

May 2021



EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY POLICY

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST
AMERICAN LANE, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. PE29 1TQ**

Equalities and diversity Policy

Our Policy covers our responsibilities under legislation for ensuring equality in relation to Single Equalities Policy and duties and relate to:

Protected characteristics in schools:

Disability, Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief or lack of religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, being married or in a civil partnership, becoming transsexual / gender reassignment, being pregnant or maternity leave, Age (but does not apply in law to children).

Positive action: alleviation of disadvantage

Taking positive action is legal if people with a protected characteristic:

- are at a disadvantage
- have particular needs
- are under-represented in an activity or type of work

Schools are allowed to voluntarily target measures designed to alleviate disadvantage experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics.

Victimisation – protection for children

It is unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Equality Act by a school parent or a sibling.

Direct discrimination:

This refers to a person that treats someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic than they would treat another child in the school.

Indirect discrimination:

Provision or practice applied that has the effect of putting children with a particular characteristic at an advantage compared to others. There is special provisions law for disability - Schools are allowed to treat disabled children more favourably.

Harassment: This is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic e.g. ridicule of a pupil due to disability.

Curriculum content is excluded from discrimination law.

The Staff complete training to maintain their awareness to maintain awareness of Equalities and Diversity to ensure that their working practice does not breach a protected characteristic. We expect our staff to be advocates for disabled children in the community.

Definition of a disability:

'a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities..' (Usually this has occurred over 12 months and has continuous substantial and adverse impact on day to day living).

The purpose:

To show the Trust and the schools are commitment to Equalities to promote equality for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

We believe in treating everyone with fairness. In doing so there needs to be an understanding that we may treat someone more favourably with a protected characteristic to enable access to special needs provision.

We will make consideration of reasonable adjustments to duties for staff recommended only if this does not compromise health and safety or safeguarding for our children.

We are committed to creating an environment within all schools within our trust which is appropriate and accessible to all.

We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging any form of bullying and harassment to promote our Trust values: Listening, Moral purpose, Trust and respect, Supporting innovation, Integrity, Communication, Building confidence, empathy and collaboration.

Our aims:

We will listen to views and opinions in the work of our school with Equalities when possible through this work be anticipatory. We recognise that equalities and diversity is the responsibility of everyone. Progress will be best achieved in all our schools within the trust by the supporting the community to work together including our pupils, parents, guardians and carers, staff, volunteers, professionals visiting us and for Trustees.

2. National, Legal and school context

The Equality Act 2010 which came into force in April 2011 brought together discrimination laws into one legal framework. All schools have duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. Schools also have a duty to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across groups within the local community. (See Links legislation are set out in Annexe 1 to this policy)

Annexe 2 gives provides Key information about the schools in the trust. Annex 3 provides the issues we have identified for positive action from the Equalities Questionnaire and Equalities Plan for schools within the trust.

3. Guiding principles

In fulfilling our legal obligations, we have regard to seven principles:

a) Everyone in our school community is of equal value.

b) We can respect difference.

At Horizons Education Trust and our schools, we believe that diversity is a strength and as such should be celebrated by everyone including pupils/ students, Parents, guardians, carers, teaching staff, support staff and Trustees.

We will make our best endeavours to ensure that our trust policies or that of our schools, procedures and activities must not discriminate or promote any discriminatory practices.

Nevertheless we shall take into account differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and barriers and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments can be made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds, ethnicity and national backgrounds and experiences of prejudice and unconscious bias are recognized and understood if and when issues arise.
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognized if and when issues arise; such as transsexual including gender reassignment.
- religion, belief or faith background or lack of beliefs.
- sexual identity.

c) Within Horizons Education Trust we will offer training to our staff to foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

d) We keep under review our equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development.

e) We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers when we become aware that they exist within the trust or our schools or in our community.

f) We consult our community annually, record feedback and for our Trustees create Annual Equalities Objectives for our schools.

We collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs DFE categories; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender. We will analyse these

groups to determine priorities and whether an action plan is required. We keep these processes within the Data protection Act and related legislation in relation to special school Academies.

4. The curriculum

We keep each area of learning and formal curriculum subject development or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflects our equality principles and the values of our trust and our schools.

We develop our Equalities work through SMSC (Spiritual, moral, Social and Cultural education), cultural and social capital and by the value we place upon tracking personal development opportunities for individual pupils.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- a) Trustees through the advice from our Executive Head Teacher are responsible for ensuring compliance with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and to ensure action plans are implemented.
- b) The Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and supported to take appropriate positive action to avoid cases of unlawful discrimination.

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the trust and our schools. Prepared to test their own understanding of equality and diversity issues.
- Record, report and deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur (PRIDE reporting to Local Authority).

- Plan and deliver lessons that reflect our equality and diversity principles and trust and our school values.
- Plan and provide appropriate support to meet the diverse needs of pupils. Contribute to priority setting for Equality Objectives within their respective school to support the aims of the trust to promote equalities and diversity within communities.
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work by attending additional training provided and contributing to discussions professionally.

6. Tackling discrimination

Harassment of any kind is unacceptable and can have a long – term impact on the individual person. Harassment regarding race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within our trust. All staff are expected to have skills to notice and deal with discriminatory incidents: how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping, and support the full range of diverse needs according to pupils’ individual circumstances.

We expect staff to record, report incidents of concern directly to the Head Teacher or representative on the same day. (using a PRIDE incident form).

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation may take many various forms for the individual and their experience. It may include verbal, physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups or activities, unwanted looks or aside comments, cyber bullying, jokes or graffiti.

A racist incident is defined as:

“any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”

Types of discriminatory incidents we are looking out for:

- Physical assault because of race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Use of derogatory names, insults or jokes
- Racist, sexist, homophobic graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic badges or insignia or tattoos.
- Bringing discriminatory material into school
- Verbal abuse or threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to race, gender, disability, religion or religious beliefs or lack of religious belief or sexual orientation
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussions
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations or groups
- Ridicule of an individual
- Refusal to cooperate with others on grounds of race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation including becoming a transsexual.

7. How to record and report issues:

Staff should report any issue using the 'Log of concern form' and give this to the Head Teacher or representative.

8. Review of progress and impact

Trustees review this Policy and Equalities plan on an annual basis and it is part of a rolling programme of policy review.

8. Publishing the plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements, we will:

- Publish our Equality plan on the school website.
- Include the plan in the Head teacher Report to Trustees.
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies and staff meetings and by posters in the Academy.

Dated: 10 May 2021

Annexe 1: National and Legal context

The Equality Act 2010 which came into force in April 2011 has brought together all the current discrimination laws together. All schools have duties to promote race, disability and gender equality.

Schools also have a duty to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across protected groups within the community.

The 3 aims of the general duty are:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, by taking steps to meet their needs where they are different from the needs of others
- To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by encouraging participation in activities where it is disproportionately low

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by schools.

a. Race equality

The general duty requires schools to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

b. Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 defines a disabled person as someone who has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

The general duty requires schools to have due regard to the following:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people in relation to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

c) Gender

The Gender Equality Act places a general duty on schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender or gender reassignment or becoming a transsexual.
- Promote equality of opportunity between male and female pupils and male and female staff

d. Sexual orientation

The Equality Act (Sexual orientation) 2007 made discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful. For schools, this relates to admission and treatment of, and services to, pupils.

e. Publishing information

Schools over 150 employees are required to maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information showing their compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Spring Common Academy Trust has less than 150 employees.

f. Community cohesion

Schools have a duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

- Since the Equality Act 2010 came into effect in April 2011 there has no longer been a requirement that schools should draw up and publish equality schemes or policies. It is still good practice, however, for a school to make a statement about the principles

according to which it reviews the impact on equalities of its policies and practices, and according to which it gathers and publishes information, and decides on specific objectives. Our trust values the work to promote and advocate for equalities and diversity so we continue to set and track progress with Equalities objectives.

- Schools' legal duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Policy agreed on: 10 May 2021

Committee: Teaching, Learning & Welfare

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