

Equality & Diversity Policy

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Date to be reviewed: 01.09.2023

Introduction

This policy applies to all Academies across the Spencer Academies Trust (SAT), the Trust Central Team and Board of Directors. The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Policy is to define The Spencer Academies Trust's commitment to equality and diversity; to reaffirm our commitment to a common set of values and objectives, and to set out a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring Equality and Diversity goals within the Trust.

The Trust and its member academies are committed to promoting equality in both employment and education provision. We aim to ensure that students, parents, governors, employees, contractors, partners, clients and other stakeholders within the Trust community are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**).

The Trust is committed to ensuring individuals are treated fairly and decisions are based on objective criteria. This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with the Trust, including recruitment and selection, pay and conditions, family friendly leave, flexible working and leave of absence, training and development, professional performance reviews, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. This is not an exhaustive list, for more details see SAT employment policies <http://satrust.com/policies/>

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, leading by example and ensuring that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. All employees are expected to adhere to the principles and shared responsibilities set out in the Trust Employee Handbook, associated Code of Conduct and will undertake on-line training on equality, diversity and inclusion as part of their induction and on-going employment with the Trust. The Trust and our academies encourage the establishment of employee assistance and network groups.

This policy has been developed taking into account the guidance set out by ACAS on improving equality, diversity and inclusion. At SAT we are committed to being a disability confident employer.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, students, governors, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in all SAT academies and both in the workplace and outside the workplace; when dealing with colleagues, students, customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts identified as a SAT employee and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.

- **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

The Trust recognises that it is also unlawful to discriminate by association or perception, e.g. treating a student unfairly based on the Protected Characteristics of their parents or other family members. Please also see the SAT Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Equality Statement

The Spencer Academies Trust will ensure that equal opportunities and the principles of fairness underpin all aspects of policy, procedure, education provision, consultation and decision making.

We will provide high quality education services, making sure services are accessible without barrier or discrimination. We will improve what we do by continuing to consult with employees, students, parents and governors, their communities and partners about equalities issues. We will promote our equality and diversity policy in our contact with parents, employees, governors and external organisations.

Our employees, Directors and governors will recognise the importance of diversity and demonstrate a proactive approach in their day-to-day work. They will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, recognising special needs and understanding differences. Behaviour will reach our high standards of conduct (staff and students) and the learning environment we provide will be safe and accessible for all children, young people and adults who study or work within the Trust. Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments, or additional support, to ensure equality of access to an education and suitable working environment.

The Trust will adhere to statutory Government legislation and give consideration to other relevant guidance, which aim to make sure that everyone is treated with equity. We will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against members of the Trust community.

Employment

The Trust is committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to jobs, training, and professional development opportunities. All employment policies refer to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010. The Trust recognises that the Act extends beyond the protected characteristics of an individual employee and that employers have broader responsibilities to employees and situations that maybe covered by the Act.

All recruitment will be within the provisions of the Equalities Act, and applications will be monitored to report on recruitment activity, in line with the act. Age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment, but does not apply to students studying in Trust academies.

Employees who are in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the SAT disciplinary policy.

Student Provision

The Trust and its member academies will ensure that students are provided with appropriate support to recognise their individual needs. This includes protection under the Act extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students.

Contractors and Service Providers

The Trust will ensure that all service providers that are contracted to provide services to students, employees or visitors will comply with Equalities legislation.

Where services are deemed not to meet Trust standards, in relation to equal opportunities and fairness, contracts may be terminated.

Roles and responsibilities

Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring all Trust and academy practices follow the equality and diversity policy and meet statutory responsibilities with respect to equality.

Principals are responsible for:

- Providing consistent and high-profile leadership on equality and diversity
- Putting SAT equality and diversity policy and any local equality statements and objectives into practice at academy level
- Ensuring all employees know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out
- Following relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Employees are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- Actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination, related to protected characteristics perpetrated by students, colleagues or visitors
- Keeping up to date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training as appropriate.

Students are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their language and actions
- Obeying all of the Academy equality and diversity policies.

Complaints

The Trust will regard any complaints of unlawful (or potentially unlawful) discrimination as a potentially very serious matter. Any complaint will be investigated in accordance with the Trust grievance, anti-bullying or harassment or complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.

Breaches of this policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against employees who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.