



Thinking Schools Academy Trust
“Transforming Life Chances”

Thinking Schools Academy Trust

Equality Policy

Paignton Academy

This policy was adopted on	November 2024
The policy is to be reviewed on	November 2029

1. Introduction

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust (The Trust) is committed to ensuring that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups whilst having an inclusive approach and focus on the wellbeing and progress of every child. We aim to ensure that students, parents, governors, employees, contractors, partners, clients and those who may potentially join the Trust community, are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect.

The trust is committed to being an inclusive educator and employer by enabling all students and employees, to utilise the same facilities, take part in the same activities and experiences, regardless of whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation.

The Trust believes that the Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people.

2. Equality Statement

In accordance with Trust and Academy ethos and values we respect the equal human rights of all our students, educate them about equality and respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the school community.

Where appropriate we assess ("Equality Impact Assessment" – appendix 1) specific projects or processes and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to religion or belief, socio-economic background, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity

We promote community cohesion at Academy, local, national and global levels, comparing our school community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to ethnicity, religion or belief, and socio-economic background.

3. Policy & Scope

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 and employees or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. Age, marriage and civil partnership are also "protected characteristics" and relevant to employees but are not part of the school provisions related to students.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. All organisations have a statutory obligation and a regulatory requirement to be inclusive. The Trust has a moral obligation to embed a diverse and inclusive culture for all our students and Employees. The trust operates on principles of fairness, transparency and equality of all opportunities for all students and Employees.

This Policy sets out how the Trust and its schools meet the two specific duties within the “Equality Act.”

The Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
 - Foster good relations between different groups
- Our schools to publish information to show compliance with equality duty
- Our schools to publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years, which are specific and measurable.

4. Thinking Schools Academy Trust 6 Principles

The Trust’s 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, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation
- 2 **We recognise and respect diversity**
 - Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
 - Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
 - Gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men and any other gender identities are recognised.
- 3 **We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**
 - Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
 - Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice- related bullying and incidents
 - Mutual respect and good relations between boys, girls, women, men, and any other gender identities and an absence of sexual harassment
- 4 **Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:**
Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation
- 5 **We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist, and take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:**
 - Disabled and non-disabled people
 - People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
 - Girls, boys, women, men, any other gender identities and LGBTQ+

6 We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled
- People of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Both women and men, girls and boys, any other gender identities and LGBTQ+

5. Responsibilities

The Trust Governing Body are responsible for:

- Making sure the Academies/Schools follow all of its equality and diversity policies and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality.
- Recognising the importance of inclusion and having an inclusive school
- Having an understanding of unconscious bias and how it might appear in a school
- Ensure inclusion is embedded within their own practice
- Improvement and development of their own self-awareness and ways to mitigate bias in their own behaviours

The Head teacher/Principal/Line Manager is responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on equality and diversity
- Putting the Trust's equality policy into practice
- Ensuring that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out
- Following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- Improvement and development of their own self-awareness and ways to mitigate bias in their own behaviours

All staff 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, other staff or visitors.
- Keeping up to date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training.
- Complaints from parents, students and the community will be dealt with in line with the academy's complaints procedure, and as such appropriate staff will deal with the relevant stage of the complaint.
- Improvement and development of their own self-awareness and ways to mitigate bias in their own behaviours

Students are responsible for:

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

6. Action Paignton Academy is taking to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and Foster good relations between different groups

a) Students' attainment and progress

The Academy aims to change life chances. Staff have high expectations of all students and

continually challenges them to reach their potential and beyond. Every student's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of ability, gender, social background, ethnicity, disability, special educational need and looked-after status.

In addition to monitoring, to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the Academy meets its duty to positively promote diversity. For example, lesson plans record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity. The data collected is used to inform the Academy improvement plan, target-setting and decision-making.

b) The quality of provision - teaching and learning

Students are primarily encouraged to become responsible for their own learning. Teaching is responsive to students' different learning styles in order to engage all students and all classroom based staff ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel all contributions are valued.

Teaching styles may include collaborative learning so that students appreciate the value of working together. All students are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks, student grouping in the classroom is planned and varied to develop these skills.

The Academy support students who are bilingual, or for whom English is not their first language using adapted resources including technology. Students with additional needs are supported using differentiated activities which reflect student abilities.

All staff challenge stereotypes and foster students' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities

Resources and displays reflect the diversity within school and are reviewed regularly to ensure they echo the inclusive ethos of the Academy.

c) The quality of provision - curriculum and other activities

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and diversity in order to promote positive attitudes. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of the students.

The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages students to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes. Choice of literature and text should highlight the diversity and the local community. The materials and programmes of study in each department should reflect and value the Academy equalities policy. For example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability.

This curriculum builds on student starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- Students of all gender identities
- Students of any sexual orientation
- Students with English as an additional language
- Students from minority ethnic groups
- Students with SEN and/or a disability
- Students who are looked after children/previously looked after children
- Students at risk of disaffection, exclusion or NEET

Extra-curricular activities and special events e.g. school productions, cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental preferences related to religion and culture.

d) The quality of provision – guidance and support

Students are prepared for life in a diverse society and the Academy ensures that there are a range of activities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students. Good personal and community relations are recognised and diversity is seen as having a positive role to play within the Academy.

Students are taught about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, citizenship and across the curriculum. Materials and resources are used that reflect the diversity of the Academy, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.

Positive messages about equality and diversity are demonstrated through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events such as Black History Month, LGBT History Month and Anti-bullying week.

Staff challenge stereotypes and foster student's critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

Pastoral support takes account of religious, cultural and ethnic differences, special educational needs, disability and gender. Any victims of harassment and bullying are given appropriate support.

Outside agencies must also demonstrate their commitment to equality, including disability, gender and race equality.

e) Behaviour and Attendance

Students are encouraged to become independent and to take responsibility for their own conduct, the Academy sets high expectations of all students with regard to behaviour and attendance.

The Academy promotes a whole school ethos that challenges prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour. Language or behaviour, which is racist, sexist, Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic (HBT) or potentially damaging to any minority group, will not be tolerated. In addition, derogatory and offensive language towards others with SEN or those who are disabled will also be challenged.

All forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism and HBT, are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with the Academy's behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Students, staff and parents are aware of these procedures and all staff operate consistent system of rewards and sanctions.

Adults in school take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations of all students.

Attendance is analysed by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and socio-economic group (e.g. Pupil Premium). Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of students.

Leave of absence for religious observance is offered, for staff as well as students.

The Academy fully supports children with long-term medical needs who may have irregular attendance because of their condition.

f) Partnership with students, parents, carers and the wider community

The Academy communicates effectively with children, young people, colleagues, parents and carers and provides timely, accurate and constructive feedback on learners' attainment,

progress and areas for development. Progress reports to parents/carers are clearly written and free from jargon to encourage parents to participate in their child's education..

The Academy has a commitment to collaboration and cooperative working. It recognises and respects the contribution that the community, parents and carers can make to the development and well-being of children and young people, and to raising their levels of attainment. When necessary, the Academy works in partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to difference.

Parents are fully involved in the co-production process for their child with special educational needs, understand the purpose of any intervention or programme of action, and are informed about available support organisations when SEN is identified.

The Academy's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community.

g) Leadership and management

Admission arrangements are fair and transparent, and the Academy does not discriminate.

The Academy is aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students and does not discriminate against a disabled student in the arrangements it makes for determining admission.

Students with already identified special educational needs are admitted. Students with EHC plans will also be admitted unless it is demonstrated that the student's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

Comprehensive information about student's ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc. is included in admissions forms and gathered at admissions interview.

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equitable and in line with statutory duties.

We welcome people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school and ensure recruitment and selection processes are monitored. Equality and diversity issues are reflected in our school's employment practices.

The Academy expects all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities, meeting the requirements of the Equality Act, and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it. The Academy will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this. Equality is incorporated in the induction programme for new staff.

Everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy.

7. Paignton Academy Equality Objectives

Objectives – what will be done	Strategies – How are we going to do it	Led by	Evidence of Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to close the gap on national average for White British students (particularly boys) making expected levels of progress in subjects • Continue to close the gap between SEN Support (K), EHCP (E) and non-SEN students and the expected progress they make based on their attainment on entry • Continue to close the in-school variation gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students who make expected levels of progress at the end of each key stage • Improve understanding of the importance of equality and equity within our society and throughout the whole school community. 	<p>Use of regular Assessment Data to scrutinise performance of different groups throughout the year. SLT, CTLs, SENCOs and HOHs to use this data to develop strategies for meeting equality gaps within class.</p> <p>Appropriate interventions to be implemented.</p> <p>Through the PSHE curriculum, tutor activities and assembly programme, and through communications with parents.</p> <p>Regular attention to equality related issues during staff CPD.</p> <p>Monitoring of equality and equity within the classroom by SLT, HoDs and HoYs</p> <p>Ensuring equality of opportunities at all times.</p>	<p>SLT, SENCO, CTLs, HOHs</p>	<p>Data shows that no differences in progress can be attributed to reasons of inequality</p> <p>An environment in which pupils feel safe, and in which bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexual violence – online or offline – are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently and effectively whenever they occur. Therefore, Incidents involving intolerance or prejudicial behaviour are rare.</p>

8. Eliminating 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, services, trips and visits.
- 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.
- We ensure 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 ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day- to-day operations of our schools/academy's.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all, working together and the need for all to embrace diversity.
- 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.
- We are committed to training our managers and all other employees regarding their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help the Trust provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

9. Breaches of this policy

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.

10. Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the approach outlined in this policy underpins all decision making in relation to our academy/school transformation plans, policy reviews, self-evaluation, the academy/school prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references to equalities in the behaviour, attendance, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies, as well as minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and the student councils.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the ways we comply with this are found in all our related HR policies.

11. Monitoring and review of the policy

This policy is reviewed annually by the Human Resources Department to ensure it is achieving its objectives. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved.

Monitoring will also include reviewing the make-up of the workforce and assessing how this policy is working in practice and considering any action to take to address issues that may arise.