



Horizons Specialist Academy Trust
Providing infinite opportunities

Horizons Specialist Academy Trust Equality and Diversity Policy

Reviewed and Adopted by Resources & Audit & Risk Committee: 3 December 2024

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2027

Responsible Officer: CEO / HR Manager

Introduction

This Equality and Diversity Policy is the Trust's response to the specific and general duties in the current legislation. It demonstrates how, as a Trust, we are systematically establishing and implementing good practice in equality and diversity across all areas of Trust life. Horizons Specialist Academy Trust is an inclusive organisation which focuses on the well-being and progress of every young person and where all members of our community are viewed as being of equal worth.

The Trust is aware of its responsibility in relation to the requirements under the Equality Act 2010:

- The Trust promotes and encourages equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination, harassment or victimisation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Trust aims to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are never subject to unlawful or unfair discrimination on any grounds. This may include reference to their gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief.
- The Trust will work within the recommendations in the Code of Practice of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights to ensure that statutory requirements and the principles of equal opportunities are incorporated into policies, procedures, practices and strategies in the best possible way.
- Equal Opportunities is not a stand-alone policy as it is relevant to several different areas of the services that the Trust provides. This policy will be referred to in other policies as appropriate.
- To ensure that this commitment is put into practice, the Trust will adopt and review positive measures that seek to eliminate discrimination to ensure that all individuals are treated according to their specific needs or requirements.
- The Trust will encourage any organisation that it may work with to work with equal opportunities best practice guidelines to ensure legislative compliance.

The Trust's approach to equality and diversity is based on the following 7 key principles:

- 1. All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- 2. Respect is recognised, difference valued, and diversity understood as a strength.** Differences are taken account of; and barriers and disadvantages – whether in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith, and sexual orientation – are the objects of challenge and removal. Diversity is viewed as a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn in, work in, and visit a Trust academy.
- 3. Positive attitudes and relationships are fostered.** Positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other are actively promoted.
- 4. A shared sense of cohesion and belonging is fostered.** All members of the Trust are supported and encouraged to feel a sense of belonging within the academies and the wider community, and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in Trust life.
- 5. Good equalities practices for Trust staff are observed.** The Trust ensures 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. **The highest expectations of all our young people are central to the Trust.** All students are expected to achieve to their highest potential.
7. **Raising standards for all students is at the heart of all that the Trust does.** Improving the quality of education for all groups of children raises standards across the Trust as a whole.

Specific Duties:

- To prepare and maintain a written statement of policy for promoting equality in terms of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexuality, gender reassignment, civil partnership and marriage, pregnancy and maternity.
- To put in place arrangements for implementing the policy, publicising its contents and the results of monitoring its effectiveness.
- To assess the impact of the policy on pupils and staff
- To monitor, by reference to disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, the admission and progress of pupils and the recruitment and career progress of staff.

Responsibilities

Ensuring that the Trust complies with all legislation referred to in this policy and meets all of its duties.

Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team

- The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing the policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Board of Trustees will:

- ensure that the Trust complies with all relevant equalities' legislation
- ensure all Trustees receive up-to-date training
- designate a member with specific responsibility for the Single Equality Scheme
- establish that the action plans arising from the scheme are part of the Trust Improvement Plan
- support the Chief Executive in implementing any objectives necessary - Trust Strategic Plan Summary 2023-2026 objectives:
 - o Promotion of Cultural Capital and British Values – Rights Respecting Schools Awards
 - o Maintaining IIP Gold with a focus on Equality and Diversity
 - o Trust training for all (staff, trustees, governors, students) with a focus on Relationship, Sex & Health Education (RSHE), and Sexual Harassment, Online Abuse & Sexual Violence (SHOSASV)
- evaluate and review the objectives annually
- assess the potential impact of decisions made upon equalities

Senior staff are responsible for:

- Putting the policy and its strategies and procedures into practice
- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training carrying these out
- Following relevant procedures and taking action against staff or pupils who discriminate

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping and to challenge or report this if they witness it.
- Promoting equality and ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone
- Accessing training and development opportunities to keep up with the law

Pupils are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they do not discriminate against anyone
- Ensuring that they are able to recognise bias and stereotyping and to challenge and report this if they witness it.

Parents/ Carers are responsible for:

- Supporting the Trust's equality ethos
- Sharing concerns or issues with senior staff

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- Following the Trust's expectations regarding equality and diversity

Putting the Equality and Diversity Policy into Practice:

As a result of this policy, the Trust will seek to ensure that:

- Trustees, staff and pupils and all stakeholders are aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and the action needed for its implementation
- Issues identified relating to disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief will be discussed at the Finance, Risk & General Purposes Committee
- Staff, pupils, partners and stakeholders are made aware of the value placed upon equality of opportunity and that action will be taken in the event of any breach of the policy
- Trustees and staff have access to comprehensive information, which will assist them to plan, implement and monitor actions to carry out their responsibilities under the policy
- The Trust's publicity materials will present appropriate and positive messages about equality
- All activities relating to pupil experience demonstrate sensitivity to issues of disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief including:
 - o Admissions, Guidance and Support
 - o Resources
 - o Leisure activities
 - o Monitoring pupils and staff by disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Applicants for employment are drawn from a wide pool with, positive action to encourage applications from minority groups

Reviewing and publishing the Equality and Diversity Policy

The Trust will:

- Review the policy every three years through the Finance, Risk & General Purposes Committee
- Provide mandatory staff training on equal opportunities issues and regularly offer training to Trustees

- Publish the Equality and Diversity Policy and all policies relating to equality in paper and electronic format

Assessing the impact of the Equality and Diversity Policy and relevant policies on staff and pupils

The Trust will:

- Ensure that equality issues are considered as part of all policy development
- Ensure that questions are built into all annual surveys (service user, parent and staff), aimed specifically at assessing the effectiveness of policies and strategies in tackling equality related issues
- Assess reported incidents of harassment or bullying by disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Assess use of complaints procedure by disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief
- Consider, through the Finance, Risk & General Purposes Committee, issues raised through evaluation and make recommendations to the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer for improvement.

Monitoring by reference to disability, the admission and progress of pupils and the recruitment and career progress of staff.

The Trust will collect and monitor data related to disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief at all stages of a pupil's and member of staff's development including:

- For pupils, data relating to:
 - Admissions
 - Behaviour
 - Achievement
 - Progression
- For staff, data relating to:
 - Job applications
 - Appointments
 - Type of employment
 - Take-up of staff professional development and training opportunities
 - Disciplinary and grievance issues
 - Staff progression and promotion

The actions outlined in this policy will be continually assessed and implemented. The policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by new legislation or best practice guidance.

Monitoring and Reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy bi-annually and adjust as appropriate.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality and Diversity Policy, along with the Equality Objectives and data, is available

- on the Trust website
- as paper copies
- available to staff on the staff shared area

We ensure that the whole Trust community knows about the policy, objectives and data through newsletters, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the Trust's website copies of all relevant policies and guidance.