



EQUALITY POLICY

Policy First Adopted February 2019

Reviewed Annually

Introduction

SBL Academy is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth. We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
6. We have the highest expectations of all our students. We expect that all students can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
7. We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity. Age and marriage and civil partnership are also “protected characteristics” but are not part of the school provisions related to students. This requires all public organisations, including schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Additionally schools must:

- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Development of the policy

This policy is part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing an inclusive school, When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards. We note that Ofsted has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Equality Objectives

In line with legislation we have produced the following equality objectives which will be reviewed in 2023:

1. To promote cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school and local communities.
2. To monitor and promote the involvement of all groups of students in the extra-curricular life of the school, including leadership opportunities, especially students with special educational needs.
3. To close gaps in attainment and achievement between students and all groups of students; especially boys and girls, disadvantaged students, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from different heritage groups.
4. To improve attendance of all groups of students, particularly students disadvantaged students, students with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and students from different heritage groups.

Links to other policies and documentation

The Equality Act applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our approach to recruitment.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our students and the way we provide access for students to facilities and services.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers. The Principal ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day-to-day life of the school. We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

- The school Policy on Behaviour takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for students with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns. Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying
- The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality: - prejudices around disability and special educational needs - prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum - prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes
- We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously. We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-

related incidents at our school and how we have dealt with them. We review this data regularly and take action to reduce incidents. What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups.

- We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.
- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our student admissions meetings.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement.
- We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age appropriate literacy and number skills.
- We collect, analyse and publish data: on the school population by gender and ethnicity; on the % of students identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability; by year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English; on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English
- We carry out an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage. We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups
- We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any students' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all students
- We provide support to students at risk of underachieving
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example: - disabled and non-disabled people - people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds - girls and boys

- We ensure equality of access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

Positive Action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support.

What we are doing to foster good relations

- We prepare our students for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and citizenship and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping. We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures. We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people
- We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act.

Intervention Board/Governing Body

The Intervention Board is currently responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and plans are implemented. This group monitors aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors regularly review the Equality Policy

Principal and Leadership team

The Principal is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all students
- support different groups of students in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work. We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy.

Equal Opportunities for staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and Reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy is available on the school website and paper copies by request. We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.