

Equalities Objectives

Equalities Statement

Over recent years, schools and academies have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities. Much of the work is in response to new legislation that places an increased duty on schools, academies and other settings to tackle radicalisation and to establish a positive ethos of British Values. Legislation requires schools and academies both to eliminate direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment and to promote equalities for students, staff and others who use their facilities.

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as, socio-economic factors.

Document Management

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Approved by:	Board of Directors
Responsible for review	Chief Operating Officer

At Swale Academies Trust, we are committed to ensuring equality of education, valuing diversity and providing opportunity for all.

Inclusion in Swale Academies Trust schools is about providing quality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. It also ensures that we recognise and celebrate the differences that exist amongst us, that we treat all people fairly and that we strive to eliminate discrimination wherever it exists. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit our schools.

Our equality objectives apply to all our directors, employees, potential employees, supply/agency staff and volunteers, members of our local governing bodies and all pupils/students of each of our school communities.

Our Principles

We see our first task as equipping pupils across the Trust with an awareness of an increasingly diverse society. On such foundations, pupils will develop a sense of their own place in, and contribution to, a pluralistic society. Our schools acknowledge the complexity of society and recognise that they would be failing pupils if they did not prepare them for their integral part in society.

Our objective is to promote equality to all irrespective of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Sexual orientation;
- Race (including nationality; ethnic or national origin);
- Gender (including gender reassignment);
- Marital Status including civil partnership;
- Religion or belief.

Age and marriage and civil partnership apply to schools as employers, but not in relation to provision for their pupils.

Thus, our approach to equality is based on the following:

- Discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, sex, ability, political and religious belief is unacceptable in our schools.
- Every pupil/student, member of staff, governor and director will endeavour to further this objective by personally contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for, and appreciation of, each other as individuals.

- Our main objective is to therefore educate, develop and prepare all our pupils, whatever their sex, colour, culture, origin or ability, for life.
- An equal opportunities philosophy will be practised by all staff.

Equality Act 2010

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It has consolidated this legislation.

The Board of Directors at Swale Academies Trust is responsible for ensuring that each of the schools within Swale Academies Trust meets the requirements of the Equality Act. The Board of Directors will:

- Ensure that everything the schools do are fair, non-discriminatory and no individuals or groups of people are put at a disadvantage
- Ensure all schools take all reasonable steps to see that its employees do not carry out unlawful discriminatory actions or behaviour
- Support and guide the schools to have 'due regard' for equality in all their functions
- Ensure all schools comply with the two 'specific' duties to publish equality information and objectives
- Ensure the success of every pupil/student, alongside equal opportunities are at the heart of Swale Academies Trust vision
- Ensure that the Headteacher of each Trust school is responsible for implementing these objectives; all their staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination

In Practice

Admissions

Our schools ensure their Admission Policies does not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as a criteria for admission, augmented by creed and ability,

Registration

Pupils'/Students' names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Pupils/Students should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person within our schools are to be treated seriously. A careful note must be kept of such incidents. It should always be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable and further action could be taken.

Pupils

If there are subsequent incidents, then the appropriate senior staff member should be informed and consideration should be given. Racist and political symbols, badges and insignias on clothing and bags are forbidden in our schools. Graffiti will be removed immediately.

Staff

Our schools value diversity amongst staff. In all staff appointments, the best candidate will be appointed, based on strict professional criteria. All staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

In order to understand the background and experience of ethnic minority pupils and to raise expectations of their potential, staff need to be aware of the historical and contemporary processes which have caused, and may continue to sustain, racism.

Curriculum

All pupils/students must have equal opportunity of access to our schools curriculums. Staff must be constantly aware that their own expectations affect the achievement, behaviour and status of each pupil. The curriculum must be balanced, objective and sensitive and must not highlight sexual or cultural diversity.

Language

Our schools view linguistic diversity positively and staff should be aware of the language and dialect spoken by pupils and their families. Staff must be conscious of any racist or sexist connotations in the language they themselves use. Pupils and staff must feel that their language or dialect is valued.

Resources

Our schools aim to provide for all pupils/students according to their needs, irrespective of sex, ability or ethnic origins. Whenever possible, staff must ensure that the resources used in all curriculum areas are multicultural and non-sexist. Pupils should have access to accurate information about similarities and differences.

Our Primary School- Equality Objectives

- To narrow the gap between boys and girls in mathematics at Level 5
- To narrow the gap between boys and girls in writing at GDS level at the end of KS2

Our Secondary School- Equality Objectives

- To improve pupils' understanding of diversity and develop their tolerance of different ethnic and social groups so that our schools are welcoming and supportive of pupils whatever their sexual orientation or ethnicity.
- To narrow the gap between boys' performance in the Key Stage 4 basics measure so boys achieve in line with similar pupils nationally.
- To increase the performance of white British pupils in key measures, especially those who are in receipt of free school meals, so that more of these pupils attain high quality level 3 qualifications when they leave school.
- To increase the attendance of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.
- To reduce the number of pupils internally and externally excluded for prejudicial behavior.

The Trust will always ensure that we appoint the best person for the job in all circumstances.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

Since April 2011, schools have been bound by a part of the Equality Act 2010 called the public sector equality duty (hereinafter referred to as the PSED or the 'equality duty').

The equality duty replaces the previous three sets of duties on schools to promote disability, gender and race equality through having equality policies and action plans for these groups. Whilst there is now no requirements for schools to have these equality policies, schemes and/or action plans the Governing Body will ensure that there will be no discrimination, harassment or victimization of a pupil or potential pupil because of their race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act. These 'protected characteristics' are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

- Sexual Orientation

**The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership apply to schools as employers, but not in relation to their provision for pupils.*

The new equality duty has two parts: the 'general' duty and 'specific' duties.

The general duty

The general duty is the overarching legal requirement for schools and means they must consider how their policies, practices and day-to-day activities impact pupils and staff. Schools are required to have 'due regard' to the need to:

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

The specific duties

The two specific duties for schools aim to assist them in meeting the general duty. These are:

- To publish information to show how they are complying with the equality duty. This must be updated at least annually
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years

As a Multi Academy Trust, we will publish information on:

- The diversity of our schools population
- How we are performing in relation to the three aims of the equality duty
- We ensure that the content of this objective is known to all staff, governors and directors, and also, as appropriate to all pupils/students and parents.

How will we achieve equality?

Our schools will make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure equality and the no pupils/students is placed at a substantial disadvantage. To make these reasonable adjustments we:

- Plan ahead;
- Identify potential barriers;
- Work collaboratively;
- Identify practical solutions through a problem-solving approach;
- Ensure staff have the necessary skills;
- Monitor the effects of the adjustments and this policy;
- Consider the effect of any proposed change upon all members of our school communities and the available resources.