Empower Multi-Academy Trust
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Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Frequency of Review:	Every three years
Date of Approval:	April 2024
Date of Next Review:	March 2027
Adopted by the Board of Empower Trust	

Date of Review:		
Date of Review:		
Date of Review:		

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Empower Multi-Academy Trust is a welcoming and caring trust. It respects and values each and every individual associated with the Trust. It has a commitment to social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all and aims to provide an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and prejudice.

1. Policy statement of intent

Empower Trust recognises that certain groups in society have historically been disadvantaged on account of unlawful discrimination they have faced on the basis of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

This policy will put in place a range of actions to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the Trust, its school communities and workforce.

2. Legislative Framework

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The effect of the Equality Duty is that schools must have due regard to the above in relation to the management of their pay policies, avoiding direct or indirect discrimination. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to prepare and publish equality objectives and publish information, to demonstrate compliance with the general duty (the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011).

This policy has due to regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Empower Trust 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 and visitors. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent provisions.

A protected characteristic under the Act is as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Gender (including transgender people)
- Gender reassignment
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

In schools, the Act makes it unlawful for a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

3. Principles and Aims

In accordance with this policy, the Trust and its academies commits to:

- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- Promoting dignity and respect for all
- Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy

As a result of this policy the Trust will:

- Ensure that all members of the Trust community feel happy, safe and secure
- Ensure that equality of access exists for everyone
- Promote equality of opportunity regardless of the nine protected characteristics
- Actively develop the self-esteem and self-respect of all members of the Trust community
- Ensure that educational provision is relevant to our increasingly diverse society
- Ensure that the curriculum actively promotes equality of opportunity
- Actively challenge all forms of bullying, harassment, prejudice, and stereotyping
- Actively engage the support and commitment of the whole Trust community in achieving these

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including volunteers and students on placement), pupils and visitors at our academies and should be read in conjunction with the following trust-wide policies or policies of the respective academy: SEN, admissions, uniform, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, employment policies such as Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Trust Appraisal Policies, accessibility plan.

This policy applies to all aspects of the Trust/ school's relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

Instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct, in line with the Trust's Grievance Policy and /or Disciplinary Policy and procedure, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Discriminatory treatment, bullying or harassment of staff or students by visitors will also not be tolerated.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with all legislation referred to in this policy and meets all of its duties. They will set equality objectives (reviewed annually) and publish information to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Board of Trustees will take action towards:

- The Trust Board having a diverse membership and, in particular, balanced gender composition
- Increasing the diversity of our central and academy-based leadership teams
- Creating a workforce that's representative of our communities
- Our Local Governing Bodies reflecting the diverse nature of our communities
- Ensuring that any work completed as a Trust towards our equality objectives will be impactful and embedded, so sustainable in every way
- Ensuring equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, professional development programmes and in membership of the Local Governing Boards
- Monitoring the composition of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- Monitoring how the composition of the workforce encourages equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and meets the aims and commitments set out in this policy.
- Assessing how this policy, and any supporting action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues
- Ensuring that this policy is applied consistently and fairly throughout the Trust
- Ensuring that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to enforce this policy

Local Governing Bodies

Local Governing Bodies are responsible for supporting the Trust's equality ethos and for ensuring that policies and procedures are implemented and monitored in the school in which they govern.

Local Governing Bodies will:

- Aim to have a diverse membership, a balanced gender disposition and governors who represent the local community
- Communicate in an open and inclusive manner
- Actively promote equality of opportunity in all areas of school life.
- Aim to ensure that prejudice or discrimination in all its forms is actively rejected.
- Raise awareness of equality issues for all members of each academy community, and through our links with the local community
- Ensure that this policy is applied consistently and fairly in all aspects of school life

The CEO and Trust Senior Leadership Team

The CEO and trust senior leadership team are responsible for giving a high-profile lead on equality issues and for the promoting the equality, diversity and inclusion policy inside and outside of the organisation.

The CEO and trust senior leadership team will:

- Implement the policy and its procedures
- Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training as part of their induction and continuous professional development
- Ensure that all parents, visitors and contractors are aware of and are incompliance with the provisions of this policy
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with Trust policies
- Actively promote equality of opportunity in all areas of school life
- Establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum, and enable each individual to fulfil their potential regardless of ability, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation

All staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping and to challenge and report this if witnessed. All staff are responsible for promoting equality and ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone.

All staff will:

- Be mindful of any incidence of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in the school / Trust
- Actively challenge and report to the Headteacher any incidents of harassment, discrimination, or disadvantage in the school / Trust (CEO for the Central Team)
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the Trust and school's culture
- 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
- Monitor pupil's progress and academic needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place
- Keep up to date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training

Pupils

Pupils are responsible for ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone and ensure that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping and to report this if witnessed.

Pupils will:

- Not discriminate or harass any other pupil or staff member
- Actively encourage equality and diversity in the school by contributing their cultural experiences and values
- Report any incidents of discrimination or harassment, whether to themselves or others, to their teacher or another member of school staff

Parents and Carers, Visitors and Contractors

Parents and carers, visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- Following the Trust's expectations regarding equality
- Supporting the Trust's equality ethos
- Sharing concerns or issues with staff

We all have a responsibility to behave in a way that is respectful of others and to understand that our views and opinions may not always be the same.

Some other things that individuals can do to create an inclusive environment:

- Try to understand other peoples' points of view and help them understand yours
- If you ever see inappropriate behaviour, challenge or report it
- If you challenge others, do so in a respectful way
- Be aware of different cultures and customs, and respect the benefits that diversity can bring
- Respect confidentiality
- Deal with others in an ethical and lawful way and with respect at all times
- Take responsibility for your own actions
- Look for solutions to problems and try to resolve issues constructively

5. Uniform/dress Policy

The Act does not deal specifically with aspects of pupil's and employee's appearance, but the general requirement not to discriminate in the treatment of people applies here in relation to other aspects of the policy.

The Trust and its academies will ensure that unform policies do not discriminate because of race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

The Trust and its academies will be sensitive to the needs of different cultures, races and religions and act reasonably in accommodating these needs, without compromising important school policies, such as those relating to safety or discipline.

6. Gender Identity

The Trust is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 towards pupils identifying as transgender and non-binary. In respect of pupils identifying as transgender or non-binary, the Trust will be sensitive to their individual needs whilst also recognising the needs and sensitivities of other students.

7. Curriculum

All pupils will be entitled to access to a curriculum and to teaching and learning opportunities which meet their needs, including extra support where this has been identified as a statutory need. When planning the curriculum, the school will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.

8. Promoting Equality

In order to meet our equality objective, the Trust will:

- Ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extracurricular activities and residential visits, and the Trust academy will monitor uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Carefully monitor bullying and prejudice and address it accordingly, recording any incidents. Training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice related bullying
- Provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, so they integrate wholly in all parts of school life
- Provide differential schemes of work designed to meet the abilities and learning styles of all pupils
- Have a clearly defined disciplinary system, which will be consistently reinforced
- Increase physical and other forms of access for disabled children who have disabilities or other special needs to the school curriculum and take necessary steps to meet pupils' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments, enabling pupils to take as full a part as possible in the activities of the school, including extra-curricular activities

- Throughout the year, plan on-going events to raise awareness of equality and diversity
- Seek the views of advisory staff, outside agencies and local schools as appropriate
- Establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning. These equality objectives will be reviewed and reported on annually.

9. Recruitment and Selection

Empower Trust aims to employ a workforce that reflects the communities in which it serves.

The Trust will aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. The Trust's recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the job and not disproportionate. The shortlisting of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. The school will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions, such as:

- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

The Trust is required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents, e.g. a passport, before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, the Trust/school will monitor applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information will be voluntary and will not adversely affect an applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before the shortlisting process, and will be kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps the school take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

In seeking to achieve a balanced workforce at all levels, the Trust will ensure that no employee, job applicant or candidate for promotion will be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements that are not related to the job.

Staff will be expected to treat each other in a fair and respectful manner that is free from discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to working arrangements and premises to ensure equal access for employees or potential employees who have a disability or a particular health concern.

10. Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

Empower Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that pupils and staff who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fair less well in the education system.

The Trust will ensure that pupils and staff are aware of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents occurring. If any incidents do occur, the Trust will address them immediately.

Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination and harassment

All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassments must be reported to senior staff (CEO in respect of the Central Team) and recorded as soon as is reasonable possible (and in any event, within 24 hours of the incident). All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise), will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Complaints and grievances

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow the Trusts Complaints or Grievance Policy and Procedure (as appropriate).

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the Trust Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Trust takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

11. Monitoring and Review

Empower Trust will review this policy every three years or as required by new legislation or best practice guidance. The Trust will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives and will report annually on the progress made in achieving its equality objectives.

Data to be published may include, but not be limited to: school performance, antibullying policies, school development plans, equality milestones and curriculum materials.

Progress will be monitored and evaluated with reference to the following:

- Reviewing pupil progress and attainment for different sub-groups (e.g. individual schools, boys vs girls, Disadvantaged/Pupil Premium, SEN and Looked after Children)
- Equal opportunities recruitment data
- Equality impact assessments
- Ofsted inspection judgements on equality and diversity
- Incident records related to harassment, bullying and prejudice related incidents
- Monitoring parental engagement and attendance
- Any relevant external parties

Following this evaluation, recommendations will be made for changes to the policy and action planning for the future to continue to improve the culture of equality, diversity and inclusion for all within the Trust.

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12. Equality Objectives

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Trust to publish specific and measurable equality objectives. Our equality objectives are based on our analysis of data and other information. They focus on those areas where we have agreed to take action to improve equality and tackle disadvantage. Empower Trust has set the following objectives for a four-year period from April 2024 – April 2028.

Approved by the Board of Trustees April 2024

	Aim	Action
Objective 1 Learning Commitment	To continue to promote understanding and respect for diversity and equality	• Raise awareness of aims and objectives of policy by sharing with staff and the wider community • Provide further staff training in all aspects of equality and diversity to support staff understanding and awareness • Signpost Trustees and governors to equality and diversity training to support understanding and awareness • Introduce all aspects of statutory RHSE into the PHSE curriculum and continue to build a shared understanding of this work with parents /carers so they can support this at home
Objective 2 Local and Global Communities	To ensure that the Trust / school promotes role models that children and young people positively identify with, who reflect and broaden the diversity of Modern Britain in terms of race, gender and disability	• Identify opportunities to promote diversity through all aspects of the curriculum e.g. resourcing, study of historical figures etc • Promote engagement of visiting speakers to school to broaden children's perceptions of equality and diversity • Ensure the school calendar and displays reflects the opportunities to reflect and remember the importance of diversity • Deliver a programme of assemblies, outside visitors and education trips to promote the ethos of equality to pupils and help pupils develop good relationships with people of different characteristics
Objective 3 Our People	To ensure tolerance and respect towards individuals who identify with any of the protected characteristics	• Ensure regular analysis of any negative behaviour incidents to identify any patterns related to protected characteristics, e.g. racism, and ensure necessary action is taken to mitigate this, e.g further education, involvement of parents/carers etc • Utilise assembly opportunities to promote equality and diversity and tackle issues of discrimination or oppression for any protected groups • Respond to world news / current affair issues (related to any individuals/ protected characteristics) through collective worship / assemblies or PHSE sessions. Continue to promote the Trust's/ school's position regarding equality through communication channels with parents / carers so that there is a shared appreciation of diversity and / or British Values.

Objective 4 Learning Commitment	To monitor assessment and other data at regular intervals to ensure that children are not being disadvantaged by belonging to a protected group	• Careful tracking of attainment and progress for pupils with 'Protected Characteristics'. • Ensure reasonable adjustments are in place for these children. Where appropriate, work with outside agencies to achieve the best progress for our children • Monitor engagement of uptake of extra-curricular activities or enrichment provision to ensure these opportunities are accessible to all
Objective 5 Our People	To review staff related policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the Act (e.g. recruitment, CPD, flexible working, maternity and pay policies) and the Trust offers equal opportunities to all staff	• To undertake initial analysis of data relating to current employees with regard to race, gender and disability and report this to the Trust Board • To undertake an annual data analysis, noting any changes • To carry out an equality impact statement

Appendix 1

The Equalities Act 2010 defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat- or would treat- other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example, if a school were to refuse an employee a promotion because of their race.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents evening on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to arrange, or arranging the weekly CPD sessions for teachers on days when no part-time staff are available to work. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Act – it is 'unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person'. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offense to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does not mean that schools are free to bully or harass pupils on these other grounds - to do so would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable. Any case against the school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment.

Thus, if a teacher belittles a pupil and holds her up to ridicule in class because of a disability she has, this could lead to a court case alleging unlawful harassment. The same unacceptable treatment directed at a lesbian pupil, or based on a pupil's religion, could lead to a case claiming direct discrimination. The practical consequences for the school, and the penalties, would be no different.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ('a protected act') in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation.

As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, a child must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act. This means that a child must not be made to suffer in anyway because, for example, her mother has made a complaint of sex discrimination against the school, or her brother has claimed that a teacher is bullying him because he is gay, whether the or not the mother or brother was acting in good faith.

If a pupil has himself or herself done a protected act – such as making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher – then the child's own good faith will be relevant. For example, if the parent's complaint is based on information from her son and the son was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish hm in the same way as it might do for any other dishonest pupil. Unless it can be clear that the mother was also acting in bad faith (for example she knew her son was lying) it would still be unlawful to victimise her for pursuing the complaint.

(Taken from the DfE publication – The Equality Act 2010 and Schools, 2014)

Appendix 2 – The 9 Protected Characteristics

Age

Age discrimination is treating an employee less favourably because of their age and can affect other employees of a similar age. Example of age discrimination include:

- Overlooking an older applicant for employment due to assuming they are more likely to have physical problems due to their age
- Not looking to further develop an employee because of their age – if the they are close to retirement, for example
- Stating a job description that you are only considering applications from 'young and energetic' individuals

Gender

This protected characteristic aims to prevent discrimination against an employee based on their gender. Examples of gender discrimination include:

- Not promoting a female employee because you're not sure what their plans are for motherhood
- Not accepting a male application for a role in a women's fashion boutique because they only want women to work there
- Asking a female candidate questions during interview you wouldn't ask a male candidate

Race

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination on the grounds of their nationality or race. Some examples of race discrimination include:

- Bullying and harassment of an employee because of their race
- Not hiring an individual because they weren't born in the UK

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 states that employees who have long-term mental or physical impairments that affect their day-to-day activities are protected under the protected characteristic of disability. Examples include Autism, Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis, and Cerebral Palsy to name a few.

Employers have a duty of care to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees so they can carry out their job effectively. Could your employee work in a less customer-facing role? Can you provide additional equipment to help your disabled employees? Do you check in more regularly with your disabled employees? Do you offer your disabled employees more training if they need it?

An example of disability discrimination is:

- A person has a physical disability that impacts their ability to drive. The person applies for a receptionist role but the job requires all applicants to have a driving licence, even though driving isn't part of the role. In this instance, the employer is indirectly discriminating against the person.

Religion or belief

This protected characteristic is where someone faces discrimination because of their religions or beliefs. Some examples of religious discrimination include:

- Not employing someone because of their religion or belief
- Not inviting an employee to a social event because they don't drink due to their religious beliefs
- Stating that no jewellery or religious wear can be worn during work to comply with the dress code
- Refusing annual leave for a religious holiday without a justifiable reason

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation or 'sexuality' refers to the gender an individual is attracted to. Different types of sexual orientation include:

- Heterosexual/straight
- Homosexual/gay
- Bisexual
- Asexual

As with the other characteristics, sexual orientation discrimination can take many forms. Examples include:

- Refusing annual leave for a female employee to attend antenatal appointments with her pregnant partner but approving annual leave for a male employee to attend antenatal appointments
- Refusing to hire someone because they have stated they're gay or bisexual
- Treating an employee less favourably because his parents are both female, otherwise known as 'discrimination by association'

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is changing from one gender to another, and the Equality Act (2010) states you can't treat an employee less favourably because they are trans, considering gender reassignment or are associated with someone who is.

This also protects employees who have changed genders without undergoing any medical procedures. As an employer, you need to identify any measures that might put a trans employee at a disadvantage and take the necessary steps to adjust them, so those employees are equally represented.

Marriage or civil partnerships

Marriage or civil partnership discrimination is treating employee less favourably because of their marital status. Employees who are divorced, engaged but not married yet, or just co-habiting do not fall under this protected characteristic.
Some examples of marriage or civil partnership discrimination include:

- Refusing to give a newly married female employee evening shifts because you assume she wants to be at home with her spouse in the evening
- Not promoting an employee because you're worried they won't have enough time to dedicate to their role now they're married or in a civil partnership

Pregnancy and maternity

The Equality Act (2010) states that you can't treat an employee less favourably because of their pregnancy or maternity status. This applies from the beginning of the pregnancy up to when the employee returns from maternity leave and a few examples of this discrimination include:

- Disciplining an employee due to a pregnancy-related sickness absence
- Asking a pregnant employee to work while they're on maternity leave
- Stopping an employee from returning to work because they're breastfeeding

