

Policy

Equality and Diversity

Children Universal

Great Dunmow School

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy
Approval Date	Feb 2026
Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
Next Review Date	Feb 2029
Version No.	001
Policy Level	Homes and Education
Staff groups affected	All Homes and Education Staff

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Responsible Individual or Senior Leader. A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to this policy to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.

Local or service-level alterations may not be made without approval through the organisation's policy governance process.

Headteacher: Carrie-Ann Gibbs

Regional Lead: Roc McConomy

1. Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

‘Establishment’ or ‘Location’	This is a generic term which means the home/school/college owned by CareTech.
Individual	Means any child or young person under the age of 18 or young adult between the ages of 18 and 25.
Service Head	This is the senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college/home. <i>* dual registered locations need to include Service Head and Registered Manager if they are not the same person.</i>
Key Worker	Members of staff that have special responsibility for Individuals residing at or attending the Establishment.
Parent	means parent or person with Parental Responsibility
Regulatory Authority	Regulatory Authority is the generic term used in this policy to describe the independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services. E.g Ofsted, DfE, CIW, CIS, ESTYN, HMIE etc)
Social Worker	This means the worker allocated to the individual. If there is no allocated worker, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	Placing Authority means the local authority/agency responsible for placing the child or commissioning the service
Local Authority	This means the local authority for the location.
Staff	All staff working at the Location including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.
Company	Any service owned by CareTech

1. Legislative Context

This policy is aligned with the following legislation and guidance:

UK-Wide

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

England

- Children Act 1989 & Children Act 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Education Act 1996

Wales Legislation

- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
- Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
- Education Act 1996
- Government of Wales Act 2006 (Equality Duties)

Scotland

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000
- Education (Scotland) Act 1980

3. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets the standard for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all of our homes and education settings. It applies to all children, young people and adults under and over 18 who receive services from us. We commit to rights-based, anti-oppressive and trauma

responsive practice that promotes safety, belonging, dignity and opportunity for every person who uses our services.

4. Principles

- **Rights and non-discrimination** – We uphold the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UNCRC. No child, young person, adult, family member or staff member will be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic. We proactively remove barriers to access, participation and achievement.
- **Person-centred practice** – We personalise care and education to identity, culture, language, beliefs, strengths, needs and aspirations.
- **Participation and voice** – We actively seek and act upon wishes and feelings. Children and young people help shape decisions that affect them.
- **Trauma-responsive care** – We recognise that adversity and discrimination can be traumatic. We prioritise psychological and physical safety, trust, collaboration, choice and empowerment; and we avoid re-traumatisation.
- **Safeguarding and learning** – We work effectively with safeguarding partners and inspectorates. We use incidents, complaints and feedback to improve inclusion and outcomes.

5. Outcomes

We evidence that:

- Children/young people/adults develop a positive sense of identity and belonging;
- care and education are personalised to need;
- equality, diversity and cultural identity are promoted;
- participation and progress are equitable for all groups;
- staff are confident and competent to deliver inclusive, trauma-responsive practice.

6. Definitions

- **Equality** means ensuring everyone has equal access to opportunities and fair treatment.
- **Diversity** means recognising and valuing difference.
- **Protected characteristics** are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- **Prohibited conduct** includes direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failure to make reasonable adjustments.

7. Responsibilities

All staff:

- challenge discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviours;
- plan and deliver inclusive care, education and activities;
- use culturally competent communication, including interpreters and augmentative/alternative communication where required;
- record and escalate concerns;
- participate in training and supervision.

Managers:

- provide leadership, policies, training and supervision that embed EDI;
- ensure equality monitoring and analysis inform improvement;
- commission accessible resources and environments;
- maintain links with local cultural, faith and community groups;
- ensure safeguarding pathways are clear for under-18s and for adults (18+).

8. Access, Participation and Reasonable Adjustments

We design premises, routines and curricula to be accessible. We provide reasonable adjustments, assistive technology, sensory regulation strategies and communication aids (e.g., Makaton/PECS/BSL), and we review adjustments regularly with the child/young person/adult and their family or advocate.

9. Personalisation and Culture

Care plans and education plans include cultural identity, language, faith, diet, hair and skin care, dress, observance and family connections. We provide opportunities to explore identity safely and positively; we challenge stereotyping; and we ensure activities, reading materials and displays reflect the diversity of our community.

10. Education and Enjoyment

We promote attendance, engagement and achievement for all learners, with tailored support for SEND/ASN/ALN, care-experienced and other protected groups. We ensure access to extracurricular experiences (arts, sport, trips, volunteering) free from bias and stereotyped expectations.

11. Information, Recording and Oversight

We record identity and access needs sensitively. We monitor participation, attainment, incidents, complaints and compliments by protected characteristic and other relevant cohorts to identify and close gaps. We report to governance and regulators as required.

12. Training and Supervision

All staff complete EDI and safeguarding training appropriate to role, including trauma-informed practice. Leaders ensure reflective supervision and continuous professional development that reinforce inclusive, rights-based practice.

13. Complaints and Feedback

We provide accessible ways to raise concerns (including advocacy). We respond promptly, address bias or discrimination where found, and use learning to improve policy, training and practice.

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.