

## Philip Wood

Principal Associate

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Philip is a principal associate advising schools and academies. He's known for his breadth of experience across the key issues that education institutions face, including admissions, SEND, exclusions and discrimination. He regularly advises on complaints and exclusions that have Equality Act implications across the full range of protected characteristics including sex, race, gender reassignment, religion, and disability.

Philip frequently represents schools in Equality Act litigation, including in the First Tier Tribunal, Upper Tribunal and in the County Court. In 2024 Philip acted on nearly half of the total Upper Tribunal appeal cases relating to disability discrimination in schools. These include *A Multi Academy Trust v RR* [2024], which provides the first interpretation of the reasonable adjustment amendments to the Equality Act for schools.

He's frequently instructed on some of the most high-profile and sensitive matters relating to education and pupils. This has recently included cases related to Prevent and pupils deemed at risk of terrorism, child deaths in school, pupil stabbings and sexual misconduct by pupils.

Previously, Philip advised several schools in relation to the 'No Outsider' protests, relating to sex and relationships and citizenship education. He also successfully defended a related judicial review claim. This experience means that he is still called upon to advise on continuing issues in a number of schools where parents have ongoing concerns about the curriculum.

Philip also co-chairs the firm's Education Shadow Board and in his spare time chairs the board of a five-school multi academy trust.

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## Expertise

Academy conversions

Academy sponsorships and MATs

Child protection and safeguarding in schools

Data protection guidance for schools and trusts

Forced academisation and school intervention

Pupil behaviour and school exclusions

School admission services

School collaborations, partnerships and trading companies

Special educational needs and disability matters

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## Experience

### Defending a Disability Discrimination Claim

Defending a school against multiple claims of disability discrimination relating to lockdown from a parent, including in relation to the lack of support and reasonable adjustments and denying a place in school during the first Covid lockdown. All claims were successfully dismissed.

### Rebrokered Academy Transfer

Representing a large MAT in respect of a complicated academy transfer of an academy in deficit that was being managed by the ESFA.

### No Outsiders

Advising a number of schools in relation to the 'No Outsider' protests relating to sex and relationships and citizenship education. This included advising on a judicial review claim which was ultimately defended.

### University Sexual Harassment complaint

Assisting a Russell Group university on alleged sexual harassment between two students and the ways in which the university should manage the case and process.

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## Testimonials

*"Thank you so much Philip for your excellent advice and work on this ... you have been wonderful!!!!"*

**Large multi-academy trust ,**