

EQUALITY ACT (2010) & SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

Date Approved:	July 2019
Responsibility:	Chief Finance & Operations Officer
Committee:	Board of Trustees
Review:	July 2021

Introduction

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Employment Equality Policy.

Legal Status

This policy has been prepared with reference to:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010
- Early Years Foundation Stage 2017
- Prevent Strategy 2015
- Children and Families Act 2014
- SEN and Disability Code of Practice, 0-25 years 2014 (SEND Code 2015)

Aims

This policy is drawn up in consideration of the Equality Act 2010 which protects individuals from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics'. The protected characteristics in respect of pupils are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race

- Religion or belief
- Gender and gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Age

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we note that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs
- Religion and belief – we note that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we note that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

Equality of opportunity within Solent Academies Trust schools means providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community; pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The core values and ethos of the Equality Policy are:

1. To prepare pupils for life in a diverse society and world.
2. To meet the diverse needs of pupils.

3. To ensure that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained.
4. To make the academy a place where everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin or their citizenship, feels welcome and valued.
5. To respect and value linguistic, cultural and religious diversity in the community.
6. To develop each pupil's sense of personal and cultural identity and to encourage pupils to be confident, open to change, receptive and respectful towards other identities.
7. To acknowledge the existence of prejudice, and be proactive in tackling and eliminating discrimination.
8. To ensure that issues related to equality and prejudice are recognised across all areas of school activity.
9. To ensure that equality is an integral part of all planning and decision making within the trust.

Leadership and Management

1. All policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities.
2. The governing body and academy leaders set a clear ethos which reflects the commitment to equality for all members of the community.
3. The academy promotes positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.
4. The leadership team work in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity, oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.
5. Staff contribute to the development and review of policy documents. The academy ensures the involvement of governors and takes appropriate steps to enable the contribution of parents.
6. Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of pupils and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school and the wider community.
7. Additional grants and resources (such as those provided for minority ethnic and traveller pupils) are appropriately targeted and monitored.
8. The Governors will:
 - Ensure the aims of the academies indicate a commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
 - Strive to ensure that its own membership adequately reflects the communities which the academy serves, in terms of ethnicity, gender and class.
 - Ensure that they receive up-to-date training and instruction in fair employment practices and procedures.
 - Ensure fairness when issuing funds.
 - Liaise with the Executive Headteacher, Heads of School/Leadership Teams regarding the way that the academies address equality issues and make recommendations and decisions as appropriate.

Staffing: Recruitment and Professional Development

The Solent Academies Trust Board is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and

parents of the school. The Board recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce. The SAT Board, Local Governing Boards and leaders of the schools will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions. All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of school requirements. The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account, will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.

All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

Statutory requirements

The Trust Board and the Local Governing Boards are bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the “protected characteristics” that qualify for protection from discrimination as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment & equality
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation

There are some exemptions from this legislation in situations where the essential nature of a job calls for a man, woman, or a person from a particular religion or racial group. The governing body will not normally seek to use exemptions from the above Acts.

The Governing Boards will give sympathetic consideration to requests for time off or for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs, although such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the school.

The Governing Boards will wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.

The Governing Boards acknowledge these areas of regulation and confirms its commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the academies.

Advertising of vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the schools to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

Selection for appointment or promotion

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- i. a detailed role profile will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post
- ii. an objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the role profile
- iii. from these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up
- iv. role profiles, person specifications and selection criteria will be available to all candidates
- v. shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria and a written record retained of the assessment of each candidate
- vi. all interview panel members must be trained in selection techniques
- vii. at least one person on each panel will be trained in equality and the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation
- viii. selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria and no other criteria will be used
- ix. a written record of the selection decision relating to the agreed criteria will be retained
- x. reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the school

Specific Issues

i. Age

The SAT Board is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.

ii. Disability

The SAT Board is opposed to any discrimination against people with disabilities based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the school. Where a candidate who has a disability is appointed to a post in the school, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or environment where this is practicable.

iii. Gender reassignment & equality

The SAT Board is opposed to any discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex

iv. Marital status or civil partnership

The SAT Board is opposed to any discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

v. Pregnancy and maternity

The SAT Board is opposed to any discrimination against a woman because of her pregnancy and/or maternity leave.

vi. Race

The SAT Board is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where an occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

vii. Religion or Belief

The SAT Board is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief.

viii. Gender

The SAT Board is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on gender. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where a genuine and determining occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of a particular sex. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

ix. Sexual Orientation

The SAT Board is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation.

x. Harassment or bullying

The SAT Board is opposed to any unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. The Governing Body is further opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff either by an employee or third party based on assumptions about their status in the above categories or any other grounds. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the school's procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.

xi. Non-statutory aspects

Although there is no statutory requirement not to discriminate against other groups, or characteristics of staff, the SAT Board wishes to state that it will not in

any way discriminate against members of staff or applicants for posts on the grounds of their political affiliation.

Positive Action

The SAT Board recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. The SAT Board will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

The SAT Board will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis. Positive action measures may include:

- encouraging applications from specific groups which are under-represented in the school
- encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts
- advertisements which encourage applications from individuals of a particular sexual orientation, or religion or belief, but make it clear that selection will be on merit
- flexible working – promoting the use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible
- language/literacy training
- supporting training measure for under-represented groups
- assistance with applications for candidates with language problems
- provision of childcare facilities or support with the costs of childcare facilities for staff
- exploring the possibility of career breaks for women to assist with family commitments
- commitments to interviewing disabled people who meet the basic criteria for the post
- encouraging staff to become representatives of trade unions/associations

Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them or harassment because of perception or association.

The SAT Board is committed to the principles of dignity at work for all its staff in the school. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues. The SAT Board will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the schools. Any such

act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

The schools have procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. The SAT Board is committed to investigate any such complaint. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. The first point of contact for any such complaint should be Alison Beane, Executive Headteacher or, in the case of a grievance against the Executive Headteacher, Mr Mark Mitchell, Chair of the SAT Board. In addition, staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support. Alternatively, the Employee Support Line or Teacherline can also provide appropriate support.

Monitoring

The schools will keep records of existing staff and new applicants which can be analysed to provide data to assess whether equality is being demonstrated.

The SAT Board will regularly monitor the effectiveness of its policy by the following methods:

- i. The existing workforce will be asked to complete a monitoring form so that data is available on the composition of the staff group.
- ii. All applicants for posts will be asked to complete a monitoring form to enable monitoring of our selection decisions against the principles of this policy.
- iii. All applicants for posts will be invited to indicate whether they have any special requirements or require reasonable adjustments to enable them to submit an application, attend an interview or carry out the duties of that post. Responses to this question and appropriate actions taken by the school to accommodate people with disabilities will also be monitored as part of this process.
- iv. Information arising from this data collection process will be published on an annual basis and will be available to all staff and governors.
- v. Staff and governors will be invited to give feedback from time to time, and to make suggestions for improvements.
- vi. The incidence of complaints under the above procedures and any other aspect of this policy will also be monitored, and figures published on a regular basis.
- vii. The SAT Board will ensure that information is stored in an appropriate and confidential format in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Training

The principles outlined above in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the school's operational priorities, based on the school's overall development plan and budget allocations.

Similarly, the training of the school managers and governors in issues of equality and discrimination is an essential part of our Equality policy.

Where training is scheduled to take place on site, the school will, where possible, adapt the methods of training delivery if current arrangements disadvantage particular individuals or groups of staff.

Curriculum

1. The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:
 - Boys and girls.
 - Pupils learning English as an additional language
 - Pupils from minority ethnic groups.
 - Pupils who are looked after by the local authority
 - Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.
2. Wherever possible, the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.
3. The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.
4. Extra curricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

Teaching and Learning

1. Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel all their contributions are valued.
2. All pupils have access to a curriculum that attempts to best meet individual needs subject to normal timetabling and resource restrictions.
3. Teaching is responsive to pupils' different learning styles and takes account of pupils' cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs.
4. Teachers take positive steps to include all groups or individuals.
5. Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under regular review.
6. Teachers recognise the importance of displays and resources as a way of communicating with all school users and ensure that they represent, promote, inform, support and celebrate all sections of the academy and wider community without bias, discrimination or stereotyping.

Assessment, Pupil Achievement and Progress

1. All pupils have the opportunity to achieve their highest standards. The academy ensures that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias, and that assessment methods are valid.
2. The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by gender, ethnicity and background enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The academy ensures that action is taken to counter this.
3. Staff have very high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards. The academy recognises and values all forms of achievement.

4. All pupils have full opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and therefore, to benefit from assessment which summarises what they have learnt. Information from assessment is used to inform future learning.
5. Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupils' progress.

Behaviour, Positive support and Exclusions

1. The academy expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils.
2. There are strategies to reintegrate long-absentees should this arise.
3. The school actively avoids excluding pupils. If there was to be an exceptional case then exclusions will be monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background, and action taken in order to reduce disparities between different groups of pupils.
4. The academy's procedures for supporting pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all.
5. It is recognised that cultural background may affect behaviour. The academy takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
6. All staff operate consistent systems of rewards.
7. Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language which is potentially damaging to any minority group is always unacceptable.
8. Behaviour which does not reflect equal opportunities is unacceptable at all times and will be dealt with.

Personal Development and Pastoral Care

1. Pastoral support takes account of religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and needs of refugee and asylum seeker children.
2. The academy provides appropriate support for pupils learning English as an additional language and encourages them to use their home and community languages.
3. The academy takes account of and meets the needs of Traveller pupils.
4. All pupils are provided with appropriate career and post-16 advice and guidance which encourages them to consider the full range of options.
5. Appropriate support is given to victims of harassment and intolerant behaviour, using the support of external agencies where appropriate.
6. The PSHE curriculum and Pastoral systems will promote and reinforce equal opportunities.

Admissions and Attendance

1. The admissions process is centralised through the Local Authority and is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently to all pupils. Please refer to the Admissions Policy.
2. Information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc is included in all admissions forms.

3. The academy and families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel.
4. Reasonable provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance which includes staff as well as pupils.
5. Provision is made for pupils on extended leave so that they are able to continue with their learning.

Partnership with Parents and the Community

1. Progress reviews to parents are accessible and appropriate in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue. Parents are encouraged to telephone the academy for appointments at any time if they have concerns.
2. All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the academy for example, through parents evenings, open evenings and coffee mornings.
3. The academy works in partnership with parents and the community to develop positive attitudes to diversity and to address specific incidents.
4. The academy takes steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under represented groups of parents and sections of the community.
5. Information material for parents and users of the community facilities, are easily accessible in user friendly language.
6. Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.
7. The premises and facilities are equally available and accessible as far as is reasonably possible for use by all groups within the community.

Responsibilities

1. The Governing Body and Executive Headteacher will ensure that each academy complies with all relevant equalities legislation.
2. The Governing Body and Executive Headteacher will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.
3. The Executive Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community. The policy will then be given to all staff through normal management meeting mechanisms and managers/supervisors will ensure that it is known and understood by all staff. The policy will also be made available to potential applicants for vacant positions in the school.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti bullying policy

- Assessment, Recording & Reporting Policy
- Learning and Teaching policy
- Whole School vision, values and ethos.