



Equality and Diversity Policy

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Contents

Document control table	1
Legal framework	3
Guiding principles	4
Roles and responsibilities	4
Review	5

1. Legal framework

- 1.1 The Trust embraces its responsibility to promote equality and diversity across all members of our school communities and this policy sets out how Southern Academy Trust intends to do this.
- 1.2 We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims and they are to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who have a shared characteristic and those who do not.
- 1.3 Specifically, due regard is to be given within organisational life in order to:
- Remove or minimise disadvantages
 - Take steps to meet different needs
 - Encourage participation when it is proportionately low.
- 1.4 Southern Academy Trust will report annually on the progress of its equality objectives with regard to protected groups under the public sector equality duty, section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are race, disability, sex, age¹, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership.²
- 1.5 The Trust is committed to ensuring it promotes equality and diversity and does not discriminate against students, staff, parents and carers, governors or anyone else associated with it.
- 1.6 We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
- 1.7 We recognise these duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework, and that they 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.

¹ For schools, age is not a protected characteristic in the equality duty in relation to education or the provision of services; it is included however in relation to staff

² Marriage and civil partnership are also protected characteristics but only in relation to employment.

2. Guiding principles

2.1 Southern Academy Trust's guiding principles are:

- All learners are of equal value
- We recognise and respect difference
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We consult and involve widely
- We base our practices on sound evidence
- We publish specific and measurable objectives

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

3.2 The Board will be responsible (or the CEO where the responsibility has been delegated) for ensuring that Trust and school policies are not discriminatory.

3.3 The CEO will work with senior leadership and other stakeholders across the Trust to evaluate data and legislation to create, analyse and report on equality objectives. The equality objectives will be reviewed at least every 3 years and an annual report will be submitted to the Board of Trustees, detailing the impact of the objectives.

3.4 The CEO is also responsible for overseeing that this policy is upheld and enforced in each school. The CEO will liaise with the Headteacher/Principal in each school and will work with them to ensure that each school is meeting the Trust's equality objectives.

3.5 The CEO will report annually on the relevant protected characteristics of its pupils and employees and will publish this on the Trust's website in accordance with the specific duties set out in the Equality Policy 2010. This will assist the Trust with creating, monitoring and measuring its Equality Objectives.

3.6 The Headteacher/Principal in each school is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of discrimination.

- 3.7 The Local Governing Bodies in each school have a responsibility to ensure that the guiding principles in section 2.1 are permeated through the ethos of the school.
- 3.8 Employees of Southern Academy Trust have a responsibility to promote and uphold this policy, to actively respond to any incidents of unfair discrimination (by students, other staff or visitors) by reporting any incidences to the Principal/Headteacher of the school. Employees are required to undertake any training in this area that is offered to them by the Trust.
- 3.9 All pupils, staff, parents and carers, volunteers and visitors to our schools are expected to respect others in their language and actions.

4. Review

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed and revised every 3 years, along with the equality objectives unless there is legislation or organisational changes which affect it.
- 4.2 The equality objectives will be revised every 3 years. They will be reported on to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.