



# JOHN TAYLOR FREE SCHOOL

Equality Policy and Accessibility Plan

2024-2026

## John Taylor Free School Equality, Diversity and Accessibility Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years to reflect changes regarding advice within education and following analysis of behaviour trends within John Taylor Free School. The policy and guidance will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors' Committee. Local Governing Bodies monitor the implementation of procedures and their effectiveness in JTMAT schools.

John Taylor Free School is committed to equality and valuing diversity and actively supports practices that promote genuine equality of opportunity for all staff and young people.

### 1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 John Taylor Free School is committed to promoting a positive and diverse culture in which all staff and young people are valued and supported to fulfil their potential irrespective of their age, disability, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 1.2 The school recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to promoting the equality and diversity of all those we work with especially our employees, students, young people and visitors.
- 1.3 John Taylor Free School opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment, and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Act and its subsequent provisions.
- 1.4 The following groups have been identified as key recipients in terms of the provision of this statement:
  - Are being looked after or on the edge of Care
  - Have Special Educational Needs / Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
  - Are excluded or at risk of exclusion from school
  - Identify as belonging to an ethnic group which represents a minority of the school community, including those from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller background
  - Have English as an additional language
  - Are missing in education
  - Have ill health, including hospitalisation, affecting attendance at school
  - Are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
  - Have drug or alcohol abuse
- 1.5 John Taylor Free School's mission statement sets out our intent that our community **succeed and thrive**, personally and in society. This intent is communicated with our community through the mantra "**Turn Up, Work Hard, Be Nice**". At the core of its ethos, JTFS believes in the importance of positive human interaction and mutual respect. This is underpinned by the JTMAT vision: "**We believe in the power of education to improve lives – and the world**". We have developed our policy with these guiding principles and in consultation with our community (See appendix 3).

### 2.0 Compliance

- 2.1 Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is the responsibility of all members of staff. John Taylor Free School does not condone any act of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation (see Appendix 1). Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.2 The Equality Act covers nine protected characteristics upon which discrimination is unlawful:
  - age

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

### 3.0 Roles and responsibilities

The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at John Taylor Free School is the Head of School (See Appendix 2 for further details).

3.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- treat colleagues, young people and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity;
- actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities;
- report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.

3.2 It is important to appreciate that an employee is personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment, whether or not the employer is also liable. Any attempt to instruct, cause or induce another person to discriminate, harass or victimise a third person will also amount to unlawful discrimination and any employee doing so will be subject to disciplinary action.

### 4.0 Duty to make reasonable adjustments

4.1 John Taylor Free School staff will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments, where there is a need, to ensure that a person has the same access to everything no matter the context, as far as is reasonable. We will take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by the individual, as far as is reasonable. This may be most necessary should a student be disabled.

4.2 The school will produce an accessibility plan, produced with relevant stakeholders. This sets out how the school will improve accessibility to the site for staff, students and visitors. The plan is monitored regularly and reviewed annually to ensure that outcomes are achieved.

### 5.0 Admissions policy

5.1 Our admissions criteria are defined under the admissions policy and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic. The admissions policy can be found on the school website [www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk](http://www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk)

### 6.0 Curriculum delivery

6.1 The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for students including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for certain groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and PSHE curriculum. Positive and proactive steps will be taken to prevent discrimination against, or victimisation of, any young person in the provision of education or access to any benefit, facility or service including educational trips, work experience and leisure activities.

## **7.0 Positive Behaviour Management and Exclusion Policy**

7.1 The decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently is a last resort at John Taylor Free School. Our exclusion criteria are defined within the Positive Behaviour Management Procedure and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic. The Procedure can be found on the school website [www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk](http://www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk)

## **8.0 Recruitment and selection**

8.1 All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent will be treated fairly and equally. John Taylor Free School will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Selections will be made on the basis of aptitude, ability and/or merit, where appropriate. Where appropriate, John Taylor Free School will endeavour to make all reasonable and effective adjustments during the recruitment and selection process.

8.2 Where recruitment and selection is carried out by a third party, on behalf of John Taylor Free School, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure they adhere to the principles of this policy.

## **9.0 Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination and harassment**

9.1 All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment must be reported to a Senior Leader and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident).

9.2 All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise), will be addressed in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **10.0 Complaints and grievances**

10.1 If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow the JTMAT complaints and grievances procedure, which is available at <https://jtmat.co.uk/privacy/policies/>

## **11.0 Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review**

11.1 The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 'Equality, Diversity and Accessibility Policy' is the Head of School. The designated member of staff is also responsible for ensuring that all young people, staff, parents/carers and placing local authorities are aware of our policy. Additional support would also be provided to any parent or significant person, wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on the premises during office hours and an electronic copy is posted on our website [www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk](http://www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk)

11.2 This policy document will be reviewed and publicised in writing, at least every 2 years and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant incidents or new developments in national, local and organisational policy, guidance and practice.

## APPENDIX 1: Further information about equality and diversity

### Types of unlawful discrimination

**Direct discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex sexual orientation).

**Discrimination by association** is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

**Perception discrimination** is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a condition, provision, policy or practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Discrimination arising from disability** occurs when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment. Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct and indirect discrimination.

**Harassment** occurs when a person is subject to “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

**Third-party harassment** occurs where, during the course of their duties, an employee is harassed by an individual or individuals who are not under the direct control of John Taylor Free School and the harassment relates to a protected characteristic.

**Victimisation** occurs when an individual is subject to a detriment because they have made an allegation of, or given evidence about, the treatment of any individual (including themselves) who has been subject to any of the above.

## APPENDIX 2: Roles and responsibilities

The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at John Taylor Free School is the Head of School.

### **The Role of the Designated Person is to:**

1. Create an environment in which all members of the community are expected to treat one another with mutual respect, dignity and tolerance.
2. Ensure that John Taylor Free School complies with equality legislation;
3. Ensure all policies, practices and procedures, associated with equality and diversity, including admissions, curriculum, recruitment and selection are implemented;
4. To make effective and reasonable adjustments where appropriate to meet the individual needs of staff, young people and others who may have business with John Taylor Free School;
5. Ensure that all staff are aware of and follow John Taylor Free School's policy; and receive appropriate equality and diversity training, in accordance with their roles and responsibilities;
6. Take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation from taking place;
7. Take responsibility for recording, managing and analysing incidents of discrimination, harassment and victimisation in accordance with John Taylor Free School's policies, procedures and guidance.

### **It is the responsibility of all staff to:**

1. Treat colleagues, young people and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
2. Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity;
3. Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities;
4. Report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.

It is important to appreciate that an employee is personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment, whether or not the employer is also liable. Any attempt to instruct, cause or induce another person to discriminate, harass or victimise a third person will also amount to unlawful discrimination and any employee caught doing so will be subject to disciplinary action.

## APPENDIX 3: How we developed our policy and procedures

### Participation and Involvement

The development of this policy has involved the whole of our school community. We've involved and listened to what they have to say, including people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010.

### How we developed our Policy

#### Our students

- Students' wellbeing and experience are regularly surveyed throughout the year.
- Student Leaders represent their peers in raising issues with the school's leadership team.
- Vulnerable students (SEN, Looked After Children etc.) have additional time spent preparing for their review meetings and PEP meetings discussing their expectations. These review meetings take place within statutory recommendations.
- Students are consulted on their religious requirements, and a multi-faith room is available for students year-round, with particular provision during festival periods (e.g. Ramadan).
- Students are invited to attend the LGBTQ+ club each week, with the aim of providing a safe space and advocacy of allyship.
- Children with Individual Health Care Plans have an annual review of their plans with the Designated DSL and / or HOY and carry a card that outlines their individual support strategies.
- As part of safeguarding procedure, students may be identified for early help as a result of attendance, SEND, mental health or behaviour.
- Trends of behaviours and actions on MyConcern are used to inform our actions to improve inclusion.
- Students are regularly exposed to the key points in the Equality Act through our PSHCE curriculum, as well as assemblies and in their reflective journal, which should be carried whenever they are at school.

#### Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. Regarding disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures.

We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators. We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment. The building is accessible by wheelchair users, with adjustable desks available in classrooms as required.

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community. We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development. Unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties.

## **The wider community**

We regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this. We listen to our stakeholders in the community through our media channels, online parent groups and other local forums. We invite our parents into school each half-term for an open-house 'Parents as Partners' event. We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through student/learner voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

We have established good links with our local and our wider community, including the local police. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school. By listening to those within our community, especially our young people, and to our partners, we can identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required. Assemblies, the Personal Tutor Time activities and Enrichment Days are an important opportunity for inclusivity.

## **Responding to hate or prejudice- based incidents and bullying**

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice-based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes, or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism

We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour. We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities, thereby preventing or responding to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses. We record all hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities. Potential hate crimes are reported via My Concern so that patterns can be observed in data collected to identify potential radicalisation and extremism.