

Equity, diversity and inclusion policy

Contents

1	Policy statement	3
1.1	Vision, mission and values	3
1.2	Purpose and intent.....	3
1.3	Roles and responsibilities.....	3
1.4	Benefits	3
1.5	Compliance	3
2	Policy	4
3	Publication of information and equality objectives	5
4	Roles and responsibilities	5
5	Duty to make reasonable adjustments	6
6	Uniform policy	7
7	Admissions policy	7
8	Religious beliefs.....	7
9	Curriculum delivery	8
10	Exclusion policy.....	8
11	Gender identity.....	9
12	Recruitment and selection	9
13	Discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying	9
14	Complaints and grievances	10
15	Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review	10

1 Policy statement

1.1 Vision, mission and values

Diverse Academies ('the Trust') is committed to equity and valuing diversity and actively supports practices that promote genuine equity of opportunity and inclusivity for all staff and students across its academies.

The Trust is committed to promoting a positive and diverse culture in which all staff and students are valued and supported to fulfil their potential irrespective of any protected characteristic.

1.2 Purpose and intent

The Trust recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and are 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, specifically the Public Sector Duty.

1.3 Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board are accountable for ensuring that statutory requirements are met; and there is opportunity for all as outlined in the Equality Act Public Sector Duty. These responsibilities are delegated to senior leaders in each academy. This is reported to Local Academy Boards and the relevant Trust Committee.

1.4 Benefits

Underpinning this policy is our commitment to empowerment, respect and care for all students and staff. Diverse Academies will ensure all pupils benefit from equity of opportunities throughout their education.

To inspire. To raise aspirations. To create brighter tomorrows.

1.5 Compliance

All pupils are key recipients in terms of the implementation of this policy.

This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff, young people and stakeholders at our academies and should be read in conjunction with all Trust-wide statutory policies.

Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action.

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

2 Policy

2.1 This policy has been developed in response to the Equality Act 2010 and replaces previous policies relating to race, gender and disability equality. It has been designed to help us meet the public sector equality duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.2 The Equality Act 2010 defines nine protected characteristics. Each of the following are potentially applicable to each of our settings:

- age (as an employer but not applicable to students)
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- race
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

2.3 Staff, Trustees and local academy committees will:

- actively promote equity of opportunity in all areas of school life;
- ensure that members of each academy community know their rights and respect the rights of others;
- 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; and
- establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum and enable each individual to fulfil his/her potential regardless of their identity, socio-economic background or protected characteristics.

2.4 Equality and diversity principles based on the above aims will be embedded in our daily practices, policies and the processes of decision-making, including:

- admissions, induction and attendance
- students' progress and achievement
- students' personal development and wellbeing, particularly in relation to safeguarding
- access to pastoral care
- parental involvement
- working with the wider community
- behaviour management
- staff recruitment and retention
- career development for staff
- curriculum access and participation
- extracurricular access and participation
- teaching styles and strategies

3 Publication of information and equality objectives

3.1 The Trust acknowledges its legal duties to publish information on compliance with the three strands of the public sector equality duty and, in addition, to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

3.2 The Trust will work across its academy communities to analyse data and existing practices to set out the actions taken in compliance of the equality duty and to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives to support the development of each academy and its community. These will be set out in our academy's equality action plan.

3.3 The information on the equality duty will be updated annually and the objectives every four years. An equality action plan is published on the respective academy's website.

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy and for ensuring compliance. There is a designated senior member of staff in each academy with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters. Progress is reported to the relevant committee on a termly basis.

4.2 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 could be discriminatory
- 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
- have a commitment to a trauma informed approach to inclusion for stakeholders, understanding that people with protected characteristics have anxieties about situations and experiences that others don't.

5 Duty to make reasonable adjustments

5.1 The Trust will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments where there is a need to ensure that a disabled person has the same access to everything as a non-disabled person, as far as is reasonable. We will take positive and proactive steps to implement a social model of disability and remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by a disabled individual, as far as is possible.

5.2 The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to all aspects of academy life, including the curriculum, classroom organisation, location and timetabling, access to facilities, clubs and visits, sports and policies.

5.3 In making reasonable adjustments, the Trust is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled students. Staff will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services. The Trust will support disabled staff in acquiring any necessary aids and services they need to deliver their duties.

5.4 The Trust will monitor the physical features of the academies' premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, we will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. Please see academy Accessibility Plans for further information, which can be found on the respective academy's website.

5.5 People in parenting roles should notify the principal in writing if they are aware or believe that their child has a disability. Where possible, please provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information about their child's disability. Providing such information will enable the academy to support the student as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. Every academy will have due regard to any request made by a parent or student (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential. Where medical evidence is missing, the academy will engage in a collaborative approach with parents, carers and the child to ensure their needs are met.

5.6 We will implement a proactive recruitment and induction process to identify strategies which will support staff who are disabled. We encourage existing staff to inform us if they have a disability. Where possible, staff should provide us with any relevant written reports which might help us to support staff with identifying reasonable adjustments we can make. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated with colleagues for whom it is essential for them to know context in order to implement a reasonable adjustment.

6 Uniform policy

6.1 Each academy's uniform policy is consistent with this policy. The same uniform policy applies equally to all students, irrespective of any protected characteristic they may have or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, all academies will consider reasonable requests to alter the uniform, for example for religious requirements and in making reasonable adjustments for disabled children to avoid disadvantage.

6.2 Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by students when doing so is based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred to the principal who will seek racial, cultural and religious advice prior to making a decision. The principal's decision will be final.

6.3 Students with afro textured hair will not be penalised for wearing their hair in natural or protective hair styles. Plaits, corn rows, Bantu knots, hair extensions and locs are not considered to be extreme hair styles. All hair must be a colour that a human being could be born with.

6.4 We recognise that all afro textured hair is professional hair. Staff should feel comfortable wearing their hair in styles which reflect their ethnic and cultural identity.

7 Admissions policy

Admissions criteria are defined under each academy's admissions policy and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

8 Religious beliefs

The Trust respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and each academy will comply with reasonable formal requests relating to religious observance and practice

wherever possible. Whilst the academy will explore other ways to accommodate the request, such as amended timetabling, this may not always be possible.

Anyone needing a space for prayer or quiet reflection should speak to a senior leader in the respective academy who will be able to direct them to an appropriate space.

9 Curriculum delivery

9.1 The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for students. The principles of equity and diversity are embedded in our academic and social curriculum. Positive and proactive steps will be taken to prevent discrimination against, or victimisation of, any student in the provision of education or access to any benefit, facility or service including educational trips, work experience and leisure activities.

9.2 The Trust recognises and promotes awareness of the possibility of bias (for example gender or racial), and work to eliminate such bias in both teaching and learning materials and teaching practices, assessment, curriculum design, behaviour policy application and pastoral care. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias.

9.3 The Trust may take positive action to give students of a particular racial group, or students with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the needs of the students in that group.

9.4 All students are encouraged to have respect for all other students. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the Trust, and students are encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

9.5 We welcome feedback from staff regarding any aspect of curriculum or quality of education which they feel presents a narrow, discriminatory, stereotypical or negative view of a group of people. The Trust and principals will use any feedback offered to refine the curriculum offer to ensure it is reflective of and responsive to the changing world we live in.

10 Exclusion policy

The decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently is a last resort and will be made in accordance with the suspension and exclusion policy. That policy applies to all students and any exclusion decision will take into account our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The Trust and principals will continually monitor exclusion data to ensure that no group of students is disproportionately excluded.

11 Gender identity

11.1 The Trust is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 towards students identifying as transgender and non-binary. In respect of students identifying as trans-gender or non-binary, we will be sensitive to their individual needs whilst also recognising the needs and sensitivities of other students. Students who have confirmed that they have commenced the process of transitioning, and therefore fall under the protected characteristic of gender-reassignment will be provided with appropriate pastoral care and support.

11.2 We acknowledge that adults working in our academies may also be trans, intersex or non-binary. We encourage staff to communicate with us should they be in the process of transitioning so that we can provide the right level of support whilst always respecting a person's privacy.

12 Recruitment and selection

12.1 All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent will be treated fairly and equally. We 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.

12.2 We will endeavour to make all reasonable and effective adjustments during the recruitment and selection process. Where recruitment and selection is carried out by a third party, on behalf of the Trust, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure they adhere to the principles of this policy. We maintain our commitment to inclusive recruitment and retention training for staff involved in the interview and recruitment process.

13 Discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying

All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment must be reported to senior staff and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible. All bullying-related incidents will be addressed in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

We acknowledge that those people with protected characteristics are more likely to experience discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We also acknowledge that a person may not feel able to report an incident immediately due to the cumulative impact of discrimination towards their protective characteristic. We advise:

- a person makes notes as soon as possible about what happened even if they cannot report the incident immediately
- a person seeks support from a trusted person

- a person reports the incident in accordance with our anti-bullying policy at their earliest convenience

14 Complaints and grievances

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow our complaints or grievance procedure (as appropriate). This procedure may be found in the Trust staff grievance policy.

15 Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

15.1 The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this equality, diversity and inclusion policy in each academy is the principal.

15.2 The equality, diversity and inclusion policy will be reviewed on a four-year cycle by a representative working party consisting of the following stakeholders. These will include one Trustee, the CEO and a selection of identified suitable stakeholders as appropriate from all levels of our organisation.

15.3 The effectiveness of this policy will be assessed against targets identified in each academy's equality action plans. Following this assessment, 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.

<i>Policy lead</i>	Caroline Saxelby
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