

SOMERSET ROAD EDUCATION TRUST EQUALITY SCHEME

Version and Date		Action/Notes
1.0	May 2018	Written by Executive Principal

Somerset Road Education Trust - SRET

Introduction

This document reflects the Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces previous legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976 and 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The policy therefore supersedes all previous school policies on Disability, Ethnicity (i.e., Race) and Gender. Through this policy SRET will fulfil its public duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations in connection with disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual identity, and where appropriate, age (age being applicable to employees only).

The guiding principles in this policy refer to all individuals and therefore are equally applicable to pupils, staff and local governors in addition to visitors at each of our academies.

SRET is committed to providing an appropriate and high quality education for all children and aims to do so in a way that seeks to remove all barriers to learning. We believe that all children have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum which is accessible to them and to be fully included in all aspects of school life. Our academies promote diversity and maximise the involvement of all i.e. staff, children, parents, neighbours, local governors and the wider community.

We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, attainment, family circumstances, difficulties in behaviour or attendance.

- In accordance with our vision statement we pledge to respect the equal human rights of all our pupils and to educate them about equality.
- We will also respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of our community.
- In particular, we will comply with relevant legislation and implement school plans in relation to sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

SRET is committed to providing appropriate support and opportunities for all employees throughout the organisation, respecting individual protected characteristics and celebrating diversity. The Equality Scheme is applicable to all who are part of the SRET organisation: children, employees, Trust and Local Governor Board members, volunteers and visitors. The principles included in the Equality Scheme, the provision, resources and accessibility arrangements, encompass and apply to the whole SRET community.

Legal framework

Duties are as identified in the Equality Act 2010 and its Schedules. There are nine equality strands (known as Protected Characteristics):

- disability;
- ethnicity (including Gypsy/Romany and Traveller groups);
- gender;
- gender identity and transgender;
- faith, religion and belief;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- sexual orientation (homophobia);
- pregnancy and maternity;
- age (not applicable to children of school age).

Each relates to direct discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination; harassment and victimization. We will seek to achieve positive action in respect of the Act.

It should be noted that all schools have a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duties, and failure to do so could result in legal action against the academy's Local Governing Body or the Trust. Employees of the school acting on behalf of the Governing Body are also liable for their own discriminatory actions.

SRET is mindful of the Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 5 April 2011, and will publish relevant information through its academy websites:

- Equality Information for children (and for public organisations with more than 150 employees)
- our Equality Objectives and to monitor, and report upon these annually.

Good Practice

- We strive to achieve a cohesive community and expect that children respect one another and behave with respect to one another, and that their parents feel fully engaged in our academies.
- We aim to enhance a wider sense of community locally, as well as in the context of the UK and World communities.
- We support the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998. Through our policies and actions we undertake to ensure that every child and young person is healthy, safe, is able to enjoy and achieve in their learning experience, and is able to contribute to the wider community.
- We consider it prudent and sensible to maintain the practice of logging racist incidents. We monitor and log incidents that discriminate against children and young people or adults in our academies with protected characteristics, e.g. homophobic bullying. We also monitor and log bullying incidents directed towards those with special educational needs.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations and establishing our ethos, we are guided by 10 principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled,
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status,
- whatever their gender or gender identity,
- whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made;
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised;
- sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

Policies, procedure and activities promote:

- positive attitudes and actions towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents;
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men and an absence of harassment related to sexual orientation.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled;
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
- whatever their gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that may exist

In addition to avoid or minimise possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and overcoming barriers that may exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled;
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men;
- those of differing sexual identity.

Principle 6: We aim to consult all relevant parties

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones. Consultation involves:

- disabled and non-disabled;
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men;
- those of differing sexual identity.

Principle 7: We address prejudice and prejudice related bullying

We oppose all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties listed above:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed against religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;

- prejudice reflecting sexism or homophobia.

Principle 8: We understand the duties and responsibilities of the Prevent Duty

We understand and adhere to Government guidance relating to the Prevent Duty (2015) and the implications for SRET. This will be manifested by applying Principle 4 above in relation to recruitment. Employees are bound by the rigorous guidelines set out in the suite of Safeguarding Policies adopted by SRET.

Principle 9: Society as a whole should benefit

Policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled and non-disabled;
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men;
- those of differing sexual identity.

Principle 10: We set objectives for improvement

Each academy will set Equality Objectives that cover a 3 year period based upon its equality data. The Equality Objectives are specific and measurable. Each year progress on the Equality Objectives will be reported and published on academy websites. To enable this to be done data will be collected in relation to:

- Disability;
- Ethnicity, religion and culture;
- Gender;
- Sexual identity / orientation.

Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

Decision makers at all levels must be aware of the duty to have "due regard" when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics. We will consider equality implications before and at the time that policies are developed and decisions taken, not as an afterthought. They will be kept under review on a continuing basis.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) will be integrated into the carrying out of each academy's functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty will always be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes or following a particular process.

We recognise that we cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

1. The equality objectives for each academy will be set out formally, are referenced in this document and are published on our Academy websites. They will be reviewed and reported upon annually, and refreshed on a three year cycle.
2. The equality employment information will be monitored and reported to the Trust Board on an annual basis.
3. Our academies will undertake Equality Impact Assessment (Equality Analysis) exercises when renewing or reviewing policy or practice to ensure full compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Curriculum

4. Curriculum information will also be evaluated by looking specifically at equality groups in addition to the standard analysis conducted by our academies and adjustments as appropriate to ensure that equality groups are supported positively.
5. All other data relating to whole school monitoring will encompass scrutiny of equality information so that groups are supported positively.

6. When it is reviewed, each curriculum subject or area will ensure that teaching and learning will reflect our Guiding Principles as set out above.

Staff and Local Governors

7. The Trust Board oversees this legislation and retains the ultimate responsibility for its implementation.
8. The Local Governing Board of each academy is responsible for ensuring that the academy complies with legislation, and that the Equality Scheme and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.
9. A member of the Local Governing Body has the role of monitoring the implementation of the Equality Scheme.
10. 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.
11. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the Equality Scheme.
12. All staff are expected to:
 - Adhere to the Equality Scheme;
 - Promote equality and inclusion in their classrooms, amongst colleagues and with visitors;
 - Deal with any prejudice related incidents that may occur;
 - Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect our Guiding Principles ;
 - provide and analyse quantitative and qualitative data that supports better understanding of equality groups and any issues that may arise, e.g., attendance, bullying, exclusion;
 - undertake or support Equality Impact Assessment (Equality Analysis) processes;
 - attend appropriate training that enables the academy to keep up-to-date with equality issues.
13. All staff and local governors have access to training and a selection of resources which discuss and explain the concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion. We value the opportunity to take a holistic approach in fulfilling our Equality Duties.
14. All staff and local governors will exercise their Safeguarding responsibilities in relation to equality matters and ensure that any bullying or challenging of Human Rights is addressed immediately.
15. We are opposed to all forms of prejudice that could act as a barrier to achieving our legal duties and a cohesive community. These include:
 - Disability;
 - Special educational needs;
 - Racism and xenophobia;
 - Gender and transgender;
 - Religious groups and communities;
 - Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
 - Sexism and homophobia.
16. Visitors and contractors are responsible for:
 - Knowing, and following, our Equality Duty which will be accessible to them in academy offices and on websites.

Practical implications

Staff value all children and support inclusion and equality. Staff are constantly aware of the best ways to support all children's needs. Teaching and learning styles and organisation are flexible to ensure effective learning for all.

Within SRET, we will:

- Design learning opportunities so that children encounter and discuss issues of fairness, diversity and disability, which will help the children to recognise discriminatory practices and respond appropriately to them;

- Ensure equal access to learning, resources and staff. It may sometimes be necessary to provide additional support and to make alternative arrangements or differentiate the curriculum. It is therefore the access to learning that should be equal, not the way in which it is provided;
- Ensure there are positive images of different races, cultures, genders, disability and lifestyles in books, displays, posters, photographs, videos and that dual language texts are available in the library;
- Ensure that children have the opportunity to express their opinions, views and ideas and that their individuality is respected;
- Ensure differentiation is included in teacher planning. Learning intentions are always made explicit and activities may be adapted as appropriate e.g. for Gifted and Talented, bilingual pupils, those with special needs and support group children. Alternative methods of responding or recording may also be planned.

Admission arrangements

Children with additional educational needs or with a known disability are considered for admission on exactly the same basis as the children without additional educational needs or disability, except where a child has a statement of special educational needs or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Auxiliary aids and services

We recognize our duty to provide auxiliary aids as part of the reasonable adjustment duty. Many disabled children will have a SEN and may need auxiliary aids which are necessary as part of their SEN provision; in some circumstances as part of a formal SEN statement. These aids may be provided in the school under the SEN route, in which case there will be no need for the school to provide those aids as part of their reasonable adjustment duty. However, our schools will have to consider whether to provide auxiliary aids as a reasonable adjustment for disabled children. This is particularly the case where a disabled child does not have an Education Healthcare Plan or where it does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

There should be no assumption, however, that if an auxiliary aid is not provided under SEN arrangement then it must be provided as a reasonable adjustment. Similarly, whilst schools and LAs are under the same reasonable adjustment duty, there should be no assumption that where it is unreasonable for a school to provide an auxiliary aid or service, for example on cost grounds, it would then be reasonable for the local authority to provide it. All decisions would depend on the facts of each individual case. The nature of the aid or service, and perhaps also the existence of local arrangements between schools and local authorities, will help to determine what would be reasonable for the school or the LA to provide.

Further guidance in relation to auxiliary aids and services can be found on pages 26 and 27 of <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>.

Monitoring

The following groups of pupils are tracked and monitored as part of our on-going tracking procedures: Pupil Premium, Free School Meals, SEN Code of Practice, Children in Care, Ethnicity, English as an Additional Language (EAL/Bilingual), Gifted and Talented and Summer born children and children of HM Forces personnel if applicable. Progress review meetings are held regularly with teachers to discuss the progress of all children. Key data will be published by individual academies as required as part of assessment and reporting arrangements.

The Trust will publish periodically on its website, equalities data relating to employees across the Trust. This will never be done in such a way as to be able to identify individual staff.

How policies and practice are monitored

- All staff are to be made aware of the contents of this Equality Duty and the accompanying objectives and relate it to all policy reviews.
- Local Governors carry out regular monitoring activities as part of termly meetings.
- Headteachers and local governors monitor all plans and policies to ensure that issues of equality are explicitly addressed.
- All data at Trust, academy, local and national level, is analysed to ensure that the attainment of all groups of pupils is on track with their peers and, where this is not the case, that appropriate interventions are in place to address the children's needs.
- Appointment procedures are monitored by the Local Governors and the Trust HR Team to ensure that there is no possibility of any form of inequality at any stage of the appointment process.
- This policy will be reviewed annually and in more detail on a three yearly basis.

How information gathered is used

- Reviewed by Leadership Teams at regular meetings.
- Local governors review the Equality Duty and its implementation as part of their regular monitoring procedures.
- Local Governing Boards receive reports from Headteachers about equalities information on an on-going basis.
- The SRET Trust Board receive on-going reports through its officers.

Involvement of stakeholders in creating this scheme

- The Trust publishes this scheme on its website and invites comments.
- The Trust and its academies review information gathered as a result of existing policies and schemes to inform this document.
- Academies consult with pupils, staff, parents / carers and local governors in the development of the Equality Duty. In consultation, the priorities for the academy have been determined with regard to equality and the requirements of the Equality Act.

Staff development

- Key staff to attend appropriate training designed to help meet the needs of children from different groups as required.
- Staff to work together to create clear plans for pupils, supported by senior leaders.
- Leadership Teams to develop their knowledge and understanding of equalities issues, including the analysis of data and scrutiny activity.

Annual reporting in relation to the Action Plan, linked to the Academy Improvement and Development Plan (ADIP), will occur as follows

- SENCOs/Inclusion Leaders to report termly to Headteachers and Leadership Teams;
- Reports made at least annually to the Local Governing Committee;
- Relevant issues to be reported to the Trust Board as appropriate;
- Headline feedback to be shared with parents, pupils and others as part of regular communications.
- Pupils to report back any concerns through established channels as appropriate.

Policy Reviewed:	May 2018
Next Review:	September 2021
Signature of Chair of Trustees:	Signature of Executive Principal