SOLENT
Academies Trust

Together we inspire lifelong learning, perseverance, kindness, and growth, transforming the lives of our children and families

EQUALITY POLICY

Scope:	Trust Policy
Author:	Chief Finance and Operations Officer
Name of Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Approving Committee:	Staff and Pay
Statutory Basis:	Statutory Policy
Requirement to publish on website:	Yes – Trust and all Academies
Date ratified by approving committee:	December 2023
Review Period:	3 years
Review Date:	December 2026

Company Registration No:08374351, Solent Academies Trust is a Charity and a Limited Company

Contents

1. Policy Statement 3
2. Definitions 3
3. Aims 3
4. Solent Academies Trust Equality Objectives 4
5. Equality within our Learning Community 4
5.1 School Environment 5
5.2 Learning 5
5.3 Pupil Organisation 6
5.4 Resources 6
5.5 Staffing and Administration 6
6. Employee Responsibilities 7
7. Employer Commitment 7
7.1 Roles and Responsibilities 8
7.2 Our Commitment 8
8. Monitoring and Evaluation 9

1. Policy Statement

At Solent Academies Trust we are a respectful, positive learning community where everyone is enabled to achieve the most that they can, progress as far as they can and learn the most that they can.

- We promote and value diversity
- We promote and value human rights
- We challenge stereotypes

We take pride in our diverse community and as a Trust we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the guidance from the Department of Education published in May 2014. Our Equality Policy is essential in ensuring this can happen.

2. Definitions

- At Solent Academies Trust "equality" is about opportunity, access, participation, and contribution on a fair and equal footing, and how we provide a framework for this to happen.

The term "diversity" acknowledges that are differences between people, and the school values and respects the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values, and beliefs of its community.

3. Aims

- To enable all members of our Trust community regardless of race, sex, gender, disability, social background, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, or age to have the opportunities to develop in every area of our Trust life to the highest level
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of our pupils
- To encourage respect and tolerance for others, their faith, culture, and way of life
- To provide a clear statement about the Trust's commitment to promoting equality and diversity within employment

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Solent Academies Trust's ethos, policies and practices respect and protect the rights of all individuals and promote positive action to ensure that all pupils, staff, parents, carers, and volunteers within the Solent Academies Trust community are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities.

This policy is written within the guidelines and to ensure we fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Department for Education Equality Act Advice guidelines published May 2014.

This policy ensures that we will:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, 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 across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

In addition, we will:

- ensure that everyone is treated fairly and respectfully
- make sure that our academies are a safe and secure place for everyone
- recognise that people have different needs and understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them the same

4. Solent Academies Trust Equality Objectives

4.1 Actively close gaps in progress and achievement between pupils for all groups, ensuring that our comparatively smaller number of girls are not marginalised.

4.2 To promote emotional and mental health awareness and develop appropriate interventions and support where necessary.

4.3 To widen diversity in our recruitment across the Trust, including achieving the 'Disability Confident – Level 2' employer approval and recognition.

4.4 Continue to improve accessibility across the academy sites for pupils, staff, and visitors with disabilities, including access to specialist teaching areas.

4.5 To improve access to health support for pupils with complex medical needs.

4.6 To ensure parents and carers can fully access information in a meaningful and supportive way.

5. Equality within our Learning Community

At Solent Academies Trust all pupils can be described as having a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal and everyday activities.''

There is an historic imbalance between boys and girls of approximately 3 to 1. Ethnic minority groups continue to form approximately a third of the school population and the number of pupils are in receipt of free school meals/pupil premium continues to remain higher than the national average. For these reasons, the Trust has a particular regard for equality issues relating to disability, race, gender, and social disadvantage. As a multi academy trust we believe we have a key responsibility around disability equality.

Our core value 'Respect' includes the following principle: 'To recognise individual differences and promote positive self-image and worth. Provide a caring, safe environment in which children are taught to respect themselves and others both in school and the wider community.'

To ensure equal opportunities for all we ensure there is no discrimination, harassment or victimisation of pupils, potential pupils, staff, parents, and volunteers. We do this by reviewing our work in the following areas:

- Policy, leadership, and management
- Provision of education (curriculum, Learning and teaching and assessment)
- Admissions, attendance, positive behaviour management and exclusion
- Pupils' personal development, attainment, and progress
- Attitudes, environment and access to any benefit, facility, or service

- Families, Governors, and community partnership, including Extended Services
- Staffing – recruitment, training, and professional development
- Pupil Voice and participation

At Solent Academies Trust we take positive steps to ensure the continued development of equal opportunities throughout the academies:

5.1 School Environment

The school sites are designed to ensure access for all, and physical resources are made available to allow full access to the curriculum as required, and to meet the needs of all our pupils.

There will always be sufficient staff on duty to ensure children are in a safe environment.

In the playgrounds, pupils will be encouraged to play together where appropriate. Our staff lead and model play activities to promote positive play and appropriate behaviour.

5.2 Learning

We organise and deliver a curriculum which ensures equal participation by pupils of both sexes and all gender identities in all the elements of learning, knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes.

We encourage positive attitudes towards everyone.

We celebrate racial and cultural diversity and plan the curriculum and its delivery to consider the ability, gender, ethnicity, background, and SEN of pupils.

We ensure our children are prepared to be included in society, regardless of their needs or disabilities.

There are pupils at our academies with different types of disabilities and these include:

- Severe or complex learning difficulties
- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Severe or complex needs
- Speech language and communication needs
- Hearing impairment
- Visual impairment
- Physical disabilities
- Complex medical conditions
- Social and emotional issues
- Mental Health issues

All children at Solent Academies Trust have Special Educational Needs and are supported by a statement or Education Health Care Plan.

We expect all staff to ensure that classes are an inclusive environment and that all contributions are valued Teachers ensure the tasks set meet the needs of all pupils with whom they are working.

Teachers communicate using a wide variety of methods and the academies constantly reflects on and improves its practices in this area.

Challenging, individually appropriate targets are set for all children to encourage them to learn as much as they can, progress as far as they can, and achieve the most that they can at a given time.

We aim to minimise the effect on pupils' learning of social and economic deprivation.

Our Trust has an inclusive approach to educational visits, and risk assessments are carried out beforehand to ensure full access for all pupils and staff.

We pay full attention to the physical needs of the children through the provision described in their Education, Health and Care Plans and medical policies.

5.3 Pupil Organisation

Across Solent Academies Trust we promote the 'Bubbles' ethos to support positive behaviour management. This activity is differentiated to the learning levels of the pupils in each class. Pupils access a range of specialist support in line with the Education, Health and Care Plans.

We prevent discrimination, harassment, or bullying based on the following 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We recognise that Marriage and Civil Partnership is a protected characteristic and would provide the same protections to a pupil aged 16 or over who entered a marriage or civil partnership.

All incidents of harassment or bullying are taken seriously and dealt with immediately by staff. Serious incidents are logged, outcomes agreed and reported to parents.

5.4 Resources

We deploy resources effectively and efficiently to ensure that all children receive appropriate support.

Playground and sporting equipment are supervised to ensure fair and equal access.

Equipment across the academies and in classrooms is selected to accommodate the needs of all children.

5.5 Staffing and Administration

We seek to ensure that our working environment is one that respects and includes everyone regardless of their gender or gender reassignment; marital status (including civil partnership); sex; sexual orientation; race, language, ethnic or national origins and nationality (including citizenship); religion or belief; disability and/or medical conditions; age; pregnancy or

maternity; whether they have dependants; trade union membership status and activity or political views/affiliations.

This policy provides employees with a clear statement about our Trust's commitment to promoting equality and diversity within employment.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating discrimination. We will do this by ensuring that our practices reflect relevant employment legislation and good practice. Our employment decisions are based upon job related, objective criteria. We are committed to having a workforce that reflects the diversity within our community where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The Staff Code of Conduct sets out how we expect staff, workers, and volunteers to behave toward one another, and ensures they understand the conduct expected and required of them.

We review recruitment and selection processes for potential discriminatory practice, and ensure that legislation and ACAS advice on employment issues, including staff disciplinary and dismissal procedures, is followed.

All teaching and support staff posts are non-gender specific. Employees of either sex or any gender are encouraged to work with all age groups and each Key Stage. All staff have equal access to in service training and posts of responsibility. All members of staff regularly review practices and approaches involving equal opportunity.

6. Employee Responsibilities

All employees, irrespective of their role, have a personal responsibility to comply with this policy and associated policies, and to abide by the Equality Act 2010, in dealing with each other, managing staff, and in their relationships with children, parents, carers, governors and other stakeholders.

In particular, employees, must not:

- discriminate against colleagues, other workers, job applicants, children, parents, carers, governors, or other stakeholders
- bully or harass colleagues, other workers, job applicants, children, parents, carers, governors, or other stakeholders
- encourage or try to encourage another person to treat others unfairly or to practice unlawful discrimination
- victimise people who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who have provided information about such discrimination

We will not tolerate any of the above behaviours. Where employees commit an act of unjustified or unlawful discrimination, or allow discrimination to occur without taking appropriate action, then they could be liable to a claim being brought against them as an individual, for example at an Employment Tribunal. The employee could also be liable to disciplinary action for a breach of the school's Code of Conduct.

7. Employer Commitment

Solent Academies Trust will carry out the following activities to demonstrate our commitment to Equality and Diversity, and also to fulfil our legal responsibilities:

7.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board and Governing bodies will:

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the academy, including to staff, pupils, and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years.

The Assistant Principals will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the Equality Policy amongst staff and pupils.

At Solent Academies Trust we believe that promoting equality is the responsibility of everyone in the Trust community. All staff, Trust Board, and Governors are responsible for ensuring the academies meets their duties under the Equality Act 2010. All staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the standards and principles outlined.

Solent Academies Trust has adopted the following principles:

- We recognise the value of diversity within the community, our workforce and our student body and the contribution made by people from different backgrounds

- We are committed to ensuring that teaching and learning meet the varied and complex needs of pupils in our care

- We will make sure our employment is accessible to everyone and that we actively value and celebrate the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures within the community

7.2 Our Commitment

Our commitment is supported by a legal duty to provide learning and employment opportunities fairly, without unlawful discrimination. We believe we have a strong moral and social duty to recognise any unlawful discrimination, take steps to challenge prejudice and discrimination and Solent Academies Trust will address the three main duties of the Equality Act in the following ways:

7.2.1 Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation

We give careful consideration to equality issues in everything that we do in our trust:

- Related policies that are in place include e-safety, behaviour, safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, assessment, and attendance.
- The Accessibility Plan is available and reviewed on an annual basis.
- Admission arrangements are followed and are non-discriminatory.
- Staff and governors have regular safeguarding and SEN training.
- School complaints procedures are followed.
- Non-discriminatory employment practice is adhered to.
- Staff codes of conduct, advice on appropriate behaviour and approaches within school reflect our commitment to equal opportunities.
- Our teaching targets each pupil's needs and there is training on differentiation and challenge with the teaching and learning policy. This is regularly discussed and updated, so that it is a working document.

- Strategies are employed, and resources targeted to support children/staff for whom English is an additional language.

7.2.2 Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Through academy analysis of data by year group, ethnicity, sex, and language.
- Through the effective use of data on inequalities of outcome and participation connected with ethnicity, gender, and disability.
- By collecting data and monitoring progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils, and by using this data to support school improvement, acting to close any gaps.
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensure we meet the needs of all pupils.
- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

7.2.3 Fostering good relations

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of our pupils.

- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, religion, gender, sexual identity, and disability, avoiding stereotyping.

- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

- We give due regard to equality issues when deciding our objectives for the School Strategic Plan.

- We review relevant feedback from the parent questionnaires and consultations, Parents/carers/carers-teacher meetings and other formal/informal feedback from Parents/carers/carers and carers.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Trust Board and Academy Committees will monitor and evaluate this policy every three years alongside all other related policies with a view to considering the impact of our main activities on people with protected characteristics.

We will take into consideration all available monitoring data to inform our evaluation of our success in this area.