



## **Equality Information and Objectives Policy**

**May 2024**

<b>Approved by:</b>	AST Trust Board	<b>Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
<b>Last Reviewed on:</b>	May 2024	
<b>Next Review Due by:</b>	May 2025	

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## **1. Statement of Intent**

Aspire Schools Trust (the Trust) recognises that certain groups in society can be disadvantaged because of unlawful discrimination they may face due to their race, sex, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, or pregnancy and maternity.

The Trust (and each of its schools) has a statutory duty to publish an Equality Information and Objectives Statement.

## **2. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives)
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

This policy also has due regard for non-statutory guidance, including the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and Schools'

The Equality Act 2010 provides a modern, single legal framework with three broad duties:

- Eliminate discrimination harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

For the purpose of this policy, the Equality Act 2010 will be referred to as 'the Act'. The Trust fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected

characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities. Protected characteristics, under the Act, are as follows:

- Age
- Disability which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

The liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left their school within the Trust, but will apply to subsequent actions connected to the previous relationship between school and pupil, such as the provision of references on former pupils or access to former pupils' communications and activities.

The Trust will promote equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants and will work in line with our established employment policies and current legislation.

This policy is also reflective of Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and Trusts](#).

This policy complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association as an Academy Trust.

### **3. Aims**

Our Trust aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- 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

Our Trust aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our values by ensuring that children come first in all of our schools and that pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, governors and visitors are treated equitably, with dignity and respect at all times.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Trust Board will:

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the Trust, including to staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives – produced by individual Trust Schools - are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher in each Trust school

The headteacher in each school will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to Local Governors

Where Trust schools have a designated member of staff for equality, they will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

All Trust staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve its over-arching objectives at all times.

#### **5. Eliminating Discrimination**

The Trust and its schools are aware of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and comply with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and Trustees/Governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every two years.

The Trust has a designated member of staff (Trust HR Officer) for monitoring equality issues. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make Trust and school senior leaders and Trustees/Governors aware of these as appropriate.

## **6. Advancing Equality of Opportunity**

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the Trust and its schools aim to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils or staff with disabilities, or LGBTQ+ pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying, etc)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils or staff to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school clubs, societies, visits or sporting activities)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the Trust's schools will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

## **7. Fostering Good Relations**

The Trust and its schools aim to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHCE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/Reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local communities. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around local communities
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within Trust schools. For example, school councils have representatives from different year groups and are

formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures and traditions

- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

## **8. Equality Considerations in Decision-Making**

The Trust and its schools ensure due regard is paid to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The Trust's schools will always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school visit or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the visit:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

Each school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show they have actively considered their equality duties and asked themselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning Trust trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

## **9. Equality Objectives**

Equality Objectives are specific to individual schools in our Trust and can be found on their respective websites.

## **10. Monitoring Arrangements**

The Trust will update the equality information we publish, at least every year. Schools will regularly review the appropriateness and challenge of their school-level Equality Objectives.

This document will be reviewed and approved by the Trust Board at least every four years.

## **11. Links with Other Policies**

This document links to the following Trust and school policies:

- AST Dignity at Work Policy
- AST Grievance Policy
- AST Staff Code of Conduct
- AST Staff Disciplinary Policy
- AST Parental Leave (and Shared Parental Leave) Policies



- AST Maternity Policy
- AST Inclusion Policy
- AST SEND Policy
- School Accessibility Plans
- School-level Risk Assessments
- School Behaviour Policies
- School Anti-Bullying Policies