

Equality Policy

Ashmole Trust



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Ashmole Academy Trust

Equality Policy

Ashmole Academy Trust is committed to encouraging equality and diversity of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. The Trust aims to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the Trust feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.

Aims of the Policy

This Equality Policy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including all those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010, as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against any individuals within our community. The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of the following characteristics:

- Sex (gender)
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Age, marriage and civil partnership are also 'protected characteristics' but are not part of the school provisions related to students.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to set out the practices that demonstrate '*due regard*' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (April 2011) which requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a '*protected characteristic*' and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a '*protected characteristic*' and those that do not

Ashmole Academy Trust will ensure that we involve students, staff, governors, parents/carers and the community in achieving the best outcomes for the students.

The Academy has a staff, parent and student Equality committee who meet regularly to discuss recommendations for the school.

Specific Duties

In accordance with the specific duties the Trust will:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty

- Publish equality objectives every four years

Equality Objectives

Ashmole Academy Trust is committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Promoting equality of access and opportunity within the schools and within the wider community;
- Promoting positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins;
- Valuing equally all members of the school community regardless of sex, race, ethnic or faith background, sexual orientation or social situation;
- Promoting social cohesion and preparing students to live in a diverse world;
- Giving staff equal access to opportunities for personal, professional or academic development and opportunities for career progression.

Meeting the Duties:

Under the statutory duties, all schools have a 'General Duty' to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Public Sector Equality Duty, the school must have regard to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the act.

Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it.

Foster good relations across all protected characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is dined in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantage
2. Take steps to meeting different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

For schools, having due regard means:

- When making a decision or taking an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics
- It should consider equality implications before and at the time it develops policy and takes decisions, not as an afterthought, and it needs to keep them under review.
- It should consciously consider each aspect of the duty (having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination is not the same thing as having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity).
- It should assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact that might result from a policy or decision and the ways in which the risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy

- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of a school's functions. The analysis necessary to comply with the duty should be carried out rigorously and with an open mind
- Schools need to do this themselves and cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

Race Equality

The general duty to promote race equality means that the schools must have due regard to:

1. Eliminating racial discrimination
2. Promoting equality of opportunity
3. Promoting good relations between people of different racial groups

Disability Equality

The general duty to promote disability equality means that the schools have due regard to:

1. Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. Eliminating unlawful discrimination
3. Eliminating disability related harassment
4. Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
5. Encouraging participation by disabled people in public life
6. Take steps to take account of disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every four years.

Accessibility

This should be read in conjunction with the Trust's SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan

Gender Equality

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

1. Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment and
2. Promoting equality of opportunity between men and women, and boys and girls

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every four years.

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

Equality into Policy and Practice

As well as the specific objectives that are required, the Trust operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways:

Teaching and Learning

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, 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 students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students.

Admissions and Exclusions

The admissions arrangements are fair and transparent and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors. Exclusions are based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

Equal Opportunities for Staff

The Trust is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

The Equality Act also applies to the Academy Trust in their role as employers. See 'Staff Equality Policy' for further details.

All staff appointment and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we will strive, wherever possible, for the staffing of the school to reflect the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;

- Senior leadership team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all

Links to Other Policies and Documentation

This policy is a key document for information on the approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Trust will also ensure that information on the responsibilities under the Equality Act is also included in the school development plans, self-evaluation, promotional material, websites and newsletters. Further references can also be found in other policies such as accessibility, behaviour, admissions, SEND, anti-bullying, teaching and learning and equal opportunities policies.

Responsibilities

The Governing Committee and leadership team of the schools will work with all its partners to be proactive in promoting equal opportunities, fostering good relations and in tackling unlawful discrimination. They will encourage support and enable all students and staff from all protected characteristics to reach the highest standards possible.

The Governing Committee

The role of governors

The Governing Committee has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on the protected characteristics.

- The Governing Committee seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The Governing Committee ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability, gender, religion

Executive Head Teacher/Head Teacher

The Executive Head Teacher/Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Overseeing the work of the Deputy Head – Inclusion;
- Making sure the policy and its procedures are followed;
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about how the policy is working and providing training for them on the policy if necessary;
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out;
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination;
- Making sure the Equality Policy is regularly monitored and reviewed.

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with incidents of unlawful discrimination and bullying;
- Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping;
- Promoting equality and good relations between all groups;
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination, and taking up training opportunities;
- Striving to provide images and lesson plans that show positive images of, and are inclusive of, people from the protected characteristics.

Tackling Discrimination

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.

All staff 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 a pupil's individual circumstances.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably 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.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the Governing Committee and local authority on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an 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 ("a prohibited act") in connection with the Act. E.g. Making an allegation of discrimination.

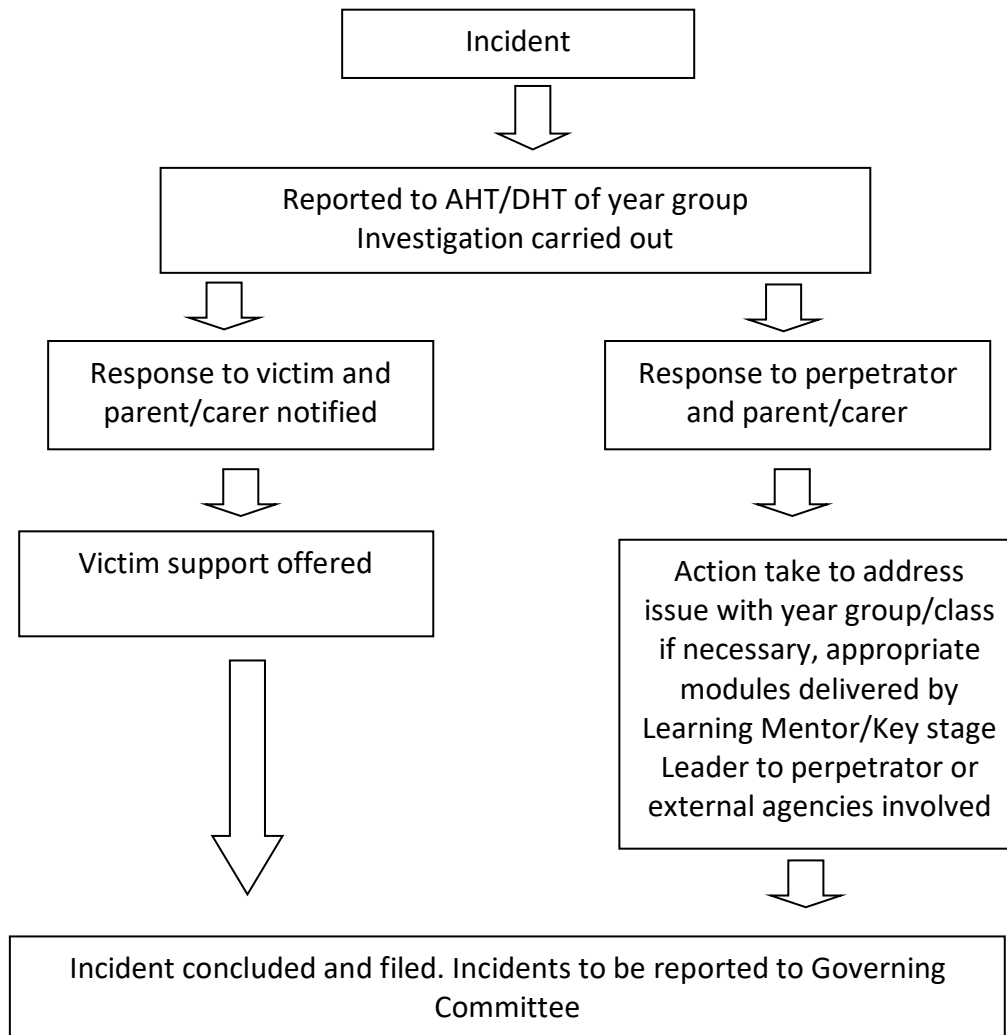
Types of discriminatory incident

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 and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats; Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of 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 co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.



Staff may report any concerns they have to HR.

Monitoring and Reviewing Objectives

The Trust will review and update the equality objectives every four years and report to the Executive Head and to the Governing Committee on progress towards achieving them.

Promoting Positive Attitudes and Meeting Needs

The Trust will:

- Promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display.
- Recruit disabled people to the school if they are the best candidate and support them in their work and career development, and try to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce.

- Recruit disabled people to the Governing Committee wherever possible and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute.
- Provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities.
- Support disabled pupils in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings.
- Help children and young people to understand others and value diversity.
- Promote shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them.
- Develop skills of participation and responsible action – for example through citizenship education and the values system.

Publishing and Reporting

The Trust will publish the Strategic Equality Plan on the website. It is available in large print and other formats on request.

We will report and publish on the progress made on the action plans and the impact of the plan itself on school ethos and practice within the school. This is undertaken as part of the Governors' Annual Report.

Equality Objectives

As public bodies, academies and free schools must comply with the public sector equality duty.

This means you have to:

- publish details of how your school is complying with the public sector equality duty - you should update this every year
- publish your school's equality objectives - you should update this at least once every 4 years

You need to include details of how your school is:

- eliminating discrimination (see the Equalities Act 2010)
- improving equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics
- consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions your school or college takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community)