



Equalities Policy

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1. Policy Aim

1.1 At Birches Head Academy, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers receiving services from within school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to Birches Head Academy feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in life at our academy. The achievement of students will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Birches Head Academy everyone is treated equally and fairly, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

2. Relationship to Guidelines, Procedures, Other Policies & Legal Requirements

2.1 We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

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

We understand the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity. A protected characteristic under the Act covers the groups listed below:

- Age (for employees not for service provision).
- Disability.
- Race.
- Sex (including issues of transgender).
- Gender reassignment.
- Maternity and pregnancy.
- Religion and belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Marriage and civil partnership (for employees).

In advancing equality of opportunity:

- We aim to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- We aim to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- We encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In order to meet our general duties, listed above, the law requires us to do some specific duties to demonstrate how we meet the general duties. These are to:

- Publish equality information – to demonstrate compliance with the general duty across its functions (we will not publish any information that can specifically identify any child).
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

To do this we will collect data related to the protected characteristics above and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across our core provisions. This will include the following functions:

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

Our objectives will detail how we will ensure equality is applied to the functions listed above. However, where we find evidence that other functions have a significant impact on any particular group, we will include work in this area.

We use evaluation and data collection to inform our decision-making and assess the impact on equality of our decision-making, policies and practices. We also welcome our duty under the Education Act 2011 to demonstrate how the education we provide meets the needs of the range of students within our Academy.

2.2 In fulfilling our legal obligations we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity.
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging.
- Tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people from different groups.
- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development and procurement.
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers.
- Consult and involve widely.
- Strive to ensure that the communities within, around and beyond the Alpha Academies Trust will benefit.
- Follow guidance from the Local Authority, HR Department on equality in recruitment, selection and employment.
- Use the Academy complaints procedure initially to deal with any complaints under the Equality Act 2010, use the Questions Procedure and, for any complaints not resolved internally, use the Local Authority complaints procedure.

3. Policy Statements

3.1 Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice – as well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the Academy operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways:

Teaching and Learning – we aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students.
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps.

- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the Academy, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice.
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education.
- Encourage classroom and staff room discussion of equality issues, which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning.
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the Academy population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students.

Admissions and Exclusions – Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the Academy's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

3.2 Access Arrangements

Birches Head Academy adheres to the definitions in relation to access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, disability, special educational needs and learning difficulties as agreed by the JCQ awarding bodies and the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB).

In line with JCQ regulations, we will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon:

☐ Whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working within school – demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement.

3.3 Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010* requires **an awarding body** to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a **substantial disadvantage** in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille.

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; **and**
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not “reasonable”.

In most cases it will not be reasonable for adjustments to be made to assessment objectives within a qualification. To do so would likely undermine the effectiveness of the qualification in providing a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the candidate. There is no duty to make adjustments which the qualifications regulators have specified should not be made.

3.4 Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Birches Head Academy. 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, however concerned to ensure that wherever possible the staffing at Birches Head Academy reflects the diversity of our community.

3.5 Employer Duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

3.6 Equality and the Law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every academy in line with legislation from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Disability Equality Duty (2005) and Equality Act (2006).

The action plan at the end of this Equality Plan outlines the actions Birches Head Academy will take to meet the general duties detailed below.

3.7 Race Equality

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Plan which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this plan, on students, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these students;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such students, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

3.8 Disability

Definition of disability – the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;

- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties – The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this scheme every three years.

3.9 Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on academies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this scheme every three years.

3.10 Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30th April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

3.11 Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the Board of Trustees/ Governing Bodies of state schools/academies to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1st September 2007.

3.12 Consultation and Involvement – it is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, students and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings/INSET.
- Feedback from each PSCHE Days.
- Parental feedback and questionnaires
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans, Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support.
- Feedback at Governing Body meetings.

3.13 The Role of all Staff – Teaching & Non-Teaching

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the Alpha Academies Trust's Equality Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Chief Executive.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

3.14 Tackling Discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the environment at Birches Head Academy.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/chair of governors where necessary.

All

incidents are reported to the Head teacher and racist incidents are reported to the Local Authority on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident? - Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender.
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes.
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia.
- Bringing discriminatory material into the Alpha Academies Trust.
- Verbal abuse and threats.
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion.
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups.
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

3.15 Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole at Birches Head Academy.

Incident

Member of staff to investigate further (if incident reported) or challenge behaviour immediately

Response to victim and family

Response to perpetrator and family

Incident form to be completed and filed.

Incidents to be reported to the Head Teacher/Chair of Governors and Local Authority on a termly basis.

Action taken to address issue with year group/each academy if necessary e.g. through circle time / assembly

3.16 Review of Progress & Impact

We have a rolling programme for reviewing our policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three-year cycle.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

3.19 Publishing the Plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

- Publish our plan on the academy website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through newsletters, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

This policy applies to all staff. Unless otherwise indicated the following terms are interchangeable:

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed within a 3-year cycle, and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be made to the Governors.

4 Approval

Approved by the Chief Executive

Signed: