



**Acorn**  
Education Trust

# Equality Information and Objectives Policy

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<b>Approved by Directors</b>	
<b>First Written</b>	

<b>For Review</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>Signature</b>
July 2022	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	S J Edwards
July 2023	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	S J Edwards
July 2024	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	S J Edwards / S Fulbrook
July 2025		
July 2026		
July 2027		

*All policies are renewed annually. If no change then just signed.  
If an amendment or full change is required, this is recorded.*



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## **Statement of intent**

Acorn Education Trust recognises that certain groups in society can be disadvantaged because of unlawful discrimination they may face due to their race, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age.

This policy will put in place a range of actions to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the school community and workforce.



# 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This policy also has due regard for non-statutory guidance, including the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy: Pupils
- Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy
- Data Protection Policy

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as 'the Act'. The school fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities. Protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of any Acorn Education Trust school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- In relation to admissions.
- In the way it provides education for pupils.
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service.
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The responsible body for all Acorn Education Trust schools is the Board of Directors.

The school's liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the school, but will apply to subsequent actions connected to the previous relationship between school and pupil, such as the provision of references on former pupils or access to "old pupils" communications and activities.

Acorn Education Trust will promote equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and will work in line with the Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy.

## 2. Principles and aims

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents, of equal value, regardless of any protected characteristic. Our policies, procedures and activities will not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences in life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face in relation to any protected characteristic.

Acorn Education Trust will:

- Promote **race equality** and have due regard to eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups.
- Promote **disability equality**, ensuring equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and disability-related harassment and encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.
- Promote **gender equality** by eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment, and promote the equality of opportunity amongst individuals of all genders.

Transgender people are explicitly covered by the PSED. For the purposes of this policy, the term '**transgender**' refers to an individual whose gender expression or identity is different from that traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. The school will respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within the community.

Acorn Education Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice and recognises that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice-related discrimination may fare less well in the education system. The Trust will ensure that all staff comply with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations. Each school's Admissions Policy will not discriminate against any protected characteristic in any way.

The Trust will:

- Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities, given necessary training and support, and report progress to the governing board.
- Ensure that the recording and reporting of equality and diversity is sufficiently scrutinised.
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, a shared sense of cohesion and belonging, and ensure this is promoted in our policies, procedures and activities.

- Observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development, and ensure that all policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees regardless of any protected characteristic, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.
- Reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.
- Engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy, procedure or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- Ensure that policies, procedures and activities benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in the public life of everyone, regardless of any protected characteristic.
- Ensure staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenging inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and showing appropriate support for pupils with additional needs, maintaining a good level of awareness of issues surrounding equality.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

The Acorn Senior Executive, on behalf of the Board of Directors will:

- Ensure that every Acorn Education Trust complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Meet its obligations under the PSED to:
  - Publish equality objectives at least every four years commencing on the date of the last publication.
  - Update and publish information every year to demonstrate school compliance with the PSED.
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans.
- Ensure that the school's Admissions Policy does not discriminate in any way.
- Ensure equal opportunities in its staff recruitment and promotion practices, professional development programmes and in membership of the governing board.
- Proactively recruit high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.
- Provide information in appropriate and accessible formats.
- Ensure that the necessary disciplinary measures are in place to enforce this policy.
- Ensure that headteachers access equality and diversity training.

The Headteacher will:

- Implement the school policy and its procedures.
- Ensure that all staff members receive the appropriate equality and diversity training as part of their induction and CPD.
- Ensure that all parents, visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the provisions of this policy.
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any case of discriminatory practice.
- Address any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with DfE guidance.
- Produce an annual report on the progress of implementing the provisions of this policy and report it to the governing board through the People Committee.



Employees will:

- Be mindful of any incidents of harassment or bullying in the school.
- Address any minor issues of harassment or bullying and report any major breaches of the policy to the headteacher.
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and the school's culture.
- Promote equality and good relations, and not harass or discriminate in any way.
- Monitor pupils' progress and academic needs to ensure the appropriate support is in place.
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation and its application by attending the appropriate training.

Pupils will:

- Not discriminate or harass any other pupil or staff member.
- Actively encourage equality and diversity in the school by contributing their cultural experiences and values.
- Report any incidences of bullying or harassment, whether to themselves or to others, to the head of year or to another member of staff.
- Abide by all the school's equality and diversity policies, procedures and codes.
- The school will have an equality page on its website, in order to demonstrate how it is complying with the PSED in the Equality Act 2010, and advancing equality of opportunity.

## 4. Equality objectives

Acorn Education Trust is committed to promoting the welfare and equality of all its staff, pupils and other members of each school's community.

To achieve this, the Trust has established the following two objectives on respecting and celebrating difference which are adopted by all schools. These objectives were set in July 2023. The third objective is specific to our school, reflecting our community and curriculum:

1. To embed inclusion in all schools by promoting neurodiversity and disability in terms of strength allowing children, young people and adults to flourish.
2. To develop practice to shine a light on the LGBTQ+ community ensuring that equity is in place.
3. To eradicate the use of homophobic, sexist, racist and other discriminatory language by students in the school.

The Trust will regularly review the steps being taken and the progress made towards the achievement of these objectives and, in line with the specific duties of the PSED, publish this information on the school website every year. The school/Trust will update and publish its equality objectives at least every four years.

## 5. Collecting and using information

In accordance with the requirements outlined in the Data Protection Act 2018, personal data will be lawfully collected and processed in line with the principles and practices outlined in the Data Protection Policy and only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, e.g. to comply with the Trust's legal obligations.

The Trust will collect equality information for the purpose of:

- Identifying key issues, e.g. unlawful discrimination in teaching methods.
- Assessing performance, e.g. benchmarking against similar organisations locally or nationally.

- Taking action, e.g. adapting working practice to accommodate the needs of staff who share protected characteristics.

The Trust will build an equality profile for staff to assist with identifying any issues within their recruitment regime. The Trust will obtain the following information from their staff:

- Recruitment and promotion
- Numbers of part-time and full-time staff
- Pay and remuneration
- Training
- Return to work of women on maternity leave
- Return to work of disabled employees following sick leave relating to their disabilities
- Appraisals
- Grievances (including about harassment)
- Disciplinary action (including for harassment)
- Dismissals and other reasons for leaving

The Trust will use the information they obtain to analyse any gaps present in their equality documentary, including the Equal Opportunities Policy: Pupils and Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy.

## 6. Publishing information

Acorn Education Trust will publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the Act. The Trust will publish information relating to persons within the school community who share relevant protected characteristics, these will include:

- Age
- Race
- Sex

The Trust will not provide this information if:

- The employee is employed under contract personally to do work.
- The employer does not have, and it is not reasonably practicable for the employer to obtain the data.

The school will publish findings in its annual report.

The Trust will publish the following information annually with regard to the gender pay gap:

- The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male and female full-pay relevant employees.
- The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male and female full-pay relevant employees.
- The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male and female employees.
- The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male and female employees.
- The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid bonus pay.
- The proportions of male and female full-pay relevant employees in lower, lower middle, upper middle, and upper quartile pay bands.

The above information will be updated and published annually on the school website in a manner that is accessible to all its employees and to the public for a period of at least three years from the publication date.

The Trust will update its equality objectives at least every four years and publish on the school website. The Trust will publish information on the Trust website every year which will show the progress made towards the achievement of the equality objectives.

## **7. Promoting equality**

In order to meet our objectives, the Trust has identified the following priorities:

- Staff will ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and each school will monitor uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- The Trust will ensure that all forms of prejudice-motivated bullying is taken seriously and dealt with equally and firmly.
- There will be schemes of work designed to meet the abilities and learning styles of all pupils.
- There will be a clearly defined Behavioural/Relationships Policy, which will be consistently implemented
- The Trust will ensure there is adequate access to the physical environment of each school.
- The Trust will seek the views of advisory staff, outside agencies and local schools.
- Throughout the year, the Trust will plan ongoing events to raise awareness of equality and diversity.

Any reports of bullying and prejudice will be carefully monitored and dealt with accordingly.

Annual training will be given to all staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying.

## **8. Addressing prejudice-related incidents**

Acorn Education Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice. The Trust will ensure that pupils and staff are aware of the impact of prejudice. The Trust will address any incidents immediately and, where appropriate, report them to the LA.

## **9. Complaints procedures**

The Trust aims to resolve all complaints at the earliest possible stage and is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality of education possible throughout the procedure. Any person, including a member of the public, is able to make a complaint about the provision of facilities or services that the school provides.

The Trust will adhere to the Complaints Procedures Policy to ensure a straightforward, impartial, non-adversarial process, that allows a full and fair investigation, respects confidentiality and delivers an effective response and, appropriate redress. If a complaint has completed the Trust's process and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to appeal, as outlined in the Complaints Procedures Policy.

The Trust works to develop good professional relationships between colleagues; however, we understand that sometimes conflicts may arise. Through maintaining open communication, we want our employees to feel able to raise any grievances so that appropriate and effective solutions can be put in place. Grievances raised by staff members will be processed in accordance with the school's Grievance Policy.

## 10. Curriculum

All pupils will be entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum and to teaching and learning opportunities which meet their needs, including extra support where this has been identified as a statutory need.

When planning the curriculum, the Trust will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality. When teaching the curriculum, the school will promote equality and will not subject individuals to discrimination. The Trust will develop an appropriate curriculum for all pupils in all vulnerable groups and will ensure PSHE lessons are designed for pupils to develop their knowledge of the world and the importance of equality.

## 11. Monitoring and review

The CEO/Head of SEND will review this policy annually, to ensure that all procedures are up-to-date. The policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Board of Directors via the Safeguarding Standards and Improvement Committee. The Committee may refer to:

- Individual attainment data
- Equal opportunities recruitment data
- Ofsted inspection judgements on equality and diversity
- Tribunal information where relevant
- Actions taken by schools

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

## Appendix – Impact of Objectives

Objective	Examples of actions and impact	Next steps
<p>Trust:</p> <p>To embed inclusion in all schools by promoting neurodiversity and disability in terms of strength allowing children, young people and adults to flourish.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on culture where every decision at every level is made “through the lens” of SEND.</li> <li>• Headteacher Conferences throughout 23-24 have focussed on EDI, through the lens and belonging. This included a guest speaker, Chris Lubbe which was inspiring.</li> <li>• Schools focussed training session on belonging for all. All staff had the opportunity to contribute to discussions around what we can do to improve the sense of belonging.</li> <li>• Impact Ed attendance questionnaires being undertaken by all schools. Results not yet available.</li> <li>• Continued drive to minimise suspensions. Suspensions of students with EHCPs has decreased by 159 this year (June 24).</li> <li>• Percentage of learners with SEND is broadly the same as last year. Percentage of EHCPs in some schools has increased further which reflects our inclusive ethos.</li> <li>• Some schools have undertaken some excellent work around fostering understanding of neurodiversity which has been celebrated in Acorn SEND news and via Acorn SEND X account.</li> <li>• Acorn SEND learning walks identify strengths in inclusive practice in schools. Provision of reasonable adjustments showing improvement.</li> <li>• Acorn SEND reviews show strongest area to be the inclusive culture in schools and focus on relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed systems and processes for newer Acorn schools.</li> <li>• Continue to share best practice via heads meetings, SENCOs meetings and DSL meetings.</li> <li>• Follow up on belonging research work to ensure that positive action and impact follows.</li> <li>• Analyse, share and act upon results from Impact Ed attendance questionnaires.</li> <li>• Share a “neurodiversity” calendar and schools to embed and share work celebrating diversity.</li> <li>• Monitoring of inclusive environments in all schools.</li> </ul>
<p>Trust:</p> <p>To develop practice to shine a light on the LGBTQ+ community ensuring that equity is in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Headteachers Conference focussed on EDI. Heads looking at actions to promote equity for all.</li> <li>• Schools focussed training session on belonging for all. All staff had the opportunity to contribute to discussions around what we can do to improve the sense of belonging for all.</li> <li>• All Senior Executive team have completed National College Training on EDI.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor data to ensure that incidences of homophobic behaviour are reduced.</li> <li>• Hub head agendas to have a standing item on EDI and sharing best practice.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Directors have received training on EDI.</li> <li>• Secondary schools raising awareness during Pride month and Equalities groups.</li> <li>• Government guidance scrutinised and discussed at DSLs meetings.</li> <li>• Ongoing training on use of MyConcern from Trust safeguarding lead so that incidents of homophobic behaviour are recorded correctly.</li> </ul>	
School:		