



Support  
Tenacity  
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Equity

## Equality Policy

Date of Review	Feb 2025
Next Review Date	Feb 2027
CEO	Paul Goodman
Chair of the Trust	Graham Smith
Signed	
Date	

## **Equality Policy**

At Scholars Trust we recognise the importance fair treatment and positive promotion of equal opportunities for all employees, pupils, school community councillors SCC, visitors, parents/ carers and all job applicants to the Trust. The Trust will actively seek to prevent discrimination any grounds.

This Equality Policy provides a framework for our school to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations, and to tackle prejudice and discrimination. We have incorporated our individual policies for race equality, disability equality and gender equality into one overarching Equality Policy to create a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within our school. Our policy includes a plan of action to address these priorities over the next three years.

At Scholars Trust we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, or socio-economic background. Our commitment to equality is a fundamental part of our drive towards excellence. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate in school life.

### **National and Legal Context for Equality**

All schools have a statutory duty to promote of the nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation as stated in the most recent Equality Act.

The general duty to promote equality means that we must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote quality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people

Schools also have a duty to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of the nine protected characteristics. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils and staff

The disability equality general duty reinforces the reasonable adjustment duties of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). In particular, it complements, and in some cases overlaps with, the anticipatory duty to make adjustments to ensure that a disabled pupil can benefit from what they offer to the same extent that a pupil without a disability can

### **Putting Equality into our practice**

As well as the specific actions set out in our Equality Plan, Scholars schools operate equality of opportunity in day to day practice. We have strategies in place to promote the participation of pupils in decision-making and in making a positive contribution to school life. We will embed equality and inclusion into these strategies so that learners from diverse backgrounds are involved in shaping provision and improving practice. We ensure that outcomes from these involvement activities are acted upon.

Strategies to promote inclusion are:

- Promoting discussion and the sharing of ideas during assemblies
- Through curriculum lessons e.g. groupwork as well as RSE and PHSE curriculum.
- Pupil focus groups such as School Council, Road Safety Officers
- Use of Pupil Premium funds to involve pupils in specific activities during and after school with a subsidy or free

- Pupil surveys

## **Teaching and Learning**

At Scholars Trust we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. We are committed to preparing our pupils for life in a multicultural society and are totally opposed to racism and all other forms of oppressive behaviour. We believe that striving for race equality is important for all schools whether multi-ethnic or all white, rural or urban. We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunities to succeed and to reach their highest level of personal achievement.

To do this we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils.
- Monitor achievement of pupils by ethnicity, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.
- Take account of the achievements of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect the diversity within schools, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability without stereotyping.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education.
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning.
- Include teaching and classroom based approaches appropriate for the whole school population which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

## **Admissions and Exclusions**

The admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on the nine protected characteristics or socio-economic factors and are managed by the LA.

Exclusions will always be based on the individual school's behaviour policy. As Trustees we will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact.

## **Equal Opportunities for Staff**

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunity principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. As an employer, we need to ensure we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects promoting the nine protected characteristics which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation are considered when appointing staff particularly when reevaluating staff structures to ensure decisions are free from discrimination.

To do this we:

- Monitor recruitment and retention of staff and behaviours in the workplace
- Provide professional development opportunities for all staff to be aware of personal responsibility towards ensuring equality is embedded in practice

- Ensure staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos within schools challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and showing appropriate support for pupils with additional needs, maintaining a good level of awareness of issues surrounding equality.
- Ensure Trust policies, procedures and activities provide equal opportunities benefit all staff and provides greater social cohesion

A person's age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment and in regard to the provision of goods and services. In the Public Sector Equality Duty which applies to public bodies, the school must have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the act
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relationships across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Having due regard in this context means that when significant decisions are being taken, thought must be given to the equality implications.

### **Consultation and Involvement**

It is a requirement that schools have an action plan and that the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. Each school in developing the plan will involve staff, pupils and parents in the following ways:

- Feedback from parents (both formal and informal)
- Input from staff surveys and through staff meetings/INSET
- Feedback from School Council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys and children's attitudes to themselves and the school
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Educational Plans/Personalised Provision Map/EHC Plans, mentoring and support
- Feedback from school community counsellors

### **Impact Assessment**

We will carry out equality impact assessments on our policy as part of everyday monitoring and practice which will cover all aspects of equality. We will look for ways to improve practice as well as ways to eliminate discrimination and harassment. We have a programme of carrying out impact assessment process into all new policy development and decision making activities.

We will do this through:

- Annual/cycle reviews of policies by trustees, governors and staff
- Annual/cycle reviews of progress and attainment for all pupils and vulnerable groups
- Pupil progress meetings and attainment plans

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Trust Board will

- Ensure the equality policy is published
- Each school is committed to reviewing and publishing, updating their own policy and action plans, which are published on the school websites
- Check the implementation of equality policy and actions plans
- Monitor the school actions plans

The School Community Council will

- In line with Trust requirements, monitor the implementation of the policy and Action Plan to check progress and assess impact on staff, learners and parents

- Ensure that all School Community Councillors are aware of their legal responsibilities under equality legislation
- Receive and discuss regular equality reports on progress and performance
- Monitor achievement of equality targets
- Check that implementation of the policy and Action Plan achieves improved outcomes for people who share an aspect of their identity in relation to race, disability, gender (including gender identity), age, sexual orientation, religion and belief

#### The headteachers will

- Provide proactive leadership to create a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation
- Ensure staff, pupils, parents/carers and any other interested stakeholders are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in implementing this policy
- Monitor to ensure effective implementation of the policy and Action Plan
- Provide regular reports for trustees on progress and performance
- Allocate appropriate responsibilities, and provide suitable training and development for staff to implement this policy

#### The senior leadership team will

- Drive forward implementation of the policy and Action Plan
- Support staff to carry out their role in implementing this policy
- Provide effective leadership on equality, inclusion and community cohesion
- Ensure the policy is successfully promoted
- Respond in a timely and appropriate manner when dealing with any incidents or issues of discrimination, harassment or victimisation

#### All staff will

- Recognise that they have a role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to
- Promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- Tackle bias and stereotyping
- Respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and report these
- Highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and responsibilities

All staff will also ensure that pupils are encouraged to recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so that they understand and are able to:

- Promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- Tackle bias and stereotyping
- Work to promote anti-bullying strategies
- Respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these.

#### **Tackling Discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

Harassment or victimisation on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. Harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done. That is regarded as a prohibited act.

All staff within Scholars Trust are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping and to support the full range of diverse needs according to the pupil's individual circumstances.

Staff and School Community Council should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences. **Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourable because of a protected characteristic. **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage.

All incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/headteacher where necessary. There are clear procedures described in the school staff handbooks which is shared with staff at the beginning of every academic year. All incidents are to be reported to the Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body on a termly basis.

Examples of the types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender
- Use of derogatory names, insults, jokes
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing sexist, racist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia
- Bringing discriminatory material into school
- Verbal abuse or threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to the victim's race, disability, gender, or sexual orientation
- Discriminatory comments in the course of a discussion
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc
- Refusal to cooperate with other people of the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

### **Publishing the Policy, raising awareness**

We recognise that the Trust and school policies are public documents that should be available to any interested stakeholder. We will promote and publish the policy by:

- Placing it on our website
- Making it available on request
- Providing a summary in our prospectus, including our vision and key priorities

### **Monitoring and evaluating the Equality Policy and Equality Action Plan**

We will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of our Equality Policy and Equality Action Plan. We will report annually on our progress and performance. Our annual report will be shared with Trustees/ School Community Council. We will inform staff and learners of our progress. The findings of our annual report will be used to update school Equality Action Plans. We want this Policy to be a 'whole organisational' document that drives forward equality and achieves improved outcomes. We will therefore ensure that the Equality Action Plans are an integral part of our School Improvement Plans, and as such our progress will be reviewed regularly by the senior leadership teams and the governing bodies.

We will formally review, evaluate and revise this Single Equality Policy and Equality Action Plan every four years, to set new priorities and identify new actions.

**Complaints** Any breaches of the policy should first be reported to the Headteacher and then the CEO, who will carry out a full investigation or delegate another designated member of staff to do so.

