



**LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST**

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# Equality & Objectives Information

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## 1. Introduction

Biggleswade Academy aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

## 2. General Duty

We will assist our children and young people in achieving to their very best potential. Where children and young people experience barriers to their success we will work with them to address these in a sensitive and sympathetic way. We will teach our children and young people the importance of equality and what forms discrimination can take and the impact discrimination can have. We will also encourage our children and young people to make their own commitment to promoting equality.

We will not discriminate on any of the grounds listed below (known as the Protected Characteristics) save where such discrimination is permitted by law. Examples of permitted discrimination are:

- The Academy may arrange children and young people in classes based on age.
- The Academy may take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting children and young people of one racial group if this is a proportionate means of dealing with the issue.

## 3. Protected Characteristics

The Protected Characteristics that apply to schools are:

1. Age (in relation to staff only);
2. Disability;
3. Gender re-assignment;
4. Marriage and civil partnership (in relation to staff only);
5. Pregnancy and Maternity;
6. Race;
7. Religion Faith or Belief;
8. Sex; and
9. Sexual orientation.

## 4. Discriminatory Behaviour

As an Academy and employer we will also not accept any of the following:

- **Direct or Indirect Discrimination;**

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat or would treat other people.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.

- **Harassment** - has a specific legal definition in the Act. It is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour but potentially also extends to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does not mean that schools are free to bully or harass children and young people on these grounds – to do so would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable. Any case against a school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment.

- **Victimisation** - occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. Even if what was said or done was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, protection against retaliation is given unless the action was in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation.

As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act a child must not be victimised because of something done by a person with whom the child is associated, whether or not that person was acting in good faith.

If a pupil has done a protected act, then the child’s own good faith will be relevant.

## 5. Compliance with Equality Duty

We will comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty giving due regard to that duty when making decisions, taking actions and developing policies. In line with its specific duties under the Equality Act 2010, the Trust will publish equality objectives and will publish information about how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Published Information will be updated annually and objectives will be updated every four years. This information is available on our website.

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

## 6. Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 requires schools to promote community cohesion under a duty which came into force in 2007. It links in with the Public Sector Equality Duty under “foster good relations”. Though the requirement for Ofsted inspectors to grade schools on community cohesion work was dropped in 2012, this duty remains and is the legal responsibility of the governing body. Ofsted inspections are still required to consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and young people.

This provides an opportunity for schools to demonstrate how wider links with the community contribute to children and young people’s development in these areas. To fulfil the duty, we must demonstrate that we understand the context of our communities; that we have planned and taken an appropriate set of actions; and that there is evidence of the impact of these actions.

There are three areas where our practice can contribute most to Community Cohesion.

### 1. Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum

Using the curriculum to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values.

### 2. Equity and Excellence

Ensuring equity and high standards for all and tackling underperformance by any particular group.

### 3. Engagement and Ethos

Engaging with other schools, parents and the community, as well as local authorities and other partners in developing extended services.

## 7. Equality Objectives

The Academy need to set objectives which will help them to promote equality. The objectives should be measurable and achievable. There is no set number of objectives.

The Equality Objectives for the Academy are:

1. **To ensure all learners are valued equally, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or ability.**
2. **To ensure diversity is celebrated across all aspects of Trust life.**
3. **To ensure staff recruitment, retention and development is successful for all, regardless Age, Disability; Gender, Marital status, Race; Religion Faith or Belief; Sex; and Sexual orientation.**
4. **To ensure we continue to reduce and remove any inequalities and barriers which already exist.**

## 8. Monitoring

The Academy actively monitors:

- learners' progress, attainment and assessment
- learners' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development

- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions

Broken down as appropriate according to:

- socio-economic status
- disabilities and special educational needs
- ethnicity and culture
- religious affiliation
- gender

## 9. Responsibilities

### Trust Board

- ensure that Equality objectives are part of the Trust's Strategic Intents
- evaluate and review Equality information annually and the objectives every 4 years
- designate a governor with specific responsibility for Equality
- support the Principal in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about Equality

### Principal

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, children and young people and visitors and contractors are informed of this policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Trust Board at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that the Leadership Team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

### Leadership

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy
- with the Principal, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues

### All Staff

Responsible for:

- being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping or prejudice and to deal with any incidents
- promoting equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination
- keeping up to date with legislative and professional developments
- taking up training and learning opportunities
- notifying the Principal/Senior Leadership Team of actions outside this policy.

## 10. Appendix 1 – Monitoring and Action for Equality Objectives

| <b>Objective 1: To ensure all learners are valued equally, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or ability.</b>  |  |   |                |                                   |
|--|--|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| We will value all learners equally regardless of their age, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status. We value equally able-bodied and disabled learners, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation. |  |   |                |                                   |
| Actions  | Target Date  | Evidence/Outcomes   | Responsibility | Monitoring/Review                 |
| Ensure that the curriculum for the Academy is inclusive.   | Annual review  | Curriculum provision/documentation which is recorded as part of the Academy's annual review undertaken and reviewed by the Trustees.  | Principal/SLT  | Annually by Principal/Trust Board |
| Ensure the Academy's commitment to equality is evident in its admission policy   | Annual review  | Admission policy and procedures will be fully compliant with all national requirements and reflect best possible practices of inclusivity.<br><br>We will ensure that the Academy uses diverse, non-stereotypical images in all marketing materials and stakeholder communication.  | Principal      | Trust Board                       |
| Ensure the systematic and consistent management of behaviour   | Regular review undertaken by relevant Governance Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and systems for managing behaviour, exclusions and attendance are clearly evidenced.</li> <li>• Views expressed by pupils, parents, staff and trustees about behaviour bullying, safety, respect and courtesy (through questionnaires etc....) will reflect positive opinions and experiences.</li> <li>• Behaviour evidence from lesson observations, 'learning walks' and off-site provision will reflect high expectations and outcomes.</li> <li>• Overall and persistent absence and attendance rates for different groups of children and young people will be below national rates and demonstrate effective action being taken to address identified issues.</li> </ul> | Principal      | Trust Board                       |

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|  |  |  |                   |             |
|--|--|--|-------------------|-------------|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective punctuality tracking will demonstrate a positive impact on school attendance and improvements in rates of punctuality and attendance for all pupils, but particularly the most vulnerable.</li> <li>• Rates of permanent and fixed term exclusion will be extremely low, and show no pattern relating to any sub-group or learning trait.</li> <li>• The tracking of behavioural sanctions/rewards and evaluations of impact will demonstrate effective action being taken for all children.</li> <li>• The tracking of incidents of bullying/ racist incidents and their resolution will show no trend or pattern, along with swift resolutions to any identified issues.</li> </ul> |                   |             |
| Use performance data effectively and incisively to monitor learner achievement and respond to variations between groups of children and young people, subjects and key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainment and progress data for current pupils will compare favourably with national statistics for all groups of children, irrespective of any identified need across a wide range of subject and across all age ranges.</li> </ul>   | Academy Principal | Trust Board |

**Objective 2: To ensure diversity is celebrated across all aspects of Trust life.**

Our policies, procedures and activities are non-discriminatory and take account of differences in life-experience, outlook and background. We strive to overcome all barriers and disadvantages which make students feel excluded from engaging fully with their education experience. We will actively practice and promote dignity, respect and inclusiveness.

| Actions  | Target Date                         | Evidence/Outcomes   | Responsibility           | Monitoring/Review       |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Develop an Academy wide approach to promoting diversity, respect and equality  | Autumn Term 2017                    | All schools / settings will have an awareness of these issues and the aims of the Trust in meeting and addressing them. Consequently, they will integrate this work into their planning processes and day to day practice.  | Principal/SLT            | Trust Board             |
| Increase pupil awareness of diversity and equality issues within the Academy   | Academic year 2018/19               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of curriculum provision within these areas and the ease with which these issues are integrated seamlessly into classroom practice.</li> <li>The quality of supporting materials and activities, such as Displays/use of diverse music/assembly foci opportunities etc.</li> <li>The level of understanding and appreciation developed and demonstrated by pupils in appreciating cultures and beliefs different to their own.</li> </ul>   | Senior Leadership Teams. | Annually by Trust Board |
| Ensure all staff are equipped with the skills to embed diversity and equality best practice into their classroom practice. | Ongoing CPD needs to be identified. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff must be consistent role models in developing and supporting behaviour which promotes the very highest standards of equality and diversity thinking and understanding.</li> <li>The Academy should provide a supportive network for all staff needing support/advice in dealing with any incidents/issues arising within these areas.</li> <li>All areas of practice should demonstrate that, organisationally, we celebrate (not tolerate) our differences and the quality of our relationships with parents/carers should further enhance this approach.</li> </ul> | Principal/SLT            | Annually by Trust Board |

**Objective 3: To ensure staff recruitment, retention and development is successful for all, regardless Age, Disability; Gender, Marital status, Race; Religion Faith or Belief; Sex; and Sexual orientation.**

Our policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development regardless of gender or sexual orientation, whether or not they are disabled, their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status.

| Actions  | Target Date      | Evidence/Outcomes   | Responsibility | Monitoring/Review      |
|--|------------------|---|----------------|------------------------|
| To further refine the Academy's employment policies and procedures in order to effectively track the provision of a barrier-free environment for recruitment and employment of high quality staff. | Autumn Term 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be able to effectively evidence and monitor recruitment practice to demonstrate explicitly that all applicants receive full and fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job.</li> <li>To demonstrate that all applicants for employment who have a disability and who meet the essential criteria are invited for interview.</li> <li>To ensure the availability of information about vacancies in alternative formats (for example large print)</li> </ul> | Academy HR     | Principal/ Trust Board |
| Integrate appropriate training opportunities on <i>equality</i> into the Academy's on-going staff training and development programme.  |                  | The Academy's annual CPD programme routinely includes opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in the area of equality for all staff.<br>Training for new teachers is provided in how to provide 'reasonable adjustments' and approach possible resulting differences in learning needs.  | Principal/SLT  | Trust Board            |

**Objective 4: To ensure we continue to reduce and remove any inequalities and barriers which already exist.**

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take all opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

| Actions   | Target Date | Evidence/Outcomes  | Responsibility | Monitoring/Review  |
|---|-------------|--|----------------|--|
| Ensure that the Academy's commitment to equality is evident in its key strategies, policies and documents   |             | The Academy's commitment to equality is evident within the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff Handbooks</li> <li>• All Academy Prospectuses</li> <li>• All marketing materials</li> <li>• All recruitment materials</li> <li>•</li> </ul>   | Principal/SLT  | Annually by Trust Board  |
| Ensure that all new and existing school buildings are accessible to all staff and children and young people |             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Wheelchair access wherever possible to all areas of the school</li> <li>• Provide study/social spaces for children and young people with disabilities</li> <li>• Provide appropriate toilet / washroom spaces for children of all needs in an area close to their usual learning spaces to minimise disruption to their learning.</li> <li>• Ensure all contractors employed by the Academy are aware of the expectations regarding equality</li> </ul> | Principal/SLT  | Project led monitoring for new builds.<br><br>Annual monitoring by Trust Board |