



# Single Equality Policy November 2020

Office use

<b>Published:</b> November 2020	<b>Next review:</b> November 2021	<b>Statutory/non:</b> Statutory	<b>Lead:</b> Patrick Knight, SDL Safeguarding
<b>Associated documents:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEND Policy</li> <li>Concerns and Complaints Policy</li> <li>Covid-19 academy and centre risk assessments</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li> <li>Accessibility Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>Links to:</b>			
Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015) <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25">www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25</a>  <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19">www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19</a>		The Equality Act 2010 <a href="http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance">www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance</a>  Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty">www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty</a>	

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# 1 Executive summary

1.1 In developing an equality policy, Diverse Academies Trust (DAT) has been guided by the following principles:

- that all stakeholders are of equal value – in terms of education, a stakeholder is someone who has a vested interest in the success and welfare of a school or education system. This includes all parties that are directly affected by the success or failure of an educational system, as well as those indirectly affected. For the purposes of this policy, a stakeholder is anyone with a responsibility to the trust (trustee), is employed by the trust and anyone who uses or provides any services including (but not exclusively) pupils, parents/carers, training providers, outside agencies and contractors.
- difference should be recognised and respected
- positive attitudes and relationships should be fostered, resulting in a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- clear evidence of this policy in the practices of staff recruitment, retention and development
- the reduction and eventual removal of pre-existing inequalities and barriers
- wide consultation with, and involvement of, all stakeholders in the formulation of policy
- sound evidence is used as a base for our policy and practices
- objectives pertaining to this policy are specific and measurable over reasonable timescales

1.2 With regard to particular groups as described under Section 5.2 below, we will ensure that they are all treated of equal value. Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same. Our policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate, but will take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage that people may face in relation to their choices.

1.3 Additionally, we intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote positive attitudes and interactions between people in these groups, leading to mutual respect and good relations between all, and with an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

1.4 Diverse Academies are committed to policies and procedures that benefit all employees, current and potential, in recruitment and promotion and their continuing professional development, and will take opportunities to maximise positive impact by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between people of these groups.

1.5 Diverse Academies will engage 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, consulting and involving, wherever possible, members within these groups.

1.6 Diverse Academies intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion between, and encouraging greater participation in public life of, people in these groups.

1.7 Diverse Academies, within the annual framework of improvement planning and processes of self-evaluation, will set out specific and measurable equality objectives that the trust, its employees and stakeholders shall pursue and review. The objectives which we identify will take into account national and local priorities and available information as appropriate.

1.8 Diverse Academies will regularly review and renew this policy and our overarching statement pertaining to equality across all our organisations.

## **2 Policy statement**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The UK has specific legislation on equality that outlaw discrimination and offers protection and redress to employees and stakeholders, underpinned by core British values, individual freedom, belief in personal responsibility and mutual respect and fairness.

2.2 This policy describes how Diverse Academies is meeting statutory duties in line with national guidance. It includes information about how its academies are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

## **3 Scope and purpose**

3.1 This policy applies to all stakeholders, students, employees, including volunteers, agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors.

## **4 Responsibility for implementing the policy**

4.1 Diverse Academies Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. The trust has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to colleagues identified within each academy (see academy appendix for details).

## **5 Legal duties**

5.1 As an organisation we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

5.2 The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific protected characteristics. A protected characteristic under the act covers the groups listed below:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex (including issues of transgender)
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership (for employees)
- Maternity and pregnancy

## **6 British values**

6.1 Equality and diversity are embodied in the aims published by Diverse Academies. All who work in the trust will aim to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all students and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in a world where we value individual liberty, democracy, the law, mutual respect and tolerance. Our students will meet, live and work with people of different cultures, religions, languages and ethnic origins. We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all and recognise that preparation for life in a diverse society is relevant to everyone.

6.2 In addition, these British values are also promoted at various times in and across the curriculum throughout the year. The curriculum offer in all Diverse Academies Trust academies is broad and balanced, complies with current legislation and provides a wide range of subjects to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. It actively promotes fundamental British values and extends beyond the classroom via a wide range of visits and experiences, engaging them in extracurricular activity and volunteering in the local community, and promoting tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths, cultures, and lifestyles

through effective spiritual, moral social and cultural development. It is supported by a well-rounded programme of assemblies and tutorials which offer clear guidance about the aforementioned values.

## **7 Aims and objectives**

7.1 Diverse Academies is committed to equal opportunities and to preventing discrimination, victimisation and harassment. In particular:

- no employee, volunteer, student, governor, parent or any other stakeholder shall suffer discrimination on the grounds of their sex, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability (discrimination)
- no employee, volunteer, student, governor, parent or any other stakeholder will be treated less favourably because of exercising his or her statutory rights (victimisation)
- no employee, volunteer, student, governor, parent or any other stakeholder will be subjected to unwanted, unwelcome, upsetting or embarrassing behaviours based on their sex, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or disability (harassment)
- it is the responsibility of all staff, students, and governors at every level of Diverse Academies to adhere to this equal opportunities policy and to ensure it is effective
- Diverse Academies will provide a friendly and secure environment for all
- every student should have the opportunity for full involvement in academy activities
- the contributions of all members of the academy, students, teaching and support staff should be valued and respected
- no form of harassment, whether religious, racial, sexual or any other sort will be accepted
- Diverse Academies will show due regard for the principles of equal opportunities in the selection, promotion, deployment and training of staff
- resources should be free of inappropriate stereotypes and, where appropriate, selected with a view to promoting the ethos of equal opportunities and to reflect the pluralism of society
- all students should have equal opportunity to study any area of the curriculum to the level that best suits their ability and should be encouraged to take a full and active part in lessons
- the whole curriculum should take account of the issues of equal opportunities.

7.2 To achieve our aims we will:

- publish and share our policy with all stakeholders of the Diverse Academies community to show compliance with the Equality Duty - outlined in the appendix
- reinforce our ethos of the value we place upon equality and diversity
- analyse appropriate data to ensure compliance with legislation
- challenge inappropriate behaviour that does not fulfil any equality commitment.

### 7.3 Success criteria

- students are aware of the impact of prejudice and understand their responsibility to prevent it
- staff are aware of the single equality policy
- data is collated and analysed to monitor equality
- incidents are logged and reported
- Diverse Academies equality objectives are published at least once every 4 years, ensuring they are specific and measurable

## 8 Roles and responsibility

8.1 Promoting equality is the responsibility of all employees within Diverse Academies and other stakeholders.

8.2 Diverse Academies is responsible for ensuring that legislation relevant to this policy is complied with and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

8.3 The principal of each Diverse Academies academy is responsible for the local implementation of this policy, ensuring that:

- all staff are aware of their responsibilities
- all staff are given appropriate training and support
- appropriate action is taken in cases of unlawful discrimination

8.4 A designated, senior member of staff within each Diverse Academies Trust academy will:

- have day to day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy, providing regular reports on its progress and any significant incidents
- ensure the principles within this policy are embedded, integral to, and encompassed within all other policies at each academy
- ensure effectiveness of the policy by being involved in an annual review with the trust Strategic Development Leader, safeguarding and attendance
- review the academy response to all allegations of inequality with regard to any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

8.5 All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in and around the academy
- deal with, and report, any prejudice-related incidents that occur
- plan and deliver curricular lessons that reflect the objectives in paragraph 6
- support students for whom English is an additional language (EAL)

- support students and staff who may have social, emotional, mental health concerns
- support students and staff who may fall under the areas covered in para 6 and 7 of this policy
- keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work
- Adhere to relevant academy and head office risk assessments – including those published in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, any other relevant risks, and the effect on the academy community.

8.6 Students are expected to:

- treat each other with respect and courtesy
- explore and value diversity with a healthy and positive approach
- speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour, or feel that they have been treated unfairly
- Adhere to their relevant academy risk assessment, as guided by respective academy staff – including the risk assessment published in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and any other relevant risks.

## **9 Information and resources**

9.1 We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all employees and governors of DAT and, as appropriate, to all students and their parents and carers.

9.2 All employees and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

## **10 Religious observance**

10.1 We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all employees, students and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

## **11 Staff development and training**

11.1 We ensure that all Diverse Academies employees, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as cohorts.

11.2 All staff are trained and made fully aware of their obligations to follow the Covid-19 risk assessment, and any other relevant risks, in their place of work



## **12 Record keeping**

12.1 Detailed records will be made to include decisions, action taken and the reasons for these. All records will be retained securely as mentioned above. Whilst we acknowledge that such allegations (as all others) may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge that they may be founded. It is therefore essential that all allegations be investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures. The following definitions will be used to determine the outcome of any alleged allegation – which will follow the protocol and policy laid out in the Diverse Academies concerns and complaints policy document:

- Substantiated: sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- Malicious: sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- False: sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Unsubstantiated: insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence
- Unfounded: no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegations being made.

## **13 Supporting those involved**

13.1 Diverse Academies has a duty of care to its employees and will provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The investigating officer will appoint a named representative to keep the person who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual e.g., contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support, access to welfare counselling or medical advice. Diverse Academies will deal with any allegation of abuse made against a teacher, other member of staff, or volunteer, in a quick, fair and consistent way in order to minimise the stress inherent in the situation, thus providing effective protection for the child, whilst simultaneously supporting the subject of the allegation.

13.2 Diverse Academies has a duty of care to its employees in the light of tier 3 and subsequent national lockdown restrictions and the associated heightened threat to health and well-being as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This would equally apply to any other identified risk.

Staff with identifiable additional risks, either as a result of pregnancy, age, gender, ethnicity, diagnosed vulnerable clinical conditions or diagnosed critically vulnerable conditions will be supported in accordance with the measures outlined in the respective Covid-19 risk assessment, and any other identified risk.

## **14 Confidentiality**

14.1 Diverse Academies will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. The Education Act 2002 introduced reporting restrictions preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a student from the same academy (where that identification would identify the teacher as the subject of the allegation). The reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State publishes information about an investigation or decision in a disciplinary case arising from the allegation.

## **15 Monitoring and evaluation**

15.1 Diverse Academies collects, studies and uses quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and in accordance with GDPR legislation (May 2018) may make adjustments to it as appropriate.

15.2 In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down according to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin/status, and gender.

## **16 Review of the policy**

This policy is reviewed by the Trust, which will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

The policy will be monitored to reflect any substantive changes necessary in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, (and any other identified and relevant risk) and the effect on staff working practices and staff/student safety.

## 17 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

<b>1. Identify the aims of the policy / procedure</b>			
	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Answers / notes</b>	<b>Actions required</b>
1.1	Is this an existing or new Policy / Procedure?		
1.2	Who articulates the Policy / Procedures?		
1.3	What are the objectives of the Policy / Procedure?		
1.4	<p>In relation to the Protected Characteristics is there anything in the Policy or our delivery that could discriminate or disadvantage any of these groups?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Religion / beliefs</li> <li>• Age (in relation to staff recruitment / selection)</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> <li>• Gender reassignment</li> <li>• Pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>• Marriage and civil partnership</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Assessment of impact</b>			
2.1	Identify any differential impact that may affect Protected Characteristics		
	<b>NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS:</b>		

## 18 Appendix B – Equality objectives and action plan

Action planning principles:

- Identification of objectives and subsequent action planning is undertaken in accordance with individual academy and Diverse Academies values, priorities and aims as identified in our policy.
- Accurate knowledge of the individual's academies enable us to plan in a way that is relevant and proportionate.
- Consideration is given to the anticipation of equality issues not presently evidenced but for which there is potential.
- Action plans are seen as the starting point for action but may be adapted where monitoring and further impact assessments reveal alternative opportunities exist and are desirable.
- Managing the process in a planned yet responsive way.
- Action plans are checked against the objectives, and targets are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed, evaluated and reviewed (SMART).

The process:

- Action planning is done in response to identified priorities arising from the analysis of all the information, including the overview of outcomes and the equality impact assessments we have undertaken.
- We plan for action so that it is possible to implement change and development in a responsive yet systematic way – with annual policy review driving this process.
- Action plans and risk assessments are reviewed regularly in order to assess the impact of our actions.
- Equality impact assessments will drive our thinking and future planning.

## 19 Appendix C - Disability Equality Duties

Diverse Academies and our academies promote equality for disabled people by:

- removing barriers to accessibility, particularly in relation to education, employment and access to services, information and buildings
- encouraging good practice by our partners through our advisory capacity
- ensuring we take their needs into account when procuring goods and services from our providers
- promoting positive images of disabled people
- challenging discriminatory attitudes
- making the environment as safe as possible for a challenging antisocial, bullying or harassing behaviour against disabled people.

We are committed to:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the academy curriculum
- increasing the inclusion of positive images of disabled people across the curriculum
- further improving the environment across our academies to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services
- improving the delivery of information to disabled students, particularly those with visual and/or audial impairment, so as not to disadvantage them compared to those who are not disabled.

Diverse Academies welcomes the requirements of the disability equality duty. The trust accessibility policy details our commitment in this regard.

### **Racial equality duty and community cohesion**

Diverse Academies and our academies recognise that black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people and/or those who do not have english as their first language may experience discrimination on the basis of colour, race, nationality, religion and ethnic origin. Racial harassment and violence are two of the most serious consequences of discrimination, xenophobia and racism, with the potential to damage people emotionally and physically, as well as limiting life choices and opportunities.

We take all necessary measures to prevent and tackle racial and/or xenophobic harassment and assist people from BAME backgrounds to live in freedom from discrimination, and to feel safe as they attend our academies.

In order to comply with this duty, we:

- keep accurate records of all ethnic, EAL and faith groups through the respective academy management system (SMS)
- keep accurate and timely records on their backgrounds, needs and where appropriate, safeguarding file
- encourage dialogue between racial groups and the appropriateness of our education provision, curriculum and delivery
- work to prevent racial discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between all members of each academy community
- encourage students and their families to participate fully in all aspects of academy life
- continue to use external support, such as tackling emerging threats to children and the NSCP forum, to promote good race relations within our Trust
- when applicable, counter myths and misinformation that may undermine good community relations
- ensure our staff and other adults working in our academies, as well as students and their families, understand the principles of good race relations
- ensure that all groups of students are able to achieve their full potential and receive any additional support that may be required to help them do so.

### **Gender equality duties**

Diverse Academies gives due regard and is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex, including domestic abuse and violence, sexual abuse and violence, bullying and exploitation
- Promoting equality of opportunity between all genders in all our functions
- Ensuring we promote gender equality through recruitment procedures

- Continuing to create engaging learning opportunities that improves the outcomes for boys across our trust – thereby narrowing the attainment gap with girls
- Recognising that society has constructed stereotypes for men and women, and both consciously and unconsciously, can lose opportunities because of these stereotypes
- Working in partnership with other agencies to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual violence and domestic abuse and other hate crimes;
- Ensuring that the rights, under the Gender Recognition Act 2003, of transgender people are protected.

### **Religion and belief equality duties**

Diverse Academies recognises that people face increasing discrimination based on the faith community they belong to or identify with.

We recognise that a person’s religious beliefs may mean that they have different needs, demands and expectations, which require Diverse Academies to facilitate some flexibility.

Diverse Academies is committed to eliminating illegal discrimination and exclusion on the basis of religion or belief.

Our academies recognise the need to consider the duties which require us to assess the impacts of policies and procedures on the promotion of equality for people with a religious affiliation or belief and those without.

In order to comply with the duty Diverse Academies is committed to:

- Ensuring our respective RE curricula follow the agreed syllabus
- Ensuring an expectation of tolerance of all beliefs from staff and students
- Providing authentic firsthand learning experiences through educational visits and/or guest speakers
- Promoting inter-faith collective worship

## **Sexual orientation equality duties**

Diverse Academies is committed to combating discrimination faced by people who identify as LGBTQ. We ensure equality of opportunity across our trust and trust academies.

We respect the rights of individuals to be open about their sexual orientation. Diverse Academies tackles discrimination, homophobia, stereotyping and works to improve knowledge about LGBTQ communities, individuals and issues via our partnership with Stonewall and subsequently through our RSE curriculum.

Diverse Academies recognises the need to protect staff and students from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to taking a proactive approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within our academies and will assess the impact of our policies and procedures.

We deal with complaints of discrimination and harassment speedily and in accordance with local authority and national guidance.

In order to comply with the duty Diverse Academies is committed to:

Ensuring that in accordance with the revised sex and relationship education guidance academy curricular recognise diverse family structures.

## **Pregnancy and maternity equality duties**

Diverse Academies recognises that the Equality Act 2010 specifically includes the need to protect female students who are pregnant or have recently given birth from discriminatory practices.

Our academies will ensure that no student will be excluded purely on grounds of pregnancy and that up to 18 calendar weeks authorised absence immediately before and after the birth may be given in order to ensure that the student is reintegrated into education as quickly as possible.

Staff are already covered under existing employment legislation.

Such a student who attends or is on roll at a Diverse Academies academy is protected from discrimination because:

- She is or has been pregnant



- She has given birth and unfavourable treatment occurs within 26 weeks from the day of giving birth
- She is breastfeeding and unfavourable treatment occurs within 26 weeks from the day of giving birth
- She gave birth to a stillborn baby, so long as she was pregnant for at least 24 weeks before giving birth
- Both direct and indirect discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity relate to the person being disadvantaged and treated unfavourably