



**Aston Community  
Education Trust**

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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**POLICY LEAD:** Chief People Officer  
**APPROVED BY:** Trust Board



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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to define our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion – both in education for students and in employment for our staff. The policy applies to students/pupils, staff, parents/carers, trustees, governors, members, volunteers and any other person who may be considered part of the ACET community.

ACET is committed to advancing equality in an inclusive culture and promoting respect for difference and diversity through our vision, ethos and values. We aim to foster a sense of community in which all pupils/students and staff are equally valued and where everyone is treated with fairness and respect. Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated and we expect all members of our community to be committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination. The **Equality Act 2010** defines protected characteristics, which it is unlawful to discriminate against, as:

- Age (in a school environment, this does not apply to students/pupils, but does apply to employees/prospective employees and other adults)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including no religion or belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise that there may be other circumstances which extends beyond these protected characteristics under which a person may face inequality and seek to ensure no member of the ACET community experiences inequality on any basis.

## EQUALITY ACT 2010

ACET recognises and embraces the requirement to comply with the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, we must:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, through tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

## PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies, including ACET, to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, to publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty, and to set equality objectives.

As part of our commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion within the Trust, and in accordance with PSED, we will review and publish our objectives at least every four years, and we will publish progress towards our objectives annually. Objectives will be linked to the ACET Strategic Plan and/or individual Academy Improvement Plans, and will be informed by either data analysis or in consultation with students/pupils, staff, parents/carers and other members of our community.

In making any decisions on behalf of ACET, staff must be aware of and have due regard for the Public Sector Equality Duty, and ensure their decisions and actions are appropriate and do not disadvantage any particular group.

## DEFINITIONS OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Term	Definition
<b>Equality</b>	Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have a poorer life chance because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe or whether they have a disability.
<b>Diversity</b>	Diversity is defines as the existence of variations of different characteristics in a group of people. These characteristics could be everything that make us unique, such as our cognitive skills and personality traits, along with other things that shape our identity, (e.g race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation and cultural background).
<b>Inclusion</b>	Inclusion is providing a space where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources and where everyone feels valued and accepted. Everyone should be able to contribute and have a voice. This may mean making reasonable adjustments to facilitate participation.
<b>Unconscious bias</b>	A prejudice or unsupported judgement in favour of or against one person or group as compared to another in a way that is usually considered unfair. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Affinity bias</b> – Can lead people to prefer individuals they have a connection with</li> <li>- <b>Halo bias</b> – Can lead to people rating an individual more highly overall because they have one single characteristic or achievement</li> <li>- <b>Horns bias</b> - Can lead people to not consider an individual because of one quality that they don't like about them (opposite to Halo bias)</li> </ul>

## TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of a protected characteristic. The Equality Act makes it unlawful to treat someone differently, either through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation or by failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person. Discrimination may also occur intentionally or unintentionally. Definitions of different types of discrimination are below:

The Equality Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. These are defined below:

Discrimination Type	Definition
<b>Direct</b>	Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat (or would treat) other people. <i>An example of this might be if a student/pupil was not allowed to take part in an activity because of their sexual orientation.</i>
<b>Indirect</b>	When a condition, policy, rule or practice in an organisation applies for everybody but disadvantages a group of people who share protected characteristics, this is known as indirect discrimination. <i>An example of this might be holding a school event which clashes with a religious festival, which would make it difficult for staff/students/pupils with that religious belief to attend.</i>
<b>Harassment</b>	Harassment (in the Equality Act) is defined as unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. <i>This would include unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially could include actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.</i>
<b>Victimisation</b>	Victimisation occurs when one person treats another less favourably because he or she has asserted their legal rights in line with the Equality Act 2010 or has helped someone else to do so (known as “a protected act”). <i>A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information (this still applies whether or not the allegation was upheld). This is to ensure people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation.</i>

It is also unlawful to discriminate either by association or perception, definitions of which are below:

<b>Association</b>	Discrimination by association occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic. <i>An example of this might be if a white student/pupil was treated less favourably because she has a black boyfriend.</i>
<b>Perception</b>	Occurs when an individual is treated unfairly because it is believed they have a certain protected characteristic whether or not it is true. <i>For example, if a line manager treated an employee less favourably because the manager believes the employee is gay, they would be guilty of discriminating because of sexual orientation, whether or not the employee is in fact gay.</i>

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In ACET, all members of our community have a shared responsibility for promoting equality diversity and inclusion.

### Students/pupils are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their actions and language.
- Complying with academy policies.
- Recognising that they have a responsibility to promote equality, diversity, inclusion and good community relations.
- Reporting any prejudiced related incidents or discrimination that may occur.

### Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Being aware of and complying with this policy, including respecting others in their actions and language.
- Encouraging their child to comply with their responsibilities related to equality, diversion and inclusion.
- Taking an active role in the life of their child’s education and schooling, including, where possible, attending parents’ evenings, school events and celebrations.
- Ensuring that their child attends regularly and fully engages in their learning.
- Taking an active role in supporting academies in order to achieve our commitment given to our local communities that we serve in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.

### Visitors are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their actions and language.
- Following our expectations regarding equality, diversion and inclusion.
- Reporting any prejudiced related incidents or discrimination that may occur.

### Staff (including volunteers) are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity, avoiding unfair discrimination and putting the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy into practice.

- Challenging any perceived harassment, name-calling, bullying, threatening or hurtful behaviour (including physical and psychological).
- Actively responding to any incidents of discrimination by following the relevant procedures.
- Keeping up to date and complying with law pertaining to equality and participating in any training opportunities.

#### Principals and Leadership Teams are responsible for:

- Maintaining a consistent and high profile for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Identifying and investigating any patterns with regard to fixed term/permanent exclusions and poor attendance in respect of specific groups
- Addressing issues such as sexual or racial harassment, bullying, and hostile behaviour and ensuring that there are effective procedures for the reporting of and responding to such incidents.
- Ensuring that the performance of different groups of students/pupils is monitored and evaluated so that different needs of individuals is met.
- Providing Continuous Professional Development to raise awareness of differences in need, and to promote strategies to raise achievement in all students/pupils.
- Ensuring fair treatment and access to services and opportunities for all students/pupils and staff.
- Creating an environment which supports ethnic, cultural, religious and social diversity for our whole academy communities.

#### ACET Trustees and the CEO are responsible for:

- Ensuring all academies within the Trust comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- Taking appropriate actions to involve and engage ACET as a whole in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in setting objectives to address these.

## OUR COMMITMENT

### Student/pupil admissions and exclusions

- ACET admissions arrangements are fair and transparent for each academy and do not discriminate on any protected characteristic or on any socio-economic factors.
- Each academy has their own behaviour policy and exclusions are based on breaches of the specific policy. The Local Governing Body for each academy monitors all exclusions in order to avoid any adverse impact.

### Teaching and Learning

- We will ensure equality of access for all students/pupils and prepare them to make their contribution in a diverse society
- Each academy will use data to establish individual needs and to ensure we provide appropriate support for all children. This includes protection under the Equality Act 2010 extending to the reasonable adjustment duty to require academies to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students/pupils
- We will ensure that protection under the Equality Act 2010 is extended to students who are pregnant, have recently given birth or who are undergoing gender reassignment
- We will set challenging targets which will take account of achievement of all students/pupils



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- Teaching staff will use materials that will reflect the diversity of the local community
- All staff will promote attitudes and values which will challenge discriminatory behaviour and prejudice
- Teaching staff will provide opportunities for children to appreciate their own culture and that of other diverse cultures

### Recruitment and Selection of Staff

- All recruitment will be carried out in accordance with the Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy and we will appoint based on ability and merit
- We will ensure that the shortlisting of candidates is undertaken by more than one person and a shortlisting pro forma will be completed to record reasons for selection
- All applicants will be asked to complete a (voluntary) equal opportunities pro forma as part of their application. This data will be separated from the application form and will be used for monitoring purposes only and will play no part in the selection process.

### Employer Duties

ACET will actively promote equality across its workforce by:

- An ongoing commitment to Continuous Professional Development for all staff identified through the appraisal processes for both teaching and support staff
- Ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Monitoring performance for pay and career advancement decisions
- Monitoring and taking appropriate action for any potential bullying or harassment of staff
- Complying with its own policies as listed in section
- Ensuring any career advancement decisions are based on merit, ability and compliance with the law
- Ensuring employee terms and conditions to ensure these are fair for all
- Ensuring redundancy criteria is applied in accordance with the ACET Redundancy Policy
- Ensuring any staff subject to a disciplinary process are treated fairly and without discrimination in line with the ACET Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Routinely monitoring ACET premises to ensure aspects do not place disabled employees or future employees at disadvantage or risk.
- Ensuring that we carry out our duty in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (disability section).

### Community

All ACET academies seek to:

- Promote understanding and engagement within local communities
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of its local community
- Tackle discriminatory behaviour
- Understand and respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities
- Increase life opportunities for all
- Ensure that learning, teaching and the curriculum explore and address issues of diversity.

## MONITORING, REVIEWING AND ASSESSING IMPACT

This policy along with PSED objectives will be monitored and reviewed by ACET staff, trustees and LGBs. Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that the policy is effective in eliminating any discriminatory behaviour. Any patterns of inequality found as a result of impact assessment will be used to inform decision making and future planning.

## COMPLAINTS

ACET will take seriously all complaints of unlawful or potentially unlawful discrimination. Any complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Grievance, Dignity at Work, Disciplinary, Complaints or Whistleblowing Policy, whichever is appropriate. Any breaches of this policy should be reported to the academy Principal, HR or CEO, whichever is most appropriate.

## LEGISLATION

This policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010, and also relates to the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (School Performance Information – England) Regulations 2007
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Education Act 2011
- School Admissions Regulations 2012
- Nationality and Immigration Act 2006
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to other ACET policies, in particular:

- Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy
- Safer Recruitment (including the recruitment of ex-offenders) Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour and Rewards Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Grievance/Dignity at Work Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Parent/Carer/Visitor Code of Conduct Policy