Lighthouse Education Trust

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

2026-2027

Document Control	
Version	*1.0*
Previous version location	*SharePoint*
Reviewed by	*HR Director*
Review date	*May 2026*
Considered/Endorsed by	*SLT*
Approved by	*Trust Board*
Principal Source(s)	*The Key*
Approved date	*July 2026*
Next review date	*July 2027*
Officer responsible	*HR Director*

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION 3
2. POLICY STATEMENT 3
3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE 4
4. AIMS 4
5. DEFINITIONS 5
6. CORE PRINCIPLES 6
7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 8
8. ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION 9
9. ADVANCING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY 11
10. FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS 11
11. MONITORING THE IMPACT OF THIS POLICY 12
12. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 12
13. ASSOCIATED POLICIES 12

1. INTRODUCTION

Lighthouse School, Leeds, a specialist secondary school, was founded in 2012 to provide exceptional, personalised education and learning for children with an autistic spectrum condition (ASC), or related communication disorder between the ages of 11 and 19 years old. In November 2025, Lighthouse School converted from a Single Academy Trust (SAT) to a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and became Lighthouse Education Trust.

At the time of writing there are 103 students on roll at Lighthouse School, Leeds and Lighthouse School, Harrogate is planned to open in the Autumn term 2026/2027.

The trust works to support every student – their head, their heart, their body, their family and their future. All students at Lighthouse Education Trust have an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with autistic diagnosis relating to their learning difficulties which underpins the four cornerstones of the school and works symbiotically to help each student.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to inspiring and enabling our students, delivering meaningful skills for life in a holistic, nurturing and stimulating learning environment. This is achieved through exceptional teaching, unwavering support, outstanding work experience, and positive interactions and role models. We repeatedly instil good behaviours in order to encourage resilience, independence, confidence and wellbeing in all our students.

We expect all staff, trustees and volunteers to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others, which reflect the school's core beliefs of:

Ambition: Taking risks, having adventures, and aspiring to achieve great things.

Versatility: Exemplifying individualised and adaptive teaching and learning.

Compassion: Showing empathy and understanding of others' needs.

Innovation: Striving for creative solutions, challenging perceptions, and inspiring positive change.

Happiness: Taking joy from developing and succeeding together.

Devotion: Being dedicated to our people, our jobs, and our school community.

Optimism: Realising our limitless destinations, now and in the future.

Respect; Embracing uniqueness, equality, and ensuring all contributions are valued.

3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to abide by the legislation set out in the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that equality, fairness and respect is provided for all stakeholders.

The trust believes it is meeting its statutory duties to not unlawfully discriminate under the Equality Act 2010. It includes information about how the trust is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and provides guidance to staff, parent/carers and outside visitors about the school's approach to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships by integrating equality, diversity and inclusion into the trust's core beliefs and principles.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy applies to all stakeholders whether temporary, full-time or part-time staff, trustees, students, parent/carers, visitors, and those connected with the trust in a wider sense.

Any breach of this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other trust policies are dealt with, as determined by the relevant school's Principal and Board of Trustees.

The contents of this policy is made known to all employees, trustees, and, as appropriate all students, parent/carers and other stakeholders.

This policy will be promoted within the school community and feature on the school website, and the school will provide a hard copy for anyone who requests one.

4. AIMS

The trust aims to create a culture of diversity and inclusion within its community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members across the trust are valued for their contribution and to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices within the school community.

<u>Profile of our Trust</u>

Lighthouse Education Trust is pioneering, dynamic, and progressive. We strive for unequivocal excellence in everything we do, and as such, seek to be recognised as a sector leader at a national level for students who have a diagnosis of autism. Our vision is to deliver transformative experiences that are destination led, for all of our students and their families.

Lighthouse Education Trust also aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty by having due regard to the need to:

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

On an annual basis and in order to meet these general duties, the school will:

- Publish equality information, ensuring it does not identify specific individuals, to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and
- Publish and review Equality Objectives – (these will be formally reviewed every 4 years)

The school also aims to oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination: This includes:

- Pay and benefits;
- Terms and conditions of employment;
- Dealing with grievances and disciplinary;
- Dismissal;
- Redundancy;
- Leave for parents;
- Flexible working requests;
- Recruitment and selection for employment, promotion, training or any other developmental opportunities.

5. DEFINITIONS

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It replaces all previous UK anti-discrimination laws and regulations and provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. The Act defines nine 'protected characteristics' in relation to a person's identity, as follows:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;

- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

The protected characteristics of age, marriage and civil partnership apply to the School as an employer, but NOT in relation to provision for students.

The Equality Act 2010 defines different kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination by association, harassment and victimisation.

a. **Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people.

b. **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, when compared to people without that characteristic

c. **Discrimination by association** occurs when someone discriminates against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

d. **Indirect discrimination by association** occurs when someone does not have a protected characteristic but suffers substantially the same disadvantages as someone who does.

e. **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** occurs where an organisation or service fails to make reasonable adjustments for an individual whose disability puts them at a disadvantage compared with others who are not disabled.

A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information. Although not specifically covered by the Equality Act in the context of students within education, at Lighthouse Education Trust, we also consider socio-economic factors, caring responsibilities and age as part of our focus on equality, diversity and community cohesion. These factors are also part of our wider responsibilities to our staff.

6. CORE PRINCIPLES

In fulfilling our statutory duties, and creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment we are guided by 7 core principles:

a. All members of the trust and wider community are of equal value We see all members of the school and wider community of equal value, despite any protected characteristics.

We recognise that to achieve inclusion, there must be positive action including measures under the Equality Act 2010 to enable and empower equal:

- Access;
- Opportunities;
- Treatment;
- Resources;
- Outcomes;
- Impact.

b. The trust recognises and respects diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same. Our policies, procedures and activities do not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and the type of barriers and disadvantages people may face, in relation to:

- Disability, in order to make reasonable adjustments;
- Ethnicity, recognising different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice;
- Gender and sexual orientation considering the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men, and individuals who identify as LGBT/ non- binary;
- Religion, belief / faith;
- Sexual identity; and
- Age (where appropriate).

c. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

The trust's policies, procedures and activities will promote positive:

- Attitudes and relationships with those people with a disability;
- Interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities from different ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, or national origin;
- Respect and good relations between sexes;
- Intergenerational attitudes and relationships.

d. We will ensure that the recruitment, retention and ongoing development of staff is undertaken in a fair and equitable manner to support the school's vision and values.

Policies and procedures will benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continued professional development.

e. **We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.** Avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, taking opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist.

f. **We consult widely**

The trust engages with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

g. **We feel that the community as a whole should benefit from our actions.**

The school intends that policies and activities will benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. The Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this policy and its objectives are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, students and parents/carers.
- Review this document annually in compliance with the Public Equality Sector Duty and Equality objectives updated at least once every four years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Principal of each school, who will attend appropriate equality and diversity training and report back to the full Board of Trustees regarding any issues for each school

b. The Principal of each school will:

- Implement the school's Equality Plan with support from the Board of Trustees;
- Ensure all staff are aware of the Equality Policy, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- Ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy, in order that no-one is discriminated against in employment or training opportunities;
- Promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and respect for other people;
- Treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of discrimination, including those which are prejudice-related incidents, with due seriousness.

c. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of each school will:

- Ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility;
- Familiarise themselves and ensure compliance with the Equality Policy strategies and procedures;
- Ensure that no one is subjected to unfair or unequal treatment or discriminatory practices and actively challenge cases of discriminatory practice;
- Provide information and guidance for members of staff with regards to the Equality Policy, strategies and procedures;
- Ensure that equal opportunities are incorporated into all induction processes for new or temporary staff and is supported by on-going training.

d. All Staff will:

- Be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of prejudicial treatment/ discrimination/ incidents related to hate;
- Deal effectively with any incidents of unfair or unequal treatment or discriminatory practices;
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos throughout the school with due regard for equality and positive working relationships;
- Promote an inclusive curriculum and ethos which reflects our diverse society;
- Keep up to date with equality legislation and developing practice by attending relevant CPD and induction programmes, as well as accessing information from appropriate sources;
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action to address cases of discriminatory practice and appropriately manage any reported incidents of hate;
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping through the curriculum.

e. Students will:

- Be involved in the on-going development of the Equality Policy, procedures and strategies through student voice activities, and will understand how it relates to them, as appropriate to age and ability;
- Be expected to act in accordance with the Equality Policy and report any incidents of, hate incidents or discriminatory behaviour or practice;
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos and culture throughout their school with due regard for equality and positive relationships
- Show respect for others in their language, culture and actions

f. Parents/carers will:

- Have access to information in appropriate, accessible formats;
- Be informed of any incident or breach of this Policy, which may directly affect their child.

8. ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION

Lighthouse Education Trust is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination in all aspects of education and welfare:

a. Recruitment, Retention and Development of Staff

- All job adverts and job descriptions include a short statement with regards to equal opportunities.
- Selection criteria, including job descriptions and post-holder specifications should be kept under review to ensure they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.
- The aim of selection is to appoint the most suitable candidate in relation to the job requirements; thus, selection criteria will relate to qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the post and any tests or exercises will be carried out in circumstances similar to the normal job environment.
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are appropriately trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Each interview panel consists of at least one member who has received Safer Recruitment training.
- All members of staff receive continuous professional development with regards to their duties under the Equality Act 2010. All new members receive this as part of their induction training.

b. Student Admissions

- The school's admissions procedures will ensure that all students and their parents/carers receive comprehensive pre-entry guidance and opportunities to take part in activities which facilitate transition. Admissions procedures will be welcoming, professional and free from bias.
- The trust will respond positively to disability legislation by ensuring that students with a SEND and any additional needs beyond autism are appropriately supported through the admissions process, that steps are taken to understand and plan to meet their needs, and that priority is given to physical access to buildings and learning facilities. (***For further details refer to the Trust's SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan***).
- All students will have a planned induction process to identify their specific needs which is designed to prepare and plan for transition into their new learning environment.

c. Teaching and Learning

- Learning resources will be free from discriminatory and prejudicial assumptions, stereotypes, images and language. The only exception to this is where materials are used to promote positive discussion with regards to equality issues. Within legislative requirements the curriculum will be designed to be inclusive and to promote accessibility and progress.
- We are committed to achieving the highest standards in teaching and learning. We will seek to develop inclusive, personalised learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students to help them to achieve the best possible outcomes and qualifications for the next stages of their

life and education. All students should develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that they need to participate in our multi-cultural and diverse society, in modern Britain and in the wider context of an inter-dependent world.

- All students will receive support appropriate to their individual needs, age and setting. Staff will adopt an inclusive, personalised approach which recognises individual student needs.
- All students will be supported to develop a strong sense of self and belonging, through access to a curriculum that promotes self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Students will be exposed to a broad and balanced curriculum and enrichment activities that promote tolerance, acceptance of difference, celebration of diversity and respect, and respect for individual identities.

9. ADVANCING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

As set out in the Department of Education guidance on the Equality Act, the trust aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people connected to a particular characteristic;
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of individuals who possess a particular characteristics;
- Encouraging people with a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities;

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the trust will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how students with different characteristics are performing;
- Analyse data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information;
- Make evidence available identifying improvements;
- Publish further data regarding any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own students.

10. FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

The school intends policies, procedures and activities promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
- Mutual respect and good relations between all sexes.

11. MONITORING THE IMPACT OF THIS POLICY

The impact of this policy will be measured through:

- Student surveys;
- Parents and carers surveys;

In addition, we will monitor other indicators on an ongoing basis, such as:

- Attainment and progress of students;
- Sanctions and rewards;
- Incidents of bullying and harassment;
- Participation rates in trips, visits and extra-curricular activities;
- Membership of the Governing Body;
- Staffing;
- Parent and carer engagement.

12. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

In accordance with the Equality Act (2010) and our Equalities Policy, the trust has published a series of Equality Objectives. To view our current objectives please refer to the document named E&D Action Plan on the staff shared drive.

13. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Accessibility Policy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Positive Behaviour Policy including Anti-Bullying;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Safer Recruitment Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Staff Grievance Policy,
- Staff Anti-Bullying, Harassment & Victimisation Policy.

LINKS TO:

The Equality Act 2010
www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sectorequality-duty