



EQUALITY POLICY

LAST REVIEW

September
2024

REVIEW PERIOD

ANNUALLY

NEXT REVIEWDATE

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1. Policy Statement

In accordance with the values of Victory Park Academy we provide:

- i. First class learning in a caring and supportive environment where all students receive the nurture and therapeutic support to develop into confident well-rounded citizens. We pledge:
 - a) To respect the equal human rights of all our pupils
 - b) To educate students about equality
 - c) To respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the school community
- ii. We will assess our current academy practices and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to:
 - a) Ethnicity
 - b) Religion or Belief
 - c) Socio-economic background
 - d) Gender and gender identity
 - e) Disability
 - f) Sexual Orientation
 - g) Age
- iii. We will promote community cohesion at the academy, local, national and global levels, comparing our academy community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to:
 - a) Ethnicity
 - b) Religion or belief
 - c) Socio-economic background

2. Our Aims & Vision

Our curriculum intent is to provide our pupils with academic and vocational learning success. As part of this education, we place great emphasis on the development of pupils' pastoral, social and emotional development to enable them to develop as individuals and citizens.

We provide first class learning in a caring and supportive environment where all students receive the nurture and therapeutic support to develop into confident well-rounded citizens.

2.1 Our statement

- We keep each other safe.

- We do our best.
- We show respect to everybody in our community.

2.2 Curriculum Aims

We will create an effective learning environment where:

- The contribution of all students is valued
- All students feel secure and are able to contribute appropriately
- Stereotypical views are challenged and students learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability
- Students learn to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour both in school and in the wider community
- All forms of bullying and harassment, including racial harassment, are challenged
- We will enable the continual professional development of all staff to the benefit of the students
- Students have access to a curriculum which is relevant to them and which leads to a greater appreciation of their own cultural traditions
- Students participate in a curriculum that takes full account of the richness and diversity of the world's cultures so they can develop understanding of and respect for people's different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Students understand the contribution different cultures have made to each of the areas covered by the subjects of the National Curriculum

2.3 Pastoral Aims

We aim that:

- Students are able to develop a positive self-image
- Students are able to develop an understanding of and empathy with others
- Students are equipped to recognise and challenge appropriately bias, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination
- Students are able to understand the clear expectations of their behaviour and respond accordingly.

2.4 Parents & the Wider Community

We aim to:

- Communicate clearly and sympathetically with parents and to value their support in our students' education.

- Give guidance and support in the education of all students to help to promote confidence and self-esteem.

3. Statutory Requirements

The equality objectives in Section 11 below address our duties under current equality legislation, up to and including the Equality Act 2010. They also relate to the Essex Council guidance for recording incidents involving students in schools.

The access plan in Section 12 below addresses our duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001.

The community cohesion plan in Section 12 below addresses our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

4. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools, to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty which has two specific duties:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty.
- Publish equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

5. Community Cohesion

5.1 Ethnicity/Culture Context of the Academy

Victory Park caters for a significantly higher than average number of students on pupil premium (compared with National Statistics). Teaching, the curriculum, resources and displays in our school reflect the experiences and backgrounds of students, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. They also reflect the inclusive ethos of the academy.

5.2 Religion/belief context of the academy

The academy has no specific religious affiliations. PSHE & RSE is taught to all students.

The academy follows the county scheme which gives students a broad and balanced coverage of a range of religions. Assembly is held weekly and follows a broadly social and moral theme. Religious days, festivals and special days are incorporated into the schedule.

5.3 Current issues affecting cohesion at academy, local and national level

Occasional academy uniform issues and attendance issues.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Academy Council

Our named board member, takes the lead, but the Academy Council as a whole are responsible for:

- Drawing up, publishing and implementing the school's equality objectives
- Making sure the academy complies with the relevant equality legislation
- Making sure the academy Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed
- Monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting annually

6.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Making sure steps are taken to address the academy's stated equality objectives
- Making sure the equality, access and community cohesion plans are readily available and that the Academy Council members, staff, students, and their parents and guardians know about them.
- Producing regular information for staff and Academy Council members about the plans and how they are working.
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice- related incidents
- Enabling reasonable adjustments to be made, in relation to disability, in regard to students, staff, parents / carers and visitors to the academy

6.3 All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and community cohesion in their work
- Avoiding unlawful discrimination against anyone
- Fostering good relations between groups
- Dealing with prejudice-related incidents
- Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Taking up training and learning opportunities

6.4 The Behaviour Lead

The Behaviour lead is responsible overall for dealing with reports of prejudice-related incidents.

6.5 Visitors & Contractors

Visitors and contractors are responsible for following relevant academy policy.

7. Staff Development

This section outlines our process for training and development in relation to equality and cohesion in terms of professional responsibilities as well as statutory requirements.

All staff are made aware of the ethos of equality within the academy. Training is imparted informally and formally through staff meetings and courses. These issues are also discussed as part of the staff induction processes.

8. Publication & Review

This Equality Scheme fulfils statutory requirements under the terms of legislation referred to above. As it is a public document, the school governors publish it by making it available on request and by publication on the academy website.

9. Reporting on Progress and Impact

A report on progress with the actions listed below will be published by the Academy Council via the academy website.

10. How we conduct equality impact assessment

This section outlines our process for monitoring the potential impact of academy practice in terms of:

- Ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Socio-economic background
- Gender and gender identity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

11. Equality Objectives (To be kept under regular review)

Equality objectives (focused on outcomes rather than processes)	
To improve the progress and attendance of students: monitor the attendance and progress of students, particularly those students supported by the pupil premium grant to ensure appropriate progress is made and good attendance is encouraged.	
To improve students understanding of diversity: continue to foster zero tolerance of racial/religious/cultural intolerance through a range of multicultural topics across curriculum and in assemblies.	
To broaden students' knowledge and understanding and raise attainment for vulnerable groups especially those eligible for the pupil premium grant: use our curriculum to broaden access to an engaging, interesting and relevant learning experience for all groups and abilities.	
Improve parental confidence and understanding of school: offer a range of opportunities (twice yearly parents consultation sessions, annual review sessions) for parents to extend their ability to support their students learning at home.	
Improve student's cultural awareness: to develop links with schools in the local, national and international spectrum to extend students understanding of their immediate and wider surroundings.	
Improve the progress in reading for all groups of students: continue to develop the teaching of literacy in order to improve students reading skills from all groups.	
Ensure the academy is accessible to all: monitor access into and around the academy site and buildings for all stake holders and adapt as required to the need of the academy population.	
Increase staff awareness when working with students with complex needs: training to increase staff knowledge and consequently groups including: autism spectrum disorders, looked after children, children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.	
Improve students' awareness of academy values: continue to promote the academy's agreed values, linking these to assemblies, curriculum and student voice.	

12. Access Plan

This can relate very closely to the disability elements of the equality objectives in Section 10 above, except that it covers students only whereas the equality plan includes all members of the school community.

Actions (focused on outcomes rather than processes)	
Improvements in access to the curriculum	Inclusive climate walks, lesson observations, monitoring of planning and students work to ensure broad and balanced coverage and access. Training for teachers ensuring their knowledge and understanding of working with students with SEMH needs. Intervention strategies to target students not making desired progress. Monitoring

	and evaluation of targets set at Annual Reviews. Continuing with appropriate transition into and from the academy. Increase associations with ethnic and multicultural groups
Improvements in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled students	Investigation of auditory and visual aids when and if required. Use of large print, coloured paper, overlays, additional time, scribe and translation during examinations as required. Investigation of ways to make the school website accessible for people with disabilities.

13. Community Cohesion Plan

The choice of appropriate actions to promote community cohesion is based on the needs, relating to ethnicity, religion or belief and socio-economic background.

For this purpose, the four geographical dimensions of “community” are as follows:

- The academy community
- Local communities
- Communities across the UK
- The global dimension

Actions (focused on outcomes rather than processes)	
Teaching, learning and the curriculum	English & PSHE activities to promote greater understanding of major festivals in world religions. Build on existing theme days e.g. Chinese New Year, PSHE as an opportunity to learn about history and the multi-cultural world which we are part of. Assemblies, Personal Development themes, Trips & Visits, External guest speakers.
Equity between groups in the academy, where appropriate	Monitor academy attendance for different groups of students to promote good attendance for all. Use of students’ performance data to track vulnerable groups and ensure good progress across all groups. Continue to offer options and activities open to all.

	Continue to offer trips and activities to enable development of students from vulnerable families.
Engagement with people from different backgrounds, Inc. extended services	Organise more visitors to school representing different religions, cultures and groups.

14. Appendix A - Equality Statements

14.1 Students' attainment and progress

This academy expects the highest possible standards. Staff have high expectations of all students and continually challenge them to reach higher standards.

The school recognises and values all forms of achievement. We will monitor and analyse student performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and social background. Any disparities which are identified will be addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.

14.2 The quality of provision - teaching and learning

All staff ensure the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel all contributions are valued. Positive steps are taken to include students who may otherwise be marginalized.

We take account of students' experiences and starting points and are responsive to students' different learning styles. All students are regularly consulted about their learning.

Student grouping is planned and varied to reflect the requirements of learners and their social development needs. Allocations to teaching groups will be kept under continual review and analysed by ethnicity, gender and background.

All students will be encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks. Students will be encouraged to be a resource for their peers.

Staff encourage students to become independent and assist them in taking responsibility for the management of their own learning and behaviour.

Staff will use a range of methods and strategies to assess student progress. Assessments are analysed for gender, cultural and social bias, and take account of access issues, e.g. print size.

This school believes that self-assessment is a teaching-learning strategy, and we will provide all students with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

14.3 The quality of provision - curriculum and other activities

The academy provides an appropriate curriculum for students of all backgrounds. We will monitor and evaluate its effectiveness through target setting and attainment analysis

All students participate in the mainstream curriculum of the academy.

The curriculum builds on students' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- Students from minority ethnic groups, including Gypsies and Travellers
- Students who are gifted and talented
- Students with special educational needs students with a disability
- Students who are in public care
- Students who are at risk of disaffection
- Lesbian, gay young people

Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of all students.

The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages students to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

14.4 The quality of provision – guidance and support

We actively promote good personal and community relations and recognise diversity as having a positive role to play within the academy.

All staff are expected to foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among students from all ethnic groups and range of abilities.

Staff challenge stereotypes and foster students' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.

Our pastoral support takes account of religious, cultural and ethnic differences, special educational needs, disability and the experiences and needs of Traveller students, refugees and asylum seekers' students.

The academy provides appropriate support for students learning English as an additional language and students are encouraged to use their home and community languages to enhance their learning

We expect work experience providers to demonstrate their commitment to equality, including disability, gender and race equality.

Victims of harassment and bullying are given appropriate support using external agencies where appropriate. The perpetrators are dealt with in line with school policy and are provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

14.5 Behaviour and Attendance

The academy expects high standards of behaviour from all students, appropriate for their developmental level.

We have procedures for managing behaviour that are fair and applied equally to all. All staff are expected to operate using the schools Behaviour Policy.

It is recognised that cultural background and disability may affect behaviour. Our academy takes this into account when dealing with incidents of difficult behaviour.

Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment, including racism and harassment related to disability, sexism and homophobia, are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently and are in line with relevant Essex LA policies and guidance such as those for anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents. All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant academy policies.

All staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice and are offered support in handling such matters.

We encourage staff to explore their own views and attitudes to difference and to monitor their practice in relation to this policy. Adults in the academy take care to lead through example, demonstrating high expectations of all students.

We monitor exclusions by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Background is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of students.

The academy will take all reasonable steps to prevent the exclusion of a student for a reason related to any disability they may have.

Students, staff and parents are aware of policies and procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour, which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group, is always unacceptable.

Information and advice on attendance and exclusion is made available to parents/carers in accessible formats such as relevant community languages and large print.

There are strategies to reintegrate long-term non-attenders and excluded students, which address the needs of all students.

Families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to students' attendance and absence is always followed up in a way that takes account of cultural issues or matters relating to a child's disability.

We make provision for leave of absence for religious observance, for staff as well as students.

We monitor attendance by gender, ethnicity and special educational need. Background is also considered. Action is taken in order to address any disparities between different groups of students.

The academy will fully support students with long-term medical needs who may have an erratic attendance because they are in and out of hospital.

We expect full-time attendance of Traveller and Gypsy students.

14.6 Partnership with students, parents, carers and the wider community

We monitor parental involvement and have strategies to raise participation of underrepresented groups of parents and sections of the community. Information and meetings for parents are made accessible for all.

Progress reports to parents/carers are clearly written and free from jargon to encourage parents to participate in their child's education. Where necessary information is available in languages and formats other than English. Parents with a disability or with learning difficulties will be able to access academy's information.

Parents are fully involved in the academy-based response for their child with special educational needs, understand the purpose of any intervention or programme of action.

The academy encourages participation of underrepresented groups in areas of employment e.g. through work experience placements.

Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.

The academy works in partnership with parents and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to difference.

14.7 Leadership and management

Steps are taken to ensure the academy's admission process is fair and equitable to all students, including short-stay Traveller and Refugee students and those with English as an additional language.

The academy will not discriminate against a disabled student in the arrangements it makes for determining admission.

We will admit students with already identified special educational needs. Students with statements of special educational needs will always be admitted unless, through the statutory assessment process, it is demonstrated that the student's inclusion would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children.

Comprehensive information about students' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc. is included in admissions forms or gathered at admissions interview.

The academy adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equitable and in line with statutory duties and Southend Borough Council guidelines.

We will take steps to encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the academy and ensure recruitment and selection processes are monitored.

Equality and diversity issues are reflected in our academy's employment practices. Everyone associated with the academy is informed of the contents of this policy. All

staff and visitors must support the ethos of the academy, promoting equality and challenging bias and stereotyping wherever they observe it.

We will ensure that staff training continually highlights equality issues. Equality is incorporated in the induction programme for new staff.

The skills of all staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.

Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.

Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and the academy strives to reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

The academy opposes all forms of racism, homophobia, prejudice and discrimination.

Resources and displays in our academy reflect the experience and backgrounds of students, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the academy, e.g. the inclusion of images relating to minority ethnic and Gypsy and Traveller children; displays to be positioned at eye level, etc.

14.8 Linguistic Diversity

We recognise and celebrate the linguistic diversity in British society. We look for opportunities to enrich the curricular experience of all our students by:

- Highlighting how English has borrowed from other languages
- Raising awareness of the similarities and differences between English and other languages
- Reflecting the multilingual nature of wider society in our resources and displays and assemblies.