

SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST (SLAT)



**EQUALITY POLICY &
STATEMENT**

Aspire - Challenge – Achieve

Owner	Approval	By Whom	Review
SLAT Director of Human Resources	September 2023	Trust Board of Directors	Annually

Equality Policy

South Lincolnshire Academies Trust

Aspire / Challenge / Achieve

Equality Policy

The South Lincolnshire Academies Trust (SLAT) welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, students, parents, applicants, local governors and Trustees (the 'School Community') from all different ethnic groups and backgrounds. This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective school community across all SLAT schools.

This policy is available on the SLAT and each school website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

Our Aims

The Trust recognise the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. The Trust are committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and employer and are committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the Trust and school community.

Students will be taught these values and to respect others. In the provision of equal opportunities, the Trust recognise and accept responsibility under the law and oppose discrimination on the basis of:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Age

These can be called the **Protected Characteristics**.

The Trust also oppose unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

The Trust aim to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty set out:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives
- This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

Aims of this Policy

The Trust and our schools, aim to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard for 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.

Through the operation of this policy the Trust aim to:

- Communicate the commitment of the Trust and each school to the promotion of equal opportunities;
- Promote equal treatment across the Trust and in each school for all members of the school community;
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination.

Whole-School Equality Policy

- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School Community;
- Remove or help to overcome barriers where they already exist;
- Ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person on any ground listed under the Protected Characteristics listed above;
- Make it clear that, and ensure, that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable;
- Take reasonable steps to avoid putting people with a disability at a substantial disadvantage;
- Set out how we will publish information to demonstrate our equality commitments;
- Set out details about our school equality objectives.

Related policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Safer Recruitment
- Admissions
- Behaviour
- Disability
- SEN
- PSHE & SMSC
- Accessibility

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Trust and each school are committed to promoting equality and when carrying out such functions, in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Trust will have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those without;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Trust will also:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

Each school's equality information and objectives are published on the school website.

Forms of discrimination Types

Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not 'fit in' on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a student is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that student.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.

Discrimination arising from disability

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a person with a disability is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a student with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

Equal opportunities education provider

Admission

Each Trust school accepts applications from, and admits students irrespective of their Protected Characteristics and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. Every application will be treated in a fair, open-minded way. Each school's admissions policy reflects our approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

Equal access

Each Trust school will afford all students equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare as set out below.

Positive action & positive discrimination

The Trust may afford students of a particular racial group, or students with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the students in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

Exclusions

The Trust will not discriminate against any student by excluding them from school, or by subjecting them him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her Protected Characteristics.

Teaching and school materials

Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example gender or race), so that this can be eliminated in both teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.

Student interaction

All students are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other students, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos, and students will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

Bullying

We will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture;
- Bullying related to SEN, learning difficulties or disabilities;
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions;
- Bullying relating to sexual orientation;
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- Sexist or sexual bullying.

Each school's anti-bullying policy contains more details about the Trust's anti-bullying practices.

School Uniform

The Trust uniform policy is consistent with this policy.

The same school uniform policy applies equally to all students, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

However, we will consider reasonable requests to alter the school uniform, for example for genuine religious requirements and reasonable adjustments for children with a disability. The student or their parents should refer the matter to the SLAT Chief Executive Officer to ensure all '*Reasonable Adjustments*' are made to accommodate the student.

Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by students when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the Trust's existing school uniform policy principles (with regard to, for example, the school colours). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the student or the student's parents to the SLAT Chief Executive Officer, whose decision will be final subject to the complaints procedure.

Students with SEN

The Trust's policy on special educational needs includes details about the welfare and educational provision for students with EHCPs.

Students with English as an additional language

Students with English as an additional language will receive additional learning support if necessary. The student and the parents will be consulted with as appropriate. Linguistic diversity is positively recognised. Each Trust school will ensure that:

- Home-school links are made to involve parents directly in the work of the school;
- Interpretation and translation services are made available as quickly as possible;
- Links are established within the local community;
- Staff work effectively with other local services;
- Learning support for ethnic minority students is efficient and effective;
- Provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, supported by appropriate resources;
- Students' names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced - students should be encouraged to accept and respect names from cultures other than their own.

Equal opportunities employer

Employment

This policy applies to all aspects of employment from the advertising of jobs, recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, career development, counselling, training, promotion, grievance and disciplinary procedures, through to reasons for termination of employment.

Applicants

The Trust accept applications from, and recruit staff irrespective of their Protected Characteristics and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a position is offered. Every application will be treated in a fair, open-minded way. The Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy reflects its approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

Equal access

The Trust will afford all staff equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, and opportunities for development, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare as set out below.

Disabilities and reasonable adjustments

The Trust have an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for individuals with a disability in respect of both employment and the education and associated services provided to ensure that such staff and students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other staff and students. Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- Making arrangements for an individual in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room;
- Allowing extra time for a child with dyslexia to complete an entrance exam;
- Providing examination papers in larger print for a child with a visual impairment;
- Rearranging the timetable to allow a student to attend a class in an accessible part of the building;
- Arranging a variety of accessible sports activities.

The Trust are not legally required to make adjustments which include physical alterations such as the provision of a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities. However, the Trust is to provide auxiliary aids and services for individuals with a disability. The Trust We will carefully consider any proposals made by parents/staff and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.

Staff Conduct & Expectations

Staff Fairness & Conduct

The expectations for staff conduct is laid out in the code shown in Appendix 1. This supplements an employee's terms and conditions of employment and supports the Trust's values, standards and behaviours for staff behaviour and conduct.

Informing us

Disability Information

Please notify the SLAT Chief Executive Officer (or HR Manager for new staff applicants) if you are aware or suspect that you, a member of staff or child has a disability, as applicable. Please provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request.

Providing such information will enable the Trust to provide the appropriate support and adjustments. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. The Trust have due regard to any request to treat the nature or existence of a person's disability as confidential.

Access

The Trust will monitor the physical features of the premises to consider whether users of the premises with a disability are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, steps will be taken to improve access for disabled users of the premises.

Each Trust school has an Accessibility Plan, which is reviewed annually and is available on request from the SLAT Chief Executive Officer.

Responsibilities

Trust & School Community

All members of the Trust and each School Community are expected to comply with this policy and therefore to treat others with dignity at all times.

Overall responsibility

The Local Governing Body of each school has delegated responsibility from SLAT Trustees for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The SLAT Chief Executive Officer is delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

Senior Management

Those working at a management level within the SLAT Leadership structure and at each Trust school have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the Trust with regard to equal opportunities in light of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The senior management team of the Trust, and in each school, is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements to monitor the performance of potentially disadvantaged individuals are in place.

Monitoring

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented, each Trust school monitors staff and student applicants' gender, race, disability and religion or belief. The Trust also monitor achievement, exclusions and bullying incidents against gender, race, disability and special educational need. Records are maintained of this data in an anonymised format for the purposes stated in this policy.

Regular feedback is sought from all stakeholders. The Trust will listen to and monitor views and experiences of students and adults to evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and procedures. The Trust will consult with and involve those affected by inequality, in any decisions taken promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

Review

The SLAT Chief Executive Officer, together with the relevant SLAT Deputy Chief Executive Officer, is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data monitored in accordance with this policy and will arrange for the taking of appropriate positive steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination where necessary. The SLAT Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for reviewing whether the aims of this policy are carried out throughout all areas of the Trust and taking appropriate action where necessary. This policy is reviewed annually and updated where necessary by the SLAT Leadership Team.

Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination

Complaints

If you believe that you or your child has received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the school or the Trust's formal complaints procedures as applicable, available on the SLAT and each Trust school websites. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant complaints procedure.

Reports

If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint under one of the grounds listed above, please contact the SLAT Chief Executive Officer or one of the SLAT Deputy Chief Executive Officers.

Enforcement

The Trust will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint and report. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the School Community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.

Record

All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded, and this record will be reviewed annually.

SLAT EQUALITY STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The Trust are committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. The Trust have chosen to combine these requirements into a single resource within this policy. Equality is a whole Trust and school issue. It is in this light that this statement is intended to give guidance in promoting equality and diversity within all aspects of the life of the Trust and each school and to meet the legal and moral requirements.

This policy will address the areas for equality covered by legislation;

- Race
- Sex/Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy and maternity

The central purpose of the South Lincolnshire Academies Trust and our schools, is to help all students to develop their unique potential to the full. The aim of our Equality and Diversity Policy is to help ensure that all have this opportunity and that all are treated fairly and justly. Unfair treatment on the grounds of disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, colour, religion/ belief, ethnic or national origins is unacceptable.

The Trust recognise the uniqueness of each individual and value their contributions to the school and the community. Our aim is to enable everyone to value, respect and live in harmony with others. The Trust recognize it has a responsibility to promote good relations and positive mutual respect between members of different groups.

The Trust's approach to equality is based on the following principles:

- All members of our school community are of equal value
- We recognise and respect difference
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships and share a sense of cohesion and belonging
- We observe good equality practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We have the highest expectations of all our students

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The Trust schools are committed to developing policies and practice that raise attainment for all children and close the gap between those facing disadvantage and their peers.

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a legal duty to publish information to demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty of that Act.

As a Trust we recognise our general and specific duties having due regard to the need to:

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

These duties extend to all members of our Trust and each of our schools, and specific regard needs to be given to those who have protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The South Lincolnshire Academies Trust schools are committed to:

- Considering equality as we develop policy and acting on those considerations;
- Being conscious of the need for our policy to be informed by equality evidence, collecting the evidence, and using it;
- Improving our practice in promoting equality, and engaging with our local, national and international communities.

In order to further support students, raise standards and further close the gap between those facing disadvantages and their peers we have set the following objectives:

Objective 1: To monitor and analyse student achievement by race, gender and disability and act on any trends or patterns in the data that require additional support for students. To be undertaken termly.

Objective 2: To ensure that all Trust publications including material shared via social media represents all students including those from BAME/LGBTQIA+ and all other identified groups.

Objective 3: To improve the student understanding of equality through the educational delivery of PSHE/SMSC/RSHE.

Objective 4: Student led support groups created in all schools to allow a student voice to provide peer on peer support and shape educational and pastoral resources.

IMPLEMENTATION

In compliance with The Public Sector Equality Duty we are committed to working for equality for all our staff, students and parents/carers. 'Due regard' means that whenever significant decisions are made or policies developed, thought is given to equality implications.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics. In order to ensure that all students are protected from discrimination, the school collects information on protected characteristics.

In addition to students with protected characteristics, we gather information on the following groups of students:

- Students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Disadvantaged group
- Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Young Carers
- Looked after Children and Previously Looked After (CLA)
- Other vulnerable groups

The Trust eliminate discrimination by the following activities, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- Our Behaviour Policy ensures all students feel safe at school and addresses prejudicial bullying.
- Reporting, responding to and monitoring all racist incidents.
- Regularly monitoring the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of our students and that it promotes diversity and challenges negative stereotyping.
- Teaching is of the highest quality to ensure students reach their potential and all students are given equal entitlement to success.
- Tracking student progress and intervening where necessary.
- Ensuring all students have the opportunity to access extra-curricular provision.
- Listening to and monitoring views and experiences of students and adults to evaluate the effectiveness of our policies and procedures.
- Publishing relevant and appropriate information on the school website and social media.
- Advancing equality and opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share it.

The Trust advance equality of opportunity by:

- Using the information, we gather to identify underachieving groups or individuals and plan targeted intervention.
- Ensuring participation of parents/carers and students in school development.
- Listening to all parents/carers, students and staff.
- Fostering good relations across all characteristics – between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share it.

IMPACT

Through rigorous tracking and monitoring of individuals and of all the groups of students, including progress and attainment, and by providing equal opportunities to access the curriculum and activities, the Trust aim to ensure that any gap in attainment for students within any of the above different groups is removed, or at least remains less than the gap nationally.