



ASCENT ACADEMIES' TRUST

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy reviewed and adopted by the Board of Trustees	July 2016
Version	1.0
Review frequency	3 years or as required
Date of next review	2019
Responsible Officer	Mick Little

1. Introduction

The Ascent Academies' Trust is a welcoming and caring trust. It respects and values each and every individual associated with the Trust. It has a commitment to social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all and aims to provide an environment which is free from bullying, harassment and prejudice.

2. Understanding equality of opportunity:

The Trust understands equality of opportunity to exist when:

- It is understood that everyone is unique and everyone has different needs
- Equality of access exists for all
- Individual choices are widened
- Everyone feels happy, safe and secure in an environment which does not disadvantage or discriminate against anyone
- Stereotypes are challenged to ensure everyone has an equal chance to develop as they wish
- Individual and community needs are responded to for the benefit of everyone
- Adequate resources exist to meet everyone's need

3. Aims and objectives:

As a result of this policy the Trust will:

- Ensure that all members of the Trust community feel happy, safe and secure
- Ensure that equality of access exists for everyone
- Promote equality of opportunity regardless of the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexuality, gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, pregnancy and maternity
- Actively develop the self-esteem and self-respect of all members of the Trust community
- Ensure that educational provision is relevant to our increasingly diverse society
- Ensure that the curriculum actively promotes equality of opportunity
- Actively challenge all forms of bullying, harassment, prejudice and stereotyping
- Actively engage the support and commitment of the whole Trust community in achieving these

4. Relevant legislation and best practice advice:

The Trust is aware of its responsibility in relation to the requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

5. Equal Opportunities Policy Statements

The Trust promotes and encourages equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination, harassment or victimisation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Trust aims to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are never subject to unlawful or unfair discrimination on any grounds. This may include reference to their gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief.

The Trust will work within the recommendations in the Code of Practice of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights to ensure that statutory requirements and the principles of equal opportunities are incorporated into policies, procedures, practices and strategies in the best possible way.

Equal Opportunities is not a stand-alone policy as it is relevant to several different areas of the services that the Trust provides. This policy will be referred to in other policies, as appropriate.

To ensure that this commitment is put into practice, the Trust will adopt and review positive measures that seek to eliminate discrimination to ensure that all individuals are treated according to their specific needs or requirements.

The Trust will encourage any organisation that it may work with to work with equal opportunities best practice guidelines to ensure legislative compliance.

6. Specific Duties

- To prepare and maintain a written statement of policy for promoting equality in terms of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexuality, gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, pregnancy and maternity
- To put in place arrangements for implementing the policy, publicising its contents and the results of monitoring its effectiveness
- To assess the impact of the policy on pupils and staff
- To monitor, by reference to disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, the admission and progress of pupils and the recruitment and career progress of staff.

7. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Trust complies with all legislation referred to in this policy and meets all of its duties
- Approving and reviewing the Equal Opportunities Policy and monitoring its implementation

The Executive Heads and Senior Leadership Teams are responsible for:

- Giving a high profile lead on equality issues
- Promoting the Equality and Diversity Policy inside and outside the academies
- Ensuring the Equal Opportunities Policy is followed

Senior staff are responsible for:

- Putting the policy and its strategies and procedures into practice
- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training carrying these out
- Following relevant procedures and taking action against staff or pupils who discriminate

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping and to challenge or report this if they witness it
- Promoting equality and ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone
- Accessing training and development opportunities to keep up with the law

Pupils are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone
- Ensuring that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping and to challenge and report this if they witness it

Parents/ Carers are responsible for:

- Supporting the Trust's equality ethos
- Sharing concerns or issues with senior staff

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- Following the Trust's expectations regarding equality

7. Putting the Equality and Diversity Policy into Practice

The Trust will seek to ensure that:

- Trustees, staff and pupils and all stakeholders are aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and the action needed for its implementation
- Issues identified relating to disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief will be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Staff, pupils, partners and stakeholders are made aware of the value placed upon equality of opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the policy
- Trustees and staff have access to comprehensive information, which will assist them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under the policy
- The Trust's publicity materials will present appropriate and positive messages about equality
- All activities relating to pupil experience demonstrate sensitivity to issues of disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief including
 - Admissions
 - Guidance and support
 - Resources
 - Leisure activities
 - Monitoring pupils and staff by disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Applicants for employment are drawn from a wide pool with positive action to encourage applications from minority groups

8. Reviewing and publishing the Equality and Diversity Policy

The Trust will:

- Review the policy every three years through the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Consult staff, pupils and external agencies as part of the policy review
- Provide mandatory staff training on equal opportunities issues and regularly offer training to Trustees
- Publish the Equality and Diversity Policy and all policies relating to equality in paper and electronic format

9. Assessing the impact of the Equality and Diversity Policy and relevant policies on staff and pupils

The Trust will:

- Ensure that equality issues are considered as part of all policy development
- Ensure that questions are built into all annual surveys (service user, parent and staff), aimed specifically at assessing the effectiveness of policies and strategies in tackling equality related issues
- Assess reported incidents of harassment or bullying by disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Assess use of complaints procedure by disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Consider, through the Finance and General Purposes Committee, issues raised through evaluation and make recommendations to the Executive Leadership Team for improvement.

10. Monitoring by reference to disability, the admission and progress of pupils and the recruitment and career progress of staff.

The Trust will collect and monitor data related to disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief at all stages of a pupil's and member of staff's development including:

- For pupils, data relating to:
 - Admissions
 - Behaviour
 - Achievement
 - Progression
- For staff, data relating to:
 - Job applications
 - Appointments
 - Type of employment

- Take-up of staff professional development and training opportunities
- Disciplinary and grievance issues
- Staff progression and promotion

The actions outlined in this policy will be continually assessed and implemented. The policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by new legislation or best practice guidance.