



Equality Statement

Document Management

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At Swale Academies Trust we are committed to working together to ensure that there is equal opportunity for all members of our community, regardless of their protected characteristics as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality. We believe that all staff should have the opportunity to flourish and achieve their full potential. The Trust has therefore adopted this document as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

1. Scope

This Equalities Statement has been adopted by the Board of Directors and applies to all schools and the central team within Swale Academies Trust. This statement sets out Swale Academies Trust (SAT) commitment to Equality and Diversity as well as explaining the key principles, drivers and duties that inform this responsibility. It also explains what SAT will do to make sure that we fulfil these responsibilities. Each school within the Trust will produce an individual set of equality objectives to be approved by their Local Governing Body.

2. Introduction

We recognise the diverse needs of our community and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and service delivery. We value diversity and believe it is essential to provide services which work well for all children, parents/carers and staff. We will treat people with dignity and respect and help people to be safe and socially included.

We will challenge discrimination and encourage respect, understanding and dignity for everyone. As a public sector organisation we follow the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010, to protect individuals from discrimination against people on the basis of their protected characteristics. The characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

We believe that it is good practice to:

- Stop unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equal opportunities
- Foster good relationships - we will foster an equality culture of continuous improvement and innovation in order to have outcomes that make a difference for all our children and staff regardless of their protected characteristics.

3. Implementation of the policy

3.1 Equality

- 3.1.1 The Trust will aim to provide a working environment in which people feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated with respect and dignity.
- 3.1.2 It is the Trust's policy to treat all workers and job applicants equally and fairly irrespective of their protected characteristics.
- 3.1.3 Discrimination by or against an employee is prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage.
- 3.1.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited.
- 3.1.5 Victimisation is prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.
- 3.1.6 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies to the way in which staff treat visitors, students, parents and former staff members.
- 3.1.7 All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this statement, to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status.
- 3.1.8 The Trust is committed to ensuring that no policy, procedure, provision, rule, requirement, condition or criterion will be imposed on any worker or job applicant without justification if it would be likely to put that person at a disadvantage on any of the above grounds.
- 3.1.9 This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. It includes training leaders and managers about unconscious bias. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- 3.1.10 All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.
- 3.1.11 The Trust will take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
- 3.1.12 Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- 3.1.13 The Trust will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

3.1.14 Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

3.2 Driving Diversity

3.2.1 By accessing, recruiting and developing talent from the widest possible talent pool, we believe that we can build a stronger workforce that demonstrates to our students the importance of equality and diversity.

3.2.2 We will constantly strive to create a productive environment, representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

3.2.3 Our aim is that the diversity of the communities we serve is reflected at all levels within our workforce.

3.2.4 To drive diversity, the Trust will:

- challenge gender stereotypes wherever they occur;
- support employees in balancing their life at work and at home;
- support employees who become pregnant and take active steps to facilitate their return to work after maternity leave;
- take positive steps to support trans-gender individuals and to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect throughout their employment;
- challenge racial stereotypes where they occur;
- understand, respect and value different racial and cultural backgrounds and perspectives;
- focus on what people can do, rather than on what they cannot because of their disability;
- challenge stereotypes about people with disabilities;
- make appropriate adjustments in the workplace to help people with disabilities achieve their full career potential;
- challenge age stereotyping and recognise the benefits of a mixed-age workforce;
- treat people fairly in the workplace, irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices or political opinions, by recognising individuals' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution;
- treat people fairly in the workplace, irrespective of their sexuality, and challenge negative stereotypical views.

4. To ensure our Public Sector Equality duties are met

4.1 Procurement and contracts:

We will use equality analysis when procuring and commissioning to ensure that services meet the needs of those who use the services. We expect all organisations that we commission or have a contract to deliver services with, to have policies and practices that are compatible with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

4.2 We will continue to be an inclusive employer.

As a Trust, we are committed to creating a dynamic workforce that is diverse and responsive to its customers and communities. Through progressive employment practices we will strive to meet the needs of all our staff, to listen to their views and to respond to what they say.