



St Mary's Academy Trust

Equality Statement, Policy and Objectives (Incorporating Equality Public Duty)

Date Agreed by HR Committee: February 2021

Date to be Reviewed: February 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

St Mary's Academy Trust recognises that all individuals have fundamental human rights and welcomes the diversity of the community who are working and learning within the organisation. As a service provider the Trust is committed to promoting equality and tackling social exclusion and, as such, will integrate equality into all activities, having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between all groups irrespective of their disability, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender status, age or marital status

St Mary's Academy Trust will put in place a range of actions to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the Trust, its school communities and workforce.

2. OUR APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

A Trust that is equal and diverse is one that will be better able to meet the challenges of the future. Equality and diversity must be embedded in everything it does and focused on delivering the priorities of the organisation.

The approach we take to equality and diversity must be informed by our Vision and Values and seek to address the challenges we face, and learn from the progress and achievements we have made so far.

We understand that developing an approach to equality and diversity should not be a one-off exercise. It will be a point of reference for us throughout the lifetime of the scheme; have we fully implemented our approach in our working practice; does the leadership team put this approach into practice; is the approach making a difference to the organisation?

Equality and diversity is the day job not an add-on extra. We will ensure that we are delivering excellent services to those sections of the community who face the greatest barriers and are in the most vulnerable situations.

The Trust therefore looks to embed equality and diversity into mainstream service activity and planning. It also seeks to ensure that performance on equality and diversity is a key element of all evaluation and assessment.

We need our leaders and employees to inherently understand equality and diversity, share common objectives for the organisation and the people we serve, and treat each other with respect as they would like to be treated themselves.

Everyone must recognise that they have a role to play. Equality and diversity should be part of our organisational DNA.

In recent years the number of people in Barnsley who were born in another country has increased, although this is still well below the national average.

This means there are more children entering the education system who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). As a result, they may have specific language support needs and their families may be less familiar with the education system in this country. Without the right support and guidance this can mean that the educational achievement of learners with EAL can fall behind their peers, but with the right support they can blossom.

We are committed to promoting equality and tackling social exclusion and, as such, will integrate equality into all our activities.

This commitment includes raising awareness, amongst all our staff and leaders of how equality and diversity should be one of the foundation stones in our work and in how we get on with each other. It also means that we address equality and celebrate diversity as an integral part of our curriculum offer, for example through the teaching of PHSE, Religious Education, literacy, the arts and history, as well as curriculum enrichment events such as assemblies, diversity week and Black History month.

It is important that we support each other and we will not tolerate instances of bullying and harassment towards employees or elected members either by colleagues or members of the public.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Equality Act 2020 provides a single legal framework with three broad duties:

- a) Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- c) Foster good relations across all characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The effect of the Equality Duty is that schools must have due regard to the above in relation to the management of their pay policies, avoiding direct or indirect discrimination. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to prepare and publish annually equality objectives and publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty (the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011).

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited, to the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Education Needs Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

St Mary's Academy Trust fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities.

A protected characteristic under the Act is as follows:-

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Sex (including transgender people)
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership (for employees)

For employees, it is unlawful to discriminate against any employee in respect of any activity including, but not restricted to: - recruitment; professional development; performance management and pay progression.

For pupils, in schools, the Act makes it unlawful for a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil: -

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HR Committee will:

- Propose specific objectives
- Produce statistics from data provided from Headteachers/Governing Bodies
- Produce annual statistics from Equality forms completed by employees
- Produce annual reports on progress achieved for both pupils and employees, this may include, but is not limited to, school performance, anti-bullying policies, school development plans, equality milestones, curriculum materials, individual attainment data, equal opportunities recruitment data, equality impact assessments, Ofsted inspection judgements on equality and diversity, incident records related to harassment and bullying

- Produce and publish on the Trust's website the Equality Statement/Policy and specific objectives in order to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and is advancing equality of opportunity
- Plan ongoing events and activities to raise awareness of equality and diversity
- Carefully monitor bullying and prejudice and deal with it accordingly, recording any incidents
- All staff will receive relevant equality and diversity training, commencing at induction
- Training will also be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying
- Ensure that all policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for all policy reviews
- Ensure that policies and procedures benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in the public life of everyone, regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age

The Headteacher of each school will:

- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, are given necessary training and support and report progress to the Governing Body
- Ensure that the recording and reporting of equality and diversity is sufficiently scrutinised
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging, ensuring that this is promoted in all policies, procedures and activities
- Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention, professional development and performance management
- Reduce and remove any inequalities and barriers that already exist
- Ensure that activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in the public life of everyone, regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age
- Ensure that the school's curriculum allows for opportunities to address equality and celebrate diversity
- Ensure that staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, 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 equalities
- Implement the Equality Statement/Policy and its required procedures
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance

- Report on progress achieved in their school to HR annually and by no later than 31st March each year

The Governing Body of each school will:

- Ensure that the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations
- Meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish equality objectives
- Approve the specific objectives adopted by the Trust
- Ensure that appropriate equality impact assessments are conducted in respect of the Trust's policies and procedures and that these inform future plans
- Ensure that the recording and reporting of equality and diversity data is sufficiently scrutinised
- Ensure equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, professional development programmes and in membership of the Governing Body
- Ensure that consideration is given to the diversity profile of existing staff when recruiting new ones
- Provide information in appropriate and accessible formats
- Ensure that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to enforce this policy

Employees will:

- Be mindful of any incidence of harassment or bullying in the academy
- Address any minor issues of harassment or bullying and report any major breaches of the policy to the Headteacher
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the Trust's culture
- Promote equality and good relations and not harass or discriminate in any way
- Monitor pupils' progress and academic needs to ensure that appropriate support is in place
- Keep up to date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training

5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The Trust has identified three key objectives:

- a) developing the skills and understanding of the workforce
- b) developing the confidence of the leadership team
- c) developing the skills and understanding of our children through our curriculum

6. KEY ACTIONS

The Trust will form a working group to implement the following actions and to collate evidence that we are meeting the objectives: -

A diverse and flexible workforce

- Carry out workforce survey
- Promote dignity at work for employees and volunteers
- Promote the Equality policy
- Analyse relevant policies i.e. recruitment, performance management, induction to ensure equality impact assessment is effective
- Audit of the above activities in schools to ensure the policies are being applied appropriately in order to ensure equality is evident and consistent across the Trust.
- Identify barriers to be addressed

Leaders at every level -

- Challenge prejudice and discrimination in the workplace
- Promote equality as a fundamental part of the Trust's "DNA".
- Employees fully aware and compliant with Public Sector Equality Duty.

Effective delivery - Making Equality Mainstream

- Ensure decisions are taken with due regard to equality impact.
- Ensure equality is mainstreamed in planning and performance management.
- Sign post Leaders to high quality advice and support on equality and diversity for services.

A genuine equal opportunities employer where we recruit the best candidate for the jobs regardless of their diversity.

- Review content of the recruitment and selection management training courses to ensure equality and diversity considerations are fully embedded.
- Consider managers' experience of recruitment and selection process to help identify any potential barriers to equal practice.
- Undertake audit of recruitment and selection exercises to ensure equal treatment and to determine future priorities for action.
- Develop action plan accordingly

A Leadership able to shape the culture and relationships of the Trust to promote equality and diversity as a fundamental part of the Trust's DNA.

- Survey to determine the percentage of employees who believe the Trust puts equality and diversity at the heart of everything it does.
- Survey to determine the percentage of employees who consider equality to be an important part of their job.

7. DATA IMPACT ASSESSMENT

At all stages of this procedure data obtained will be used only for the purpose for which it is intended and will be stored securely with restricted access to those involved in the process. Following the process any personal data will be stored on the electronic personal file, where appropriate, for the duration of the employee's employment with the Trust and for 6 years thereafter. Any other information will be stored in the secure HR files in accordance with the retention schedule. The data will be destroyed at this time using a confidential shredding service.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This policy has been impact assessed by the HR Committee, if on reading this policy you feel there are any equality and diversity issues, please contact HR who will if necessary ensure the policy is reviewed.

9. INCOME TAX AND NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

There are no tax or national insurance implications arising from this report.