



SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE ACADEMIES TRUST (SLAT)

EQUALITY POLICY, STATEMENT & OBJECTIVES

Aspire - Challenge – Achieve

Owner	Approval	By Whom	Review
Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Personnel	September 2026	Trust Board of Directors	Annually

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1. Terms of Reference

1.1. This policy applies across South Lincolnshire Academies Trust to trustees, governors, employees, workers, trainees, agency staff, volunteers, job applicants, pupils and, where relevant, parents, carers, contractors and visitors.

2. Introduction

2.1. South Lincolnshire Academies Trust is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination and creating an inclusive culture across employment, education and the delivery of its services.

2.2. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive environment where individual differences are valued, people are treated with dignity and decisions are fair, transparent and based on relevant evidence and merit.

2.3. The Trust will take concerns about discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying seriously and will address them promptly, fairly and as confidentially as is reasonably possible, in line with the relevant Trust procedure.

2.4. Everyone covered by this policy must act in accordance with it, treat others with dignity and challenge or report conduct that may conflict with the Trust's equality commitments.

2.5. The language we use matters. The Trust will use respectful and inclusive language and will, where reasonably possible, respect how individuals describe themselves.

2.6. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended following appropriate consultation and approval.

3. Scope and Purpose

3.1. This policy applies to recruitment, selection, induction, training, appraisal, promotion, pay and benefits, flexible working, conduct, disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancy, termination, curriculum access, pupil participation, educational provision, communications, facilities and services.

3.2. The Trust will take proportionate steps to prevent discrimination and remove barriers to participation.

3.3. An equitable, diverse and inclusive culture supports wellbeing, belonging, participation and high expectations for staff and pupils.

3.4. Where lawful and supported by evidence, the Trust may take proportionate positive action to address disadvantage, different needs or underrepresentation. Positive action will not mean unlawful positive discrimination.

3.5. The Trust will monitor relevant and proportionate equality information, including recruitment, retention, progression, workforce and pupil outcomes. Findings and agreed actions will be reported annually to the Trust Board, with appropriate regard to data protection and the risk of identifying individuals.

4. Protected Characteristics

4.1. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment

- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Trust recognises that people may use a range of terms to describe themselves. The legal protected characteristic remains gender reassignment, and the Trust will treat all individuals with dignity and respect.

4.2. The application of individual protected characteristics can differ between employment and education functions. The Trust will apply the law relevant to the particular decision or activity.

5. Forms of Unlawful Conduct

5.1. Unlawful conduct may include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, failure to make reasonable adjustments, harassment and victimisation. Protection may also apply where treatment is connected to a perceived characteristic or association with another person.

5.2. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic, subject to any specific legal exception.

5.3. Indirect discrimination may occur where a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages people sharing a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.

5.4. Discrimination by perception may occur where someone is treated less favourably because they are believed to have a protected characteristic.

5.5. Discrimination by association may occur where someone is treated less favourably because of their association with a person who has a protected characteristic.

5.6. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. The legal tests and scope will be applied according to the circumstances.

5.7. Victimisation is prohibited. No person will be subjected to a detriment because they have done, or are believed to have done, a protected act, including raising or supporting a complaint in good faith.

5.8. The Trust recognises that disadvantage can arise through the interaction of more than one characteristic or circumstance. Decisions and actions will consider relevant evidence and the experiences of affected groups.

6. Employee Training, Recruitment and Promotion

6.1. Managers must lead by example, apply this policy consistently and ensure that employees understand expected standards of conduct.

Relevant equality training will form part of induction, with refresher or role specific training provided at intervals determined by risk, legal change, identified need and the Trust's training plan.

6.2. Recruitment, development and promotion decisions will be based on objective, role relevant criteria. Reasonable adjustments will be offered throughout recruitment and employment where required.

6.3. Employment practices, conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed where necessary to promote fairness and comply with the law.

7. Discipline, Redundancy and Termination

7.1. Disciplinary procedures, sanctions and other employment decisions will be applied consistently and without unlawful discrimination.

7.2. Redundancy selection criteria and procedures will be fair, objective, evidenced and checked for unjustified adverse impact.

8. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

8.1. Employees, pupils and applicants are encouraged to tell an appropriate member of staff about a disability or barrier where this will help the Trust consider support or reasonable adjustments. Information will be handled sensitively and shared only where appropriate.

8.2. Requests for reasonable adjustments should be discussed with the relevant line manager, school leader or Personnel team. The individual will be involved in the discussion and medical, occupational health or specialist advice may be sought where appropriate and with the necessary consent.

8.3. The Trust will consider adjustments carefully. Where a requested adjustment is not considered reasonable, the reasons will be explained and alternatives considered where possible.

8.4. The Trust will keep accessibility of premises, information, curriculum delivery and digital resources under review and will address identified barriers where reasonable.

9. Fixed Term, Casual, Agency and Part Time Workers

9.1. The Trust will monitor the treatment and conditions of fixed term, casual, agency and part time workers to support equal access to appropriate benefits, information, training and opportunities, subject to lawful differences in status and entitlement.

9.2. Requests to change working arrangements will be considered under the Trust's Flexible Working Policy and relevant procedures.

10. Raising Concerns and Breaches

10.1. Employees may raise concerns through the Grievance Procedure, Dignity at Work or Bullying and Harassment arrangements, Whistleblowing Policy, safeguarding procedures or another relevant Trust route. Pupils and parents or carers may use the school's reporting and complaints arrangements.

10.2. Concerns will be considered in line with the appropriate procedure. Information will be handled sensitively, but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where investigation, safeguarding or legal duties require information to be shared.

10.3. A concern that is not upheld will not by itself result in action against the person who raised it. Deliberately false or malicious allegations may be considered under the relevant conduct procedure.

10.4. A substantiated breach may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal where appropriate. Contractors, agency workers, volunteers, pupils or visitors may be dealt with under the relevant contractual, conduct, behaviour or safeguarding arrangements.

10.5. Where alleged conduct may also involve safeguarding concerns or a criminal offence, the Trust will consider its duties to refer or report the matter to the appropriate external agency.

11. Responsibilities and Monitoring

11.1. The Trust Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Trust complies with its equality duties and that appropriate assurance, information and oversight arrangements are in place.

11.2. The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for implementation across the Trust. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Personnel, is the policy owner and coordinates employment related implementation, advice, monitoring and review.

11.3. Headteachers and senior leaders are responsible for implementation in their schools, including pupil related equality information, objectives, accessibility and reporting arrangements.

11.4. Managers are responsible for fair decision making, considering equality implications, responding to concerns and seeking advice where required.

11.5. All employees, trustees, governors and volunteers must follow this policy and complete relevant training.

11.6. The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where there is a significant legal, regulatory or organisational change. Equality objectives will be reviewed and republished at least every four years, with progress kept under review.

12. Equality Duty Statement

12.1. In exercising its functions, the Trust will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

12.2. Due regard means considering these aims consciously, proportionately and at the time a policy, practice or significant decision is developed, reviewed or made. Relevant evidence, likely impacts and mitigating actions should be recorded.

12.3. Responsibility for the duty cannot be delegated. Advice or analysis may be provided by others, but decision makers must consider the equality implications themselves.

13. Equality Information and Publication

13.1. The Trust will publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and will publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

13.2. Published information will be proportionate, accessible and mindful of data protection, confidentiality and the risk of identifying individuals in small groups.

13.3. Evidence may include pupil outcomes, attendance, behaviour, exclusions or suspensions, participation, bullying and prejudice related incidents, accessibility, recruitment, workforce information, stakeholder feedback and progress against objectives, where relevant and lawful.

13.4. Equality information and objectives will be available on the Trust or school websites as appropriate, with responsibility for annual review clearly allocated.

14. Equality Objectives 2026 to 2030

The following revised objectives are proposed for the four year period 2026 to 2030. Each school will set an evidence based baseline, annual milestone and named lead within its improvement planning cycle.

Objective 1. Outcomes and participation

By July 2030, reduce material and persistent gaps identified through annual analysis of attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour and participation between relevant pupil groups. Each school will identify its priority gaps annually, record targeted action and report progress to governors and the Trust Board.

Objective 2. Inclusive curriculum and communication

By July 2030, each school will complete an annual review of a defined sample of curriculum content, publications, digital platforms and key communications for accessibility, representation and the avoidance of stereotypes. Findings, actions and completion will be recorded.

Objective 3. Respect and understanding

By July 2030, strengthen pupils' understanding of equality, respectful relationships and the prevention of prejudice through planned personal development provision. Schools will use age appropriate pupil feedback and incident information annually to assess impact and identify priorities.

Objective 4. Pupil voice

By July 2030, every school will provide at least one accessible and appropriately safeguarded route through which pupils can raise equality and inclusion issues and influence relevant school improvement activity. Themes and resulting actions will be reviewed at least termly by senior leaders.

Objective 5. Accessibility

By July 2030, each school will review its accessibility plan and complete an annual accessibility check covering the physical environment, curriculum access, information and digital resources. Identified actions will have an owner, target date and recorded outcome.

15. Implementation and Impact

15.1. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unlawful discrimination and establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty.

15.2. Equality considerations will be integrated into relevant policies, improvement planning, curriculum review, workforce practices, procurement, communications and significant decisions.

15.3. The Trust will use relevant evidence to identify disadvantage, remove barriers, consider reasonable adjustments, plan proportionate interventions and evaluate impact.

15.4. The Trust will engage appropriately with pupils, parents and carers, employees and other stakeholders, particularly where decisions may affect them.

15.5. Schools will maintain local action plans or improvement plan actions showing how the Trust wide commitments and objectives are implemented in their context.

15.6. Impact will be assessed against the baselines, measures and milestones set for each objective. National comparisons may inform evaluation but will not replace analysis of local evidence, experience and barriers.

Appendix 1. Review and Evidence Framework

Area	Minimum evidence	Frequency	Oversight
Public equality information	Published information demonstrating compliance	Annual	Trust Board and local governance
Equality objectives	Baseline, measure, milestone, action and impact	Annual progress, republication at least every four years	Trust Board
Significant decisions	Recorded equality considerations and mitigating action	At the time of decision	Relevant decision maker
Accessibility	Accessibility plan and annual action review	Annual	Headteacher and governors
Training	Induction and role or risk based refresher record	According to training plan	DCEO Personnel
Policy	Legal, regulatory and organisational review	Annual or sooner if required	Trust Board

Reference points used for this revision

- Equality Act 2010.
- Equality Act 2010: advice for schools, Department for Education.
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.
- Equality Act 2010 guidance, GOV.UK, updated 22 May 2026.