulnerabilities, refine policy and implement targeted intervention to mitigate future risk.

2.6 Recruitment and Selection

2.6.1 Inclusive Approach

The Trust aims to ensure that job applicants do not experience discriminatory treatment or practices throughout the recruitment process. Applicants will be assessed based on relevant skills, knowledge and abilities in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

2.6.2 Key Principles

Job Selection Criteria: Person specifications will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant to the role.

Shortlisting and Interview Panels: Panels will, where possible, include at least three members and reflect diversity (e.g. gender and ethnicity). Selection will be objective and based on the person specification.

Inclusive Advertising: Job advertisements will avoid stereotypes or wording that may discourage applicants from protected groups. Reasonable steps will be taken to advertise vacancies to a diverse labour market and, where appropriate, to underrepresented or disadvantaged groups within our Trust.

Health and Disability: Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer, except where necessary to:

- Confirm ability to perform an intrinsic part of the role (with reasonable adjustments if needed)
- Identify adjustments for a fair interview or assessment
- Conduct equal opportunities monitoring (which will not influence selection decisions)

The Disability Passport Scheme or Health Adjustment Passport can be used, where appropriate, to identify help and support for applicants. Please refer to your allocated PACT HRBP for guidance.

Conditional Job Offers: Offers will be subject to a satisfactory medical check, in line with the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Education (Health Standards) England Regulations 2023 to verify mental and physical fitness for the role.

Safer Recruitment Training: It is recommended that all members of the shortlisting panel complete Safer Recruitment training, including unconscious bias awareness training prior to engaging in a

recruitment process. For further details, please contact allocated PACT HRBP or visit the PACT HR Website.

Genuine Occupational Requirement: In certain limited circumstances, it may be lawful for an employer to require a job applicant or employee to possess a specific protected characteristic. Such a requirement must be essential to the role and represent a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. PACT HR Advisory SLA customers are advised to liaise with their allocated PACT HRBP in circumstances where this may be applicable.

2.7 Pay and conditions of service

The Trust follows both national and locally agreed pay and conditions and these together with our policies will underpin and help embed a culture of equality, fairness and inclusivity.

2.8 Training and career development

All employees will be given appropriate training and support to allow them to undertake their role. Promotional and career development opportunities will be based on the employee's skill, experience and performance (where appropriate) so that no employee is disadvantaged.

2.9 Termination of Employment

The Trust will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair, objective and free from direct or indirect discrimination. Similarly, disciplinary procedures and sanctions will be applied consistently and without discrimination, whether they result in warnings, dismissal, or other actions.

The Trust will also ensure that processes relating to ill health retirement and performance capability are managed fairly, objectively, and in consideration of any available evidence.

Employees should refer to the Grievance Policy and procedure should any concern arise with the above processes.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is very important in dealing with cases of alleged unacceptable behaviour. The complainant, the named individual(s) and Senior Leaders handling the incident should only divulge information to authorised people on a 'need-to-know' basis and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Information sharing will only take place through agreement with the effected individual. Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that any disclosure does not pose a risk to affected parties. Where identifiable risks exist, information will be limited to ensure individuals are not directly or indirectly identified through disclosure.

Data protection legislation should not be seen as a barrier to sharing information on imposed sanctions or outcomes with the complainant. Decisions to share information of this nature should be made on a case-by-case basis and ensure that the legal principles of the Data Protection Act are adhered to.

2.11 Trade Unions

Employees who feel they are not being treated in accordance with this policy or feel they are being either directly, or in directly discriminated against or feel they are being bullied, harassed or victimised have a right to be accompanied by either a Trade Union representative or work colleague to support them

through the process. Equally, employees who are accused of breaching this policy and / or bullying, harassment or victimisation against another employee or worker also has the right to be accompanied and supported by either a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

2.12 Support for Employees

Experiencing and / or reporting unacceptable behaviour or being the subject of a concern can be extremely difficult. The following support can be offered by the Trust.

Employee Health and Wellbeing: Dependent on the nature of the alleged behaviour, a referral to Employee Health and Wellbeing (Occupational Health) will be made and this includes employees who the allegations are made against.

Confidential Support Person: Can be allocated to employees who are suspected of bullying or harassment or and employees who are affected by bullying or harassment. This could be a named PACT HRBP.

The following organisations / charities also provide useful information for anyone who is accused or affected by allegations of bullying, harassment or victimisation.

Member of a Trade Union: For employees who are a member of a Trade Union, they can contact their local branch for confidential support and advice or refer to the Trade Union Advice Line or website for more information.

www.bullying.co.uk Bullying UK is a part of a charity called Family Lives. It provides advice and support on a wide range of issues relating to bullying including bullying at work. Information is available online and they run a telephone helpline.

www.victimsupport.org.uk Victim Support is a charity which provides free and confidential information and support relating to a wide range of crimes and antisocial behaviours, including sexual harassment. Individuals do not need to have reported a matter to the police to use their services. It provides information online, has a telephone support line and local support teams who may be able to provide face-to-face advice and support.

www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk The National Bullying Helpline is a charity which provides advice and support relating to bullying including workplace bullying. It has advice online and provides a telephone helpline.

www.stonewall.org.uk Stonewall supports members of the LBGTQ+ community with a wide range of matters. Local area contact details can be found on their website.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-adjustment-passport. A Health Adjustment passport form is available through Department for Work and Pensions to assist with changes to enable employees to change roles or remain in a role.

2.13 Raising a Concern

Employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed behaviour that contravenes any aspect of this policy are encouraged to raise their concerns as soon as possible to a member of SLT. Concerns may be addressed through the Trust's Grievance policy and procedure.

Allegations of harassment or sexual harassment should be reported in line with the provisions of the respective policies.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Declaration of Responsibility

This Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy was reviewed and formally adopted by Bronte Academy Trust on

.....12 May 2026.....Date


..... Signed Chair of Trustees


..... Signed Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Introduction

All Schools, Academies and Trusts need to ensure that all strategies, policies, services and functions, both current and proposed have considered equality, diversity and inclusion. Below is a recommended Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) form for use in conjunction with PACTHR Policies. For further advice regarding the completion of this form for use in conjunction with PACTHR Policies. For further advice regarding the completion of this form, please contact your named PACTHR Business Partner.

Assessment

School Name:	
Policy Name:	
Name of staff member conducting assessment:	
Date of assessment:	
Reason for assessment: (what are you aiming to do?)	

Main Stakeholders/Beneficiaries: (e.g. Staff, Pupils, Governors, Trustees)	
Will the proposed policy/project/strategy etc impact on equality groups?	
What information / data do you have? What further information do you need? What cross-strand issues do you need to consider? Please include any actual or potential impacts on stakeholders (e.g. Staff, Pupils, Governors, Trustees)	
Race	
Sex	
Age	
Disability	
Pregnancy and Maternity	
Gender Reassignment	

Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Religion or Belief	
Sexual Orientation	
Care Leaver	

Improvement Plan

The Improvement Plan needs to outline actions you propose to take to mitigate actual or potential negative impacts.

Issues Identified	Action Required	Lead	Timescale	Comments

Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the assessment (add rows as required)		
Name	Job Title	Date

Publishing

This document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. For record keeping purposes a copy will be kept on file with a copy of the policy and one with the Governing Body / Board of Trustees approval	
Date screening completed	
Date agreed: Governors / Trustees	