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## EQUALITY STATEMENT AND SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (PUBLIC)

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Policy Reviewed and Adopted by Board of Trustees

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Responsible Officer: CEO

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## I. Our Academy Trust

### I.1 Statutory Duty

At VISION Academy Learning Trust we are committed to fulfilling our statutory duty to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

I.2 Vision schools value the individuality of all students and staff. We are committed to giving all individuals every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of students and staffs varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all individuals. This policy is intended to help to ensure that as Trust we promote equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender or background.

I.3 This policy reflects the Equality Act 2010 which replaces all previous legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

I.4 At VISION Academy Learning Trust we recognise our legal obligation to ensure that individuals who have one of the following protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are not discriminated against;

- Age;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Religion or belief;
- Gender reassignment;
- Sex;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Sexual orientation.
- Pregnancy and maternity;

I.5 This includes direct discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation (**Appendix I**) .

I.6 We also welcome the following general duties contained within the Equalities Act 2010 to;

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

I.7 In order to meet our general duties under The Equality Act 2010, the law requires us to comply with certain specific duties. These are to publish;

- Equality Information,
- Our Equality Objectives,

and to monitor, and report upon these.

1.8 To achieve this we will collect and analyse data related to the protected characteristics to determine the focus of our equality objectives and in order to carry out our general statutory duties. This will include data on;

- Admissions.
- Attendance.
- Attainment and Progress.
- Exclusions.
- Prejudice related incidents.
- Participation.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The 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

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

### 3.1 Promoting Equality: Curriculum

We aim to provide all our students and staff with the opportunity to succeed and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To achieve this we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- The curriculum prepares students for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of students and families in the academy;
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;
- The promotion of attitudes and values that challenge discriminatory behaviour and language;
- The use of non-stereotyped materials which reflect accurately a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

### 3.2 Promoting Equality: Achievement

There is a consistently high expectation of all students regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, social background and sexual orientation. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- Adults within the academy trust will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the academy trust and our schools to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement;
- It is important to place a high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability;
- A range of teaching methods need to be used throughout our schools to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all students and which promote students engagement so that students are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning.

### 3.3 Promoting Equality: Ethos and Values

At VISION Academy Learning Trust, we are aware that those involved in school leadership are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community so that:

- There should be a feeling of openness and tolerance which welcomes everyone to our schools;
- The displays around our schools are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for students, staff and visitors (including parents) with disabilities;
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all students through planning of both assemblies, classroom based and off site activities;
- Students are given an effective voice, for example through the Councils/ forums/questionnaires and through student perception surveys which regularly seek their views;
- Positive role models are used throughout our schools to ensure that different groups of students can see themselves reflected in the academy community.

### 3.4 Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- All posts are advertised formally
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure good equality practice through the recruitment and selection process;
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds;
- Equalities policy and practice is covered in all staff inductions;
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed annually to check conformity with legislation and impact.

### 3.5 Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

- Our schools counter and challenge all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, students, parents and governors;
- Our schools have a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and has a nominated member of staff who is responsible for recording and monitoring incidents

### 3.6 Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers to:

- Ensure parents/carers from all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the full life of our schools;
- Ensure that there are good channels of communication, e.g. parent forums, to ensure parents' views are captured and acted upon;
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;
- Ensure that the parents/carers of newly arrived pupils e.g. EAL, Traveller or pupils with disabilities are made to feel welcome

### 3.7. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. individuals with disabilities, or gay individuals who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- 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 societies)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data 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

### 3.8. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

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

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

### 3.9 Responsibilities

At VISION Academy Learning Trust, all members of the trust community have a responsibility for the promotion of equalities.

### 3.10 The Academy Board and Local Governing Body

**The Academy Board and Local Governing Body** has responsibility for ensuring that:

- Our schools comply with all equalities legislation relevant to the academy trust community;
- Our equality policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality schemes are easily identifiable;
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;

### 3.11 The CEO, Head Teachers and Senior Leadership Teams has responsibility for:

- Providing leadership and vision in respect of equality in partnership with the Trust Board and Local Governing body;
- Overseeing the implementation of the equality policy and schemes;
- Coordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;

Ensuring that all who enter our schools are aware of, and comply with, the equalities policy;

- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to racist incidents, discrimination against persons with a disability and sexual harassment and discrimination.

### 3.12 All staff

All staff within the trust have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Trust equalities policy and schemes;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation or other equality issues;
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation by attending training events organised by our schools.

### 3.13 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the CEO, Head Teachers and the Senior Leadership Team to monitor the effectiveness of this policy;

- Providing training and updates on equalities legislation and the Trusts' responsibilities in this regard
- Ensuring students are given opportunities to voice their opinions on equalities matters and help shape school policies.
- Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on students from different groups, in the following areas:
  - Pupils' progress and attainment
  - Learning and teaching
  - Behaviour discipline and exclusions
  - Attendance
  - Admissions
  - Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
  - Parental involvement
  - Participation in extra-curricular and extended academy activities

- Staff recruitment and retention
- Visits and visitors

#### 4. Eliminating discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

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

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings and in the staff handbook.

#### 5. Fostering good relations

The school aims 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 (PSHE) 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 community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

#### 6. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Risk assessment



## Appendix I Types of Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 extends the scope of conduct prohibited in relation to the protected characteristics. The following provides an overview of what is included within the legislation.

### Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

### Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when a condition, rule, policy or even a practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

### Harassment

Harassment is 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant 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'. Protection includes harassment because of perception and association.

### Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. A person is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need to compare treatment of a complainant with that of a person who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act.

### Discrimination by Association

This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

### Discrimination by Perception

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### Third Party harassment

The Equality Act makes an organisation potentially liable for harassment of their employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of the company, such as visitors or parents. The organisation will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, and they are aware that it has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again