Equal Opportunities Policy

Issue: February 2025

Document information

Document title	Equal Opportunity Policy		
Owner	Human Resources - Schools		
Version	3.0	Status	Final
Effective from	1 February 2025	Review date	1 February 2027
Last updated by	HR Schools/KS		
Purpose	The purpose of the Equal Opportunities Policy is to identify, prevent and redress unfair discrimination. This procedure aims to promote equality and diversity and avoid any unlawful discrimination based on protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act (2010).		

Document accessibility

If you would like this information in another language or format contact please speak to your Headteacher/Principal

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The school/academy takes its responsibility with regard to equality and diversity very seriously. The school/academy will:

- treat people fairly, justly and with respect in both education and employment
- find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded
- promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

1.2 Equal Opportunities, in a school/academy situation, means ensuring that every individual has equal access to an education or to career development in education. Where equality guidelines principles are not adhered to, unlawful discrimination may arise.

1.3 The school/academy believes that, within education, equality is fundamentally about providing exemplary education, and ensuring that the needs of pupils, parents, staff, governors and the community are identified and met where at all possible. We aim to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups.

1.4 This policy outlines how our school/academy ensures that equality is being promoted, what provision is available and what action is to be taken.

2 Principles

2.1 This policy has been developed to set out the aims and objectives of the school/academies approach to equalities and the overall commitment to valuing equality, diversity and human rights. It sets out the expectations on our employees and Governors in the school/academies objective to promote equal opportunities.

2.2 The school/academy has adopted a zero tolerance approach to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief (or no religion or belief), sexual orientation, class or social background, political belief or Trade Union affiliation. This protocol is in place to provide fairness for all involved in the school/academy employment and education provision. All employees, whether part time, full time, temporary or volunteer, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and workers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the school/academy.

2.3 The school/academy is committed to meeting the needs and expectations of people who use its services. This means fair access for all, ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. All users will positively benefit from our education services. Information to users about services will be provided in accessible formats, based on their particular need as far as reasonable and within resources available.

3. Legislative Framework

3.1 This policy has been developed within the framework of existing legislation and relevant Codes of Practice. The main legal provisions are contained within the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

3.2 The Equality Act (2010) covers the main equality duties together with additional requirements for public sector authorities.

3.3 The following are 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation

3.4 The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out those rights in the UK which are protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. Human rights are based on the core principles that are relevant to day to day life, and protect freedom to control one's own life and fulfill one's potential through: being safe and protected from harm, being treated fairly and with dignity, living the life you choose, and taking an active part in the community and wider society.

4. Leadership on Equality and Diversity

4.1 The Governing Body and the Headteacher/Principal have responsibility for developing a culture that promotes equality and values diversity. They also ensure that the school/academy complies with all relevant equalities legislation and will challenge any prejudice, discriminatory behaviour and attitudes.

4.2 The Headteacher/Principal will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The school/academy requires that its employees and volunteers have appropriate training and possess competencies to fulfill the principles of this protocol. The training and competence levels will depend on the role of the employee or volunteer. Some roles will require specific training, competencies and conduct, Induction and training are available for employees and volunteers to acquire appropriate levels of competence.

5.2 **Managers and supervisors**

Headteachers/Principals and managers have responsibility for embedding equality objectives in plans and strategies. School/Academy leadership is responsible for ensuring that fair employment decisions are made including:

- promoting a representative workforce, for example; fair recruitment, career development, pay, training, promotion and welfare of staff to ensure that the workforce, as far as reasonable, reflects the make up of the local population.
- ensuring staff are competent in equality and diversity, through regular one-to-one meetings, supervision and appraisals.
- challenging unfairness, and acting promptly and fairly in any instances of actual or alleged discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, in areas for which they are responsible;
- consulting employees from all protected characteristics on key employment related decisions, such as restructures or changes to work practices.
- supporting staff with disabilities, as far as reasonable, by putting in place reasonable adjustments, to overcome barriers they may experience during their employment with the school/academy.

5.3 **Employees and Volunteers**

All school/academy employees and volunteers have a duty to demonstrate the principles and values of this protocol in their interactions and relationships with colleagues and customers. This includes, but is not limited to:

- acting in ways that are in accordance with equality legislation, policies, protocols and good practices
- treating everyone they come into contact with, with dignity and respect
- ensuring that they do not discriminate or induce others to practice discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- recognising and reporting behaviour that undermines equality and diversity.

6. Monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Policy

Effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher/Principal or nominated equal opportunities governor as part of the school/academy standard workforce analysis. Disproportionate or negative outcomes will be monitored and actions will be put in place by the Governing Body.

7. Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy

Breaches of the equalities policy may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct under the school/academy disciplinary policy. Schools/Academies are strongly advised to seek assistance from Human Resources in such cases.