

Equality and Diversity Policy

Approved by: Chief Executive

Date: March 2021

Last reviewed: February 2024

Board Summary

The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all in employment and the provision of teaching and learning. We take pride in our increasingly diverse community and all the cultural richness that it brings with it.

This statement outlines our commitment to equality and diversity. It sets out our intention to create an environment in which everyone in our school community can take full part in the social and cultural life of the school. It also sets out our commitment to promote equality and diversity among our pupils, their families and our staff.

The Equality Act 2010 has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It also provides some changes that need to be highlighted.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. However, schools that are already complying with the law should not find major differences in what they need to do.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single- sex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools as follows:

It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work. This means that schools should no longer, as a matter of course, require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Schools are advised to review their existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations and Section 60 of the Equality Act.

The Single Equality Act reflects the Government's commitment, 'to narrowing gaps, and to tackling the barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility which hold individuals back and bring heavy social and economic costs.

Equality is central to building a strong economy and fairer society. It underpins the Coalition's guiding principles of freedom, fairness and responsibility'.

The Government believes that they need to reform education to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years. They believe, 'that too many children are held back by disadvantage and discrimination. We want to build a fair society where social mobility is unlocked; where everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to succeed. We welcome the fact that the Equality Act gives us all an opportunity to do this in a more streamlined and effective way'.

Statement of Intent

The Trust recognises that certain groups in society have historically been disadvantaged on account of unlawful discrimination they have faced on the basis of their race, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation or age. We will put in place a range of actions to eliminate prejudice, unlawful discrimination and victimisation within the school community we serve and our workforce. The Trust intends to achieve all its targets in respect of the equalities agenda and become recognised as a leader on equalities.

Our aim

We want to see a strong sustainable and cohesive community in our school. We will continue to develop and promote policies and systems that make sure that the school community and our workforce are not unlawfully discriminated against.

Our aims are to:

- promote equality of opportunity;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, and
- promote good relations between people from different backgrounds.

How will we deliver our commitment?

The Trust has adopted the following principles:

- we recognise the value of diversity within the community and our workforce and the contribution made by people from different backgrounds;
- we are committed to ensuring that teaching and learning meet the varied and complex needs of pupils in our care;
- we will make sure our employment is accessible to everyone and that we actively value and celebrate the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures within the community;

Our commitment is supported by a legal duty to provide learning and employment opportunities fairly, without unlawful discrimination. We believe we have a strong moral and social duty to recognise any unlawful discrimination, take steps to challenge prejudice and discrimination and promote equality.

Objectives

Accessible services and partnerships:

Where appropriate we will work with other organisations and local voluntary and community groups to provide teaching and learning and access to employment which promote equal opportunities to all by:

- building on good practice;
- consulting with and involving our local community;
- providing accessible information and ways for people to comment;
- carrying out equality impact assessments of new and existing policies and practices to make sure that they do not unlawfully discriminate against anyone;
- removing barriers which deny people access to our school community;
- using our powers to make sure that organisations providing services on our behalf work in line with this statement;
- promoting an environment which gives all pupils an equal chance to learn and live free of unlawful discrimination and prejudice, all staff to work and live free of unlawful discrimination and prejudice;
- take steps to build an inclusive and cohesive school community.

Equal and appropriate treatment in employment, training and recruitment opportunities:

We will put in place a range of actions aimed at tackling prejudice and celebrating diversity within our workforce.

This will be achieved by:

- developing a workforce which reflects the community at all levels;
- making sure that all employees understand their responsibilities under this statement;
- making sure that all employees know about their rights of protection from unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation;
- developing and promoting policies which give everyone equal access to employment and opportunities;
- setting performance targets so we can measure our progress.

Anti-Racism

It is the right of all pupils to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident.

Our schools will endeavour to make the school welcoming to all minority groups. So, for example, we will immediately remove any offensive graffiti that we may find in school. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

Each curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, the history curriculum gives due

emphasis to ancient African traditions and cultures in the work that the children do on the Ancient Egyptians. In the religious education curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children study the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person in overcoming any difficulties they may have.

Every pupil, regardless of race, is expected, and encouraged, to reach their potential by all staff. The expectations are underpinned by our monitoring of the performance of ethnic minority pupils to pinpoint and tackle underperformance

Gender Equality

We are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all our employed, pupils and visitors, regardless of gender, neither males, nor females, will be treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and aspects of school life.

Our school will not tolerate harassment of people based on their gender or transgender status. We will endeavour to use and display images which show positive images relating to gender.

Staff at school will challenge gender stereotyping and promote positive role models. Social relationships between boys and girls will be developed and encouraged so that there is a mutual respect and understanding between both genders. This will often be explicit in PHSCE lessons and implicit across the curriculum.

The dignity and privacy of transgender people will be protected by our procedures and practices. For example, proof of identity does not rely solely on birth certificates; other proof, such as a passport, is acceptable.

Disability Equality

We are committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its staff, pupils and visitors, with any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and aspects of school life

The Disability Equality in Education (DEE) recommends that all pupils with SEN and those with long term medical needs be treated as disabled for the purposes of the Act and for equality. This is in addition to all pupils with long term impairments, which have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

We recognise that disability is not caused by the individual(s), but by the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers which exist in the education system and in society as a whole.

Our schools will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities

Social relationships between able and disabled pupils will be developed and encouraged so that there is a mutual respect and understanding between both groups. This will often be explicit in PHSCE lessons and implicit across the curriculum.

Every pupil, regardless of ability/disability, is expected and encouraged to reach their potential by staff in school. These expectations are underpinned by our monitoring of the achievement of pupils, according to ability/disability to pinpoint and tackle underperformance.

Our schools will not tolerate harassment of disabled people with any form of impairment and will also consider pupils who are carers of disabled parents.

Responsibilities

Diamond Learning Partnership Trust is an equal opportunities employer and provider of teaching and learning. In order to support this public commitment all staff play a key role in ensuring that provision does not give rise to unlawful discrimination of any kind and that we have a shared understanding of the relevant issues and how best to deal with them.

All employees of the Trust are expected to comply with our values of promoting equality and diversity and treat colleagues and others in the school community with dignity and respect at all times. This commitment must be evidenced in practice. Any behaviour that falls below these standards is unacceptable to the Trust and potentially constitutes misconduct.

Leaders and managers are expected to:

- be at the forefront of best practice on equalities within their respective areas.
- mainstream equalities within their respective areas;
- set equality targets, monitor outcomes and develop relevant action plans;
- review all provision to ensure elimination of unequal treatment of staff, pupils and the wider school community;
- raise equality-related issues with their staff and senior colleagues;
- encourage leadership on equalities amongst their staff and other providers;

- establish monitoring systems;
- report to governors on the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring;
- train staff on equalities issues;
- consider better access for people with disabilities;
- monitor provision by contractors and other external providers;
- evidence consultation carried out with staff and the school community;
- make guidance readily available to staff.

The governing body are responsible to ensure that the School Senior Leadership have implemented the policy and have a commitment to equal opportunities and to ensure all staff, pupils and parents are treated fairly and with equality.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

It is the for the leadership within our schools which includes our Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, Heads of School to implement the Trusts equality and diversity policy and s/he is supported by the governing body in so doing.

It is their role to ensure that:

- All staff are aware of the school policy on equality and diversity opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- In conjunction with the Trust HR team to ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- They promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.
- Any incidents of unfair treatment or racist incidents are treated with due seriousness.

The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child.

When selecting classroom material, teachers' pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics in our school include examples of the significant contribution's women have made to developments in this country's history. In geography topics the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents in the school logbook and draw them to the attention of the appropriate member of the senior leadership team. Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

Discrimination

Bullying, harassment or victimisation on account of a protected characteristic are unacceptable and are not tolerated within the school environment. Our School's abhorrence of such behaviours is communicated to pupils, parents and staff. For example, through the curriculum, the Prospectus, newsletters and staff training. All parents of new pupils receive a summary of the schools behaviour expectations and anti-bullying policy as part of the inductions process.

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 the pupil's individual circumstances.

Racists and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a member of Senior Leadership team or central HR team where necessary. All incidents are reported, and racist incidents are reported to the Trust on a monthly basis via the Risk Register. It is also important that these are report to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

All incidents are discussed with the Trust Leadership Team and Governor who takes a lead on

safeguarding. Incidents are monitored to ensure they are dealt with effectively.

Training

Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through our School's self-review process and staff appraisal.

Monitoring

On behalf of the Trust the responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of this Equality and Diversity Policy with our Schools has been delegated to the Governing Body. This is achieved by:

- Monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school via a report from the School leadership team.
- Taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents/carers, staff or pupils
- Monitoring the schools behaviour and exclusions policy, so that those from minority groups are not unfairly treated.
- Ensuring that any concerns or complaints raised relating to staff have been reported to for investigation by the central HR team.
- Ensuring that the school have coordinated with the central HR team and that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against.

The commitment will be implemented through our Schools Equality Action Plan.

The Plan sets out the arrangements for taking action on individual tasks that will help deliver the broad aims set out in this statement. We will set clear deadlines and give responsibility to named leaders/managers who will be accountable for implementation of the given tasks.

With the help of feedback from employees and the wider school community we will continue to develop arrangements to monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of our employment policies and provision of teaching and learning. If our monitoring reveals any gaps in our policies/provision, we will take necessary action.

Policy Review

This policy will be monitored as part of the Trust's annual internal review or as required by legislature changes.

The Policy will be issued for the LGB to adopt in the Autumn term following the approval of Trustees.