



Equality Information and Objectives Policy

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Introductory notes

When the Equality Act 2010 was introduced fully in April 2011 there was no longer a statutory requirement that schools should draw up and publish equality schemes or policies. However, under the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty, all schools and academies are required to publish equalities information and to produce objectives on how they will enhance provision to ensure equality for all. These to be reviewed at least once every four years. It is therefore highly advisable for schools and academies to set out their equalities principles.

Legal framework

1. The STAR MAT welcomes its duties under the Equality Act 2010 (the “Act”) to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster diversity and good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guiding principles

4. In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by [seven] principles as they relate to individuals with one or more of the protected characteristics under the Act: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

- We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, staff and members of our wider community as of equal value whatever their protected characteristics.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life- experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to their protected characteristics.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of

disabled people

- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between persons of different gender or sex and an absence of sexual, homophobic and ageist harassment

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development whatever their protected characteristics.

Principle 5: We aim to minimise and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to removing or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by minimising and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist for or between individuals with different protected characteristics.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We 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. We consult and involve individuals who have different protected characteristics insofar as is possible or practicable for us to do so.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of individuals who have different protected characteristics.

5. We recognise that the **actions** resulting from a policy statement such as this, are what make a difference.

Public Sector Equality Duty

6. We are committed to complying with the **Public Sector Equality Duty** and will seek to
 - 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

We will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions, taking actions and developing policies.

7. Every three years, accordingly, our schools draw up and publish an action plan within the framework of their overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific, measurable and achievable equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.
8. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

The curriculum

9. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the [seven] principles set out in paragraph 4 above.

Ethos and organisation

10. We ensure the principles listed in paragraph 4 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils'/students' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils'/students' personal development, welfare and well-being
- pupils'/students' access to a benefit, facility or service offered by the school
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

11. The Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice (including discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other form of conduct prohibited by the Act) which stand in the way of our fulfilling our legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1-3, including those relating to:
 - disability and special educational needs
 - racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
 - sexism, ageism, homophobia, bi-phobia and transphobia (or any other form of gender discrimination)
12. There is guidance in staff handbooks on how such prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

13. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of such prejudice-related incidents at our schools and how they are dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

14. Our Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) are responsible for ensuring that the schools in the STAR MAT comply with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.
15. A member of each LGB has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
16. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.
17. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.
18. All staff are expected to:
 - promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
 - deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
 - plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles in paragraph 4 above
 - support pupils/students in their class for whom English is an additional language
 - keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

19. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils/students and their parents and carers.
20. All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

21. We respect those of all faiths and none. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils/students and parents, and consider and endeavour to comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

22. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

23. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and governing body.

Monitoring and evaluation

24. We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.
25. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

Features of the model

1. This Equalities Policy contains the following features.
 - The term ethnicity is used in preference to race or racial group, on the grounds that it better reflects the intentions and concerns of race relations legislation
 - There are references where appropriate to religious affiliation and identity
 - There are references where appropriate to sexual orientation and to challenging homophobia and ageism
 - The duty to promote community cohesion is integrated into the policy particularly but not only in the third of the [seven] principles
 - The phrasing of this Policy may reflect the specific duties required by the Equality Act 2010.

Statement on Equality

All schools within the STAR MAT always interact with others with an attitude of deep respect. This respect is based on the essential human dignity of each person. There is no room in any of our schools for hatred, injustice, or a lack of charity or compassion. It is also true that all people have an inherent dignity and their fundamental rights and freedoms that must be respected.

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil/student or potential pupil/student (subject to certain exceptions including those applying to schools with a religious character):

- In relation to admissions;
- In the way it provides education for pupils/students;
- In the way it provides pupils/students access to any benefit, facility or service; or by excluding a pupil/student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Protected characteristics applying to pupils/students and prospective pupils/students

It is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil/student or prospective pupil/student by treating them less favourably on the basis of the following protected characteristics:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

It is also unlawful to discriminate on the basis of association or perception i.e. because a person with whom the pupil/student or prospective pupil/student is associated has a protected characteristic, or if you think a person has a protected characteristic even if this is mistaken.

(Please note: schools have detailed their school's Value, Vision and Mission Statements, objectives, action plan and statement of intent in an Appendix of this policy published on their school website).