



LAURUS

TRUST

Equality Policy Secondary

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE EQUALITY POLICY

Promoting equality means treating people fairly, valuing differences and removing the barriers that prevent people from fully participating in everyday life and realising their full potential. Over recent years, society in general has worked extremely hard to reduce inequality. Yet we know that people still experience disadvantage and unfair treatment simply because of who they are or the background they come from.

The Laurus Trust is committed to taking positive action that will open up the curriculum and its associated activities, services and opportunities to everyone, to ensure that difference and diversity is embraced, and that people are always treated fairly and with respect.

This policy sets out the key principles of equality that will guide the way in which we make decisions, provide services, recruit and support our employees, work with other organisations, and involve local people. It will be supported by strategies and action plans that set out the objectives and activities that will ensure we meet our Equality Duty. These documents are referred to throughout this Policy, and can be viewed by accessing our website.

2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Laurus Trust is committed to ensuring equality, fairness, inclusion and good relations are at the heart of everything we do, be it policy-making, service delivery or employment practice. This will be key to delivering our vision for our academies to ensure that:

‘Every child and young person should leave our care able to live healthily, enjoying safe, happy and fulfilling lives, and with a desire to continue learning, expand their horizons and realise their ambitions and aspirations.’

Our work will be guided by the codes of practice published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and informed by the Equalities Framework for Local Government. We will share best practice through regular Leadership and Team Meetings.

Our commitment to promoting equality is reflected in the values that guide the way in which we plan and deliver services:

- Openness, fairness and accountability
- Involving and listening to our citizens
- Valuing our people
- Continuous improvement

3 LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Laurus Trust will meet all of its Legal Duties in respect of equality and diversity. The key piece of legislation is the Equality Act 2010, which came into effect in October 2010. It replaces and consolidates all of the anti-discrimination laws with one single Act, and has implications for The Laurus Trust as an employer and a service provider.

The Act contains a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires all public bodies and private bodies that deliver a public function, to consider the needs of diverse groups when designing and delivering services. Under the Act, The Laurus Trust must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low;
- Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between different communities.

The Laurus Trust must also comply with the conventions contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to.

The following websites provide useful information about Equality and Human Rights:

www.equalityhumanrights.com

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities

www.acas.co.uk

4 WHO DOES THE EQUALITY POLICY PROTECT?

The Laurus Trust Equality Policy has taken the legal requirements placed upon public bodies straight from the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects people on the grounds of specified “protected characteristics” listed below:

- Age
- Gender
- Disability and caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment (transgender)
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave (including adoptive parents)
- Religion, belief or faith
- Race or ethnicity
- Marital status or civil partnership

We also recognise that one of the main factors that contribute to inequality is poverty. Indeed, poverty can often have a disproportionate impact on protected groups. We have therefore broadened the scope of our equality work to encompass

social, income or housing circumstances. Within the The Laurus Trust, pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium and/or Free School Meals is an indicator used to help us analyse our work in this area.

5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR EQUALITIES

Equality is the responsibility of every member of the Trust Board and employee of The Laurus Trust, as well as organisations who provide services on behalf of The Laurus Trust.

Our parents and carers also have a responsibility to treat our staff with dignity and respect, and to tell us if they require assistance or adjustments to enable them to access our services. We can only help if we are informed help is required.

Overall responsibility for ensuring that our decisions are compliant with equality legislation lies with The Laurus Trust Board, who will be supported by the Executive Head and Senior Leadership Team, to whom they may delegate the day to day management of this area of work. We will follow a robust process to ensure we consciously think about the three aims of the equality duty as part of our decision-making process. This is evidenced in the minutes of meetings, in particular our Trust Board meetings.

All Staff have a professional responsibility to keep up to date with equalities legislation by attending training events organised by the Trust or Local Authority or recognised training provider.

6 MAKING FAIR DECISIONS

Every day, decisions are made within The Laurus Trust schools that affect the lives and relationships of pupils, families and its employees. Equality Analysis will be used when required as a tool to help us make fair, sound and transparent decisions that are based on a robust understanding of the needs and rights of the groups and individuals who may be affected. We will seek advice from our Trust Board or Human Resources Advisor when this process needs to be formally undertaken.

When advised that we should do so, the Laurus Trust Board will then make use of the Act and other legislation to ensure that equality analysis is exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind in such a way that influences the final decision. It will also be used to identify positive actions that will mitigate any negative effects of our decision, or enhance any benefits for protected groups and others at risk of disadvantage.

7 COLLATING, ANALYSING AND REPORTING ON EQUALITY INFORMATION

We will collate and analyse information about equality and diversity outcomes in our schools. This will be used to help the school develop and monitor equality objectives, informing our planning and decision making, identify ways of improving performance and demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty.

The Trustees Board receives regular updates on pupil performance information. School performance information is compared to national data and Local Authority data, to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools/academies in similar circumstances.

As well as monitoring pupil performance information, our schools regularly monitor a range of other information. This relates to:

- Exclusions and truancy
- Incidents of racism, disability, sexist incidents and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in extra-curricular activities
- Attendance

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups and to set targets in our strategic plan, in order to make the necessary improvements. We may routinely ask staff, career applicants and service-users to provide information about their personal characteristics. This will only be done where the information is relevant to the aims of the equality duty – for example if there are known inequalities in relation to a particular outcome or service. The Laurus Trust will always make it clear that disclosure of sensitive information is optional. However, without gathering some form of evidence, it may be difficult to monitor the impact of policies and procedures on certain protected groups. The Laurus Trust will endeavour to overcome this by creating a culture of trust whereby individuals are comfortable disclosing such information. Whenever we ask for equality information, we will explain why the information is needed, how it will be used, and how we will ensure that privacy will be protected.

The Laurus Trust will uphold its duty to protect an individual's right to privacy, and will not publish information that could identify an individual. Nor will the information be used to identify an individual or make a decision about them purely on the grounds of the information that has been provided in relation to their protected characteristics. All personal data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection principles and in compliance with our Data Protection Policy. Further details are included within the Laurus Trust Data Protection Policy.

8 MAKING OUR SERVICES ACCESSIBLE AND EASY TO USE

We constantly strive to deliver services that are easily accessible by all who need them, and to support people to participate in public life. This in turn will help us achieve our duty to foster good relations between different groups and individuals.

We are committed to having conversations with members of the community, staff and children to develop an understanding of how we can break down barriers and better meet their needs. This may involve making adjustments to the way we deliver services where it is reasonable to do so. Relevant actions are detailed within our School Improvement Plans or teachers curriculum planning.

Through our School Improvement Plan we will make our activities and services more accessible and inclusive, and encourage people from diverse backgrounds to come together to identify and tackle local issues.

We will make sure that everyone has the information they need about our services through our Local Offer, which is published on our own website and on Local Authority websites. We will actively seek the views of relevant stakeholders about The Laurus Trust schools, and the services we provide, as well as involving them in shaping services, curriculum delivery and decision making.

We actively support those who find it difficult to express themselves (for example children or parents who have physical, sensory or learning disabilities will be supported when a questionnaire is used).

All The Laurus Trust schools provide visitors with full accessibility information to make visiting our sites an enjoyable experience. Staff can also offer guided assistance, where required. All staff and children requiring extra support in and around our schools have a Personal and Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

9 ADVANCING EQUALITY THROUGH THE CURRICULUM

All The Laurus Trust schools will ensure that:

- Planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross curricular themes promote positive attitudes to equality and diversity.
- Pupils will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality.
- All steps are taken to ensure that all pupils have access to mainstream curriculum by taking into account the cultural and lifestyle backgrounds of all pupils, their linguistic needs are taken into account and their learning styles are considered.

9.1 Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- Ensure quality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Use a range of teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions;
- Develop pupils' advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality;
- Ensure that the PSHE and Beliefs & Values curriculum cover issues of equalities, diversity, religion, human rights and inclusion;
- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- Provide educational visits and extra-curricular activities that involve all pupil groupings;
- Take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning and settling challenging targets;

- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils;
- Identify resources that support staff development.

9.2 Learning Environment

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or social background. All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.

To secure the desired outcomes we recognise:

- Teacher enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all pupils. We will use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping. All subject departments, where appropriate, promote and celebrate the contribution of different minority groups to the subject matter. Adults in the Trust will try to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity.
- The Trust will place a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability. We will meet all pupils' learning needs, including the more able, by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work.
- The Trust must provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources.
- All pupils are to be encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning. A range of teaching methods are to be used throughout the Trust to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.

9.3 Ethos and Atmosphere

At The Laurus Trust we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the Trust community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all. There should be an openness of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the Trust. The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the Trust with friendliness and respect. The displays around the Trust are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity and are frequently monitored.

Physical access to all The Laurus Trust schools is restricted by a number of security measures to help protect and safeguard children and staff. Vehicular access to a safe parking space can be easily arranged for disabled visitors; access arrangements are clearly displayed and communicated with disabled visitors upon arrival. Assisted support around each school can be arranged.

Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all the children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and externally based activities.

9.4 Resources and Materials

The provision of good quality resources and materials within The Laurus Trust school's is a high priority. These resources should:

- Reflect the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexual diverse society;
- Reflect a variety of viewpoints; Show positive images of males and females in society including people with disabilities; they should not include explicitly and implicitly racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist materials.

9.5 Language

We recognise that it is important that all members of the Trust community use appropriate language which:

- Does not transmit or confirm stereotypes;
- Does not offend;
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document;
- Creates the conditions for all people to develop their self-esteem;
- Uses correct terminology in referring to particular groups or individuals e.g. Inuit rather Eskimo, Native Americans rather than Red Indians;
- Use, when possible, first language effectively for learning.

9.6 Extra-Curricular Provision

It is the policy of all The Laurus Trust schools to provide equal access to all activities from an early age e.g. girls playing football, boys playing netball and mixed teams wherever possible. We also provide equality of access to breakfast and after school clubs.

We undertake responsibility for making contributors to extra-curricular activities aware of the Trusts commitment to equality of opportunity (e.g. volunteers and external providers). We work to ensure that all such non-staff members who have contact with children adhere to these guidelines.

9.7 Personal Development and Pastoral Guidance

Pupils, staff, parents/carers will be offered support, as appropriate, as soon as they have made it known that in their view, an act of discrimination has taken place. We also recognise that the perpetrators of discrimination are themselves sometimes victims of their personal circumstances, and therefore where appropriate remedial work is done to ensure that the actions do not occur again. Positive role models are used when the opportunity arises throughout the Trust to ensure that different groups of pupils can see themselves reflected in the Trust community.

Emphasis is placed on the value that diversity brings to the Trust community rather than the challenges.

9.8 Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff. Where possible, this will include pupil's access to a balance of male and female staff at each key stage, although the Trust Board recognises that workforce staffing restrictions may not always allow this.

We undertake to encourage the career development and aspirations of all individuals. It is The Laurus Trust policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils in the various dimensions of equality of opportunity.

We will agree clear and challenging objectives in our School Improvement Plan that will focus our efforts on improving the lives of children at risk of inequality, exclusion and lower than expected attainment. These state what we want to achieve, and are supported by clear actions and measures of performance. The objectives are included within The Laurus Trust 's strategic planning document: The School Improvement Plan. They will also be included in other emerging issues / Leadership Team plans and other key documents. This will ensure that equality is an integral part of our day-to-day business planning and activities.

Progress towards achieving these objectives will be monitored as part of the Laurus Trust Appraisal systems.

10 EMPLOYMENT – SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING LAURUS TRUST EMPLOYEES

The Laurus Trust will treat all of its staff, and anyone who applies to work or volunteer for us, fairly and equally. The Laurus Trust expects the same level of commitment and professionalism towards equality between all the Laurus Trust colleagues.

Our employment practice is guided by the principles of equality and fairness. This includes recruitment, terms and conditions, appraisals, learning and development, career promotion and when ending employment. Our activities and approach to achieving this are available via our Human Resources team, located at the Laurus Trust Head Office.

We want our staff to reflect the diversity of the communities that we serve, and will ensure we follow guidance from Human Resources and GOV.UK when we recruit, that may include taking steps to encourage applications from groups who we know are under-represented in our workforce.

All employees should be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace. The Laurus Trust will not tolerate bullying and harassment in any form, and the Whistleblowing Policy sets out how individual members of staff might raise concerns they have about actions taking place within the workplace. It specifically covers issues around bullying and harassment; grievances and whistle blowing. Employees from protected groups will be supported and encouraged to organise their own interest groups where they can meet to share information, raise concerns and raise awareness.

We will adopt a range of methods to ensure an inclusive approach to engaging with staff about issues that affect them. This may include trade unions, team meetings, use of the internet, staff surveys, focus groups and written communication.

11 PROTECTING PEOPLE

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is everybody's business, wherever they work and whatever they do for The Laurus Trust. This includes staff, volunteers and people who work for organisations that provide services on behalf of The Laurus Trust. We will endeavour to ensure all staff and elected members are trained in Safeguarding Awareness.

The Laurus Trust has an absolute commitment to the well-being of children and young people. Our anti-bullying policy aims to reduce incidents of bullying that involve children and young people, and to encourage children, young people and adults to show respect and consideration for others. The Local Safeguarding Children Boards are responsible for agreeing how organisations co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and ensure the effectiveness of what they do.

The Laurus Trust is also committed to working in partnership to ensure that hate crime is not tolerated within our communities and neighbourhoods. Hate crime is motivated because of prejudice, hostility or hatred towards a person, family or groups because of their sexuality, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or faith. It can include physical attacks to either a person or their property, threats, verbal abuse and insults. Nobody should suffer because of who they are, and nobody should tolerate being victimised. Through the planned curriculum and when opportunities arise we will tackle incidents as well as raise awareness of hate crime, encourage victims to report incidents, support known victims and take actions against offenders as necessary.

12 ASSOCIATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

In addition to the many documents referred to within this policy, The Laurus Trust has in place a range of policies, procedures, strategies and guidance that have an important role in ensuring we are meeting the needs of, and advancing equality for protected groups. These are detailed within each Trust School Development Plan.

13 EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Equality objectives will be decided for each Laurus Trust School. These will be incorporated into the school development plan and published on individual school websites. All staff will contribute to and have access to the school development plan.

Each school must publish its own 3-year Accessibility Plan on their website.

Equality Impact Statement

Names and titles of people involved with this assessment	Wendy Searle – Acting SENCO Dave Brown – Deputy Headteacher
Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics	<div>Race <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Disability <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Gender <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Age <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Religion & belief <input type="checkbox"/></div> <div>Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/></div>
Summary of any issues/proposed changes	N/a
Date	30.05.2017
Date of next review	30.05.2018