



## **EQUALITY POLICY**

Date approved: November 2016

Date of review: November 2019

**Signed on behalf of the Governors:** .....Date

All Settlebeck Policies are statutory & regularly reviewed by the Policies Committee of the Governing Body. HR policies will be additionally updated in the light of any amendments recommended by South Lakes Federation Schools following Trade Union consultation.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it from time to time.

# EQUALITY POLICY

## 1. Introduction

The Settlebeck Academy Trust is an inclusive community where we focus on the well-being, development and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe 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. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

Equality supports good education, improves student outcomes and raises standards.

## 2. Our approach to equality is based on the following seven key principles:

1. **All staff are of equal value**, whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, race, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, and whatever their sexual orientation.
2. **We recognise, 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, race, gender, religion, belief or faith, sexual orientation, age and all the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. 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 academy communities to feel a sense of belonging within the Trust 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.

## 3. 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 the Trust 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 education provisions related to students.

The Act requires all public organisations, including the Trust to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty

#### **4. The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty”**

This requires all public organisations, including academies to

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other discriminatory conduct  
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups  
Foster good relations between different groups

In doing so, the Trust will aim to remove or minimise disadvantage, to take all steps that we can to meet people’s different needs, and to encourage participation, particularly among those who might not participate.

This policy describes how the Trust is meeting these statutory duties. It includes information about how the Trust is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

**Appendix I** shows the Trust’s Equality Objectives and Action Plan

#### **5. Development of the policy**

This policy will be developed further in consultation with students, staff, governors, directors and members and parents and carers. It is part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing an inclusive school environment.

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.

#### **6. 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, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our Trust and academy development plans, self-evaluation review, the Trust prospectus, Trust web site and newsletters.

There are also links with the Behaviour, Admissions, SEN and Anti-bullying Policies as well as minutes of meetings involving Trust directors, governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and school council.

The Equality Act also applies to the Trust in its role as employer, and there are links to our Recruitment Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Health and Safety, E-Safety and Acceptable Use policies.

#### **7. What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students and staff. We aim to enhance access and encourage participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled students being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Headteacher of each academy and the Trust ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to recruitment, employment, promotion or training opportunities. We monitor recruitment and retention.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

We train our staff to help them understand their equality duties and the different needs of protected characteristic groups.

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

## **8. Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance**

The Trust 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.

## **9. Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying**

The Trust 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
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

We challenge stereotypes and foster students' critical awareness and concept of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities. We treat all bullying incidents seriously.

The Leadership Team keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the Board about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at the Trust and how we dealt with them. They review this data termly and take action to prevent, reduce and eliminate incidents.

We seek to involve parents and carers in the education of the students.

## **10. 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 transition programme and 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 record data in accordance with DfE requirements:

on the school population by gender and ethnicity;  
on the percentage 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  
Pupil Premium & non Pupil Premium  
Vulnerable groups such as looked after children.

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups

We are aware that the legislation relates not only to current but also to students applying for admission.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any students' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners.

We use a range of targeted teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all students.

We provide targeted 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 possible.

We are also implementing an Accessibility Plan designed to increase the extent to which students with disability can participate in the curriculum, improve the physical environment and improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

We monitor recruitment and retention of staff to try to ensure a diverse workforce. We invest in continuing professional development opportunities for all staff.

## **11. 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. The actions will be designed to meet the Trust's Equality Objectives.

## **12. 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 academy, 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 eg World Book Day, World Food.

We include Equalities matters in our newsletters to parents and carers.

### **13. Other ways we address equality issues**

We maintain records of all training relating to equality.

Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of equality.

We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed.

We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of the Trust policies in relation to equality and their impact on the progress, safety and well-being of our students and staff.

The equality implications of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equality meets the needs of the whole school community we:

review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires, parents' evening, parent-school forum and/or focus meetings or Trust parent-consultation meeting

secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events

review feedback and responses from the students and groups of students, from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole academy surveys on students' attitudes to self and the academy (PASS);

analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Action Plans, mentoring and support;

ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body and Trust meetings and from the Trust's working groups.

### **14. Publishing Equality Objectives (see Equality Action Plan/ School Development Plan)**

The objectives which we identify represent the Trust's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duty by the extent to which we **achieve improved outcomes** for the different groups. We produce equality data analysis which inform our discussions about the Equality Objectives we set.

We produce an Equality Action Plan that shows how we will achieve our objectives. This is part of our school development/improvement plan.

## **15. Monitoring and reviewing objectives**

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the Trust on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, students, governors and parents and carers.

We publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives for parents and carers, on the Trust website.

## **16. Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all staff of the Trust and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

### **The Board of the Trust**

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the Board has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every Trust or academy committee keeps aspects of the Trust's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. The Board annually reviews the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the Trust's equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys)

### **Headteacher and Leadership team**

The Headteacher 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 Trust's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of achievement 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 and attend training
- support this policy.

We will provide guidance on equality for all staff new to the Trust as part of the induction procedure.

### **Visitors**

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

## **17. Key contacts**

Staff responsible for equalities:

Senior Management - Headteacher

Equality governor Myles Ripley

Safeguarding Governor Myles Ripley

## **18. 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 diversity of the staffing of the Trust's academies 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 and comply where reasonably practicable 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.

## **19. Monitoring and reviewing the policy**

We review the information about equality in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves students, staff, governors, Trust members and parents and carers.

## **20. Disseminating the policy**

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available on the Trust website as paper copies on request in the Trust or academy's office

We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and this could be through the school or Trust newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the Trust's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.



**(EACH SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE EQUALITY OBJECTIVES BY LAW WHICH ARE PUBLISHED ON THE WEBSITE)**

**APPENDIX ONE**

**EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2016 -17 (including accessibility plan)**

| <b>Sector Equality Duty</b>                                     | <b>Equality Objectives</b>                        | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>How will the impact of the action be monitored?</b>                    | <b>Who is responsible?</b>                            | <b>Time Frames</b>                             | <b>Progress commentary</b> |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>   | Ensure the Counter Bullying Policy is implemented | Staff to sign to indicate that they have read and understand this             | Link visits to enquire about implementation.<br><br>Headteacher to report | All governors<br><br>Headteacher                      | Spring 2017<br><br>Summer 2017                 |                            |
| <b>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</b> | Monitor the performance of different groups       | Governors to engage with data and its' implications                           | Link visits to enquire<br><br>Heateacher and Data Lead to report          | All governors<br><br>Karen Grant<br>Alan Dickinson    | November 2016<br><br>October 2017 and annually |                            |
| <b>Accessibility – premises</b>                                 | Audit access and act on information               | Undertake Health and Safety Audit with reference to physical and other access | Involve external consultant in audit and report                           | Kym Allan<br>Site Manager<br>Paul Beach<br>David Hunt | December 16                                    |                            |