



STEP Academy Trust

Equality Policy

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About this Document:

<p>Author/s: Jennese Alozie</p> <p>For queries related to this policy, please contact: enquiries@stepacademytrust.org</p>	<p>Related Documents:</p> <p>Admissions Policy</p> <p>Anti-bullying Policy</p> <p>Attendance Policy</p> <p>Behaviour Policy</p> <p>Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>GDPR Policy</p> <p>Inclusion Policy</p> <p>Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy</p> <p>Medical Needs Policy</p> <p>Positive Handling Policy</p> <p>Pupil Premium Policy</p> <p>Staff Code of Conduct</p> <p>Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>Young Carers Policy</p>
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Introduction

STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust. All policies, procedures, practices and systems are regularly reviewed to reflect the Trust's anti-racist stance and commitment to equality.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and aim to promote a positive and welcoming culture where all forms of discrimination are actively challenged and a systemic approach to eradicating discrimination is seated at the heart of our organisation. STEP policies reflect our commitment to ensuring unbiased treatment that pupils, parents, carers, employees and prospective employees are entitled to expect. We believe that every individual has the right to be valued, respected and offered equal opportunities, access and treatment. STEP Academy Trust is committed to providing an inclusive and diverse culture and to eradicating discrimination and stereotyping to make our Academies truly inclusive and promote high achievement for all.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspectors Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by key principles:

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, national origin or national status;
- Whatever their gender or gender identity;
- Whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background;
- Whatever their sexual identity.

2. We recognise and respect difference

Treating people equally (as per number 1 above) does not necessarily mean treating them all the same. Our 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. Across our Trust, equality is a key principle for treating all people the same. The Equality Act defines **nine 'Protected Characteristics'**:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion and belief
7. Marriage and civil partnership
8. Gender, Sex
9. Sexual orientation

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We ensure that our policies, procedures and activities promote:

- Positive attitudes 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 all genders and an absence of sexual or homophobic harassment.
- A culture of the highest expectations of both staff and pupils regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, religion, gender, marital status, age, disability or sexuality

4. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and employment.

We ensure that policies and procedures should 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 identity and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating pregnancy and maternity.

5. We aim to reduce and remove barriers and inequalities that already exist.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between:

- Disabled and non-disabled people;
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- All genders.

6. We consult and involve widely.

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

We consult and involve:

- Disabled and non-disabled people;
- People from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- People of all genders;
- People of differing sexual orientations.

7. Society as a whole should benefit.

We intend that our 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;
- A wide range people from differing ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- People of differing sexual orientations.

8. We base our practices on sound evidence.

We maintain and publish qualitative information showing our compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Appendix A).

Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected published (as per 8 above) and the engagement in which we have been involved (as per 7 above). The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues as appropriate. We continually review our equality objectives and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Schools need to publish information showing how they are meeting their duty to have due regard for equalities, and to publish objectives which show how they will better their performance in this area. See Appendix A for an example of how STEP Academies can approach this.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles set out in the Guiding Principles.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure that principles listed above apply to the full range of policies and practices, including those concerned with:

- Pupils' progress, attainment and achievement;
- Pupils' personal development, welfare, mental health and well-being;
- Teaching approaches and learning strategies;
- Admissions and attendance;
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development;
- Care, guidance and support;
- Behaviour, disciplines and exclusions;
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians;
- Working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

STEP Academies are opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties:

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

There is guidance available to all in STEP Academies on how prejudice related incidents should be identified, assessed and dealt with. We keep a record of prejudice related incidents, if any, and run a termly report that is analysed and discussed for action across all STEP Academies. These are recorded on CPOMS.

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The school policies on Pupil Discipline, Anti-Bullying and Attendance take full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of overrepresentation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

Roles and responsibilities

Each Academy Committee is responsible for ensuring that their Academy complies with legislation, and that this policy and related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the Academy Committee has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy. 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 cases of unlawful discrimination.

The SLT has day-to-day responsibility for coordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom;
- Develop and evaluate curricula in line with the Trusts' Anti-Racist Organisation Roadmap and principles (appendix C);
- Swiftly deal with and review any prejudice related incidents that may occur;
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles above;
- Support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language, SEND, and/or pupils who observe other cultural practices;
- Keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

The Academy Committee will:

- Designate an Academy Committee member with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- Ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP).
- Support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary, as part of their stakeholder engagement focus
- Engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy.

Our pupils will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- Be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- Be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- Be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- Have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements.
- Be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- Be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Information and resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parent and carers. All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of quality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail (Appendix B)

Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other STEP Academy policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Academy Committee.

Monitoring and review

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data, including community/parent and pupil voice and perspective, relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, and gender.

Definitions

Racism: The accepted definition of a racist incident, following the “Macpherson Report”, is: *“any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”*

Disability: The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines a disabled person as someone who has a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. According to the DDA, an impairment is to be treated as affecting the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, only if it affects one or more of the following:

- Mobility;
- Manual dexterity;
- Physical co-ordination;
- Continence;
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- Speech, hearing or eyesight;
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand and perception of the risk of danger.

Religion or Belief: The Equality Act defines “religion” as being any religion, and “belief” as any religious or philosophical belief. A lack of religion or a lack of belief are also protected characteristics. These definitions are fairly broad and the concepts of religion and belief therefore must be construed in accordance with Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and with existing case law Sex/Gender: STEP Academies need to make sure that no pupils experience peer on peer abuse, or are abused or unfairly treated due to another pupil’s sexualised behaviour or language. All leaders and staff have a responsibility to ensure that all pupils understand the risks they face in relation to peer on peer abuse, sexual abuse by an adult or peer/pupil. It is also essential that there is equity of access to a broad and balanced curriculum and gender stereotyping does not exclude certain pupils, nor unfairly privilege one group over another based on stereotypical idea or belief.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policies, Equality Policies and documentation:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding; Intimate Care; Positive Handling; Anti-Bullying; Behaviour; Health and Safety; Code of Conduct setting out standards and acceptable behaviour for staff; E-Safety and ICT acceptable use; Managing allegations of abuse against staff; Admission; Whistleblowing.
- Gender; Disability; Race Equality; Special Educational Needs.

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school development plans, self-evaluation reviews, the school prospectus, school website and newsletters.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the ways we comply with this are found in our Recruitment and Selection policies.

Appendix A

EQUALITY ACT 2010 – DUTY TO PUBLISH INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES BY 6 APRIL 2012

Westbridge Academy

Introductory section

In everything we do as an Academy, we take account of how we can get rid of discrimination, give pupils an equal chance, and encourage everyone to get along.

In order to do this effectively we will collect data related to the protected characteristics above and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school, but we will also analyse available data relating to the context of our local community, including hate crime data and demographic information. In relation to school provision we will pay particular attention to the following functions:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Attainment
- Exclusions
- Prejudice related incidents

Our pupil population in September 2022 comprises:

No on roll: 159	% Ever 6 FSM	% SEN support	% SEN EHCP	% EAL	% Ethnic minority pupils	% LAC	% boys	% girls
School data: (pupils)	60.4% (96)	15.7% (25)	0.01% (2)	49.1% (78)	83% (132)	0	54.7% (87)	45.3% (72)

Our school equality statement

At Westbridge Academy, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality, by challenging bullying and stereotypes and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

At Westbridge Academy, we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit us.

Here are some of the ways we do this:

The Academy gathers information on the pupil population broken down by gender and ethnicity. Currently at Westbridge Academy we have:

Westbridge 2022-2023	
Number on Roll	159
% girls	45.3% (72)
% boys	54.7% (87)
% FSM	57.9% (92)
% PPG	45.3% (72)
% minority ethnic groups	83% (132)
% EAL	49.1% (78)
% SEND support	15.7% (25)
% EHCP	0.01% (2)

The Academy gathers information about significant difference in attainment between girls and boys, and between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. Using this information, we identify areas in which the school could reduce inequalities and decide upon priorities for the upcoming academic year in which we can work towards diminishing these differences entirely.

The results for the end of Key Stage 1 in 2021/22 were:

Group	Reading	Writing	Maths
All children	68%	68%	68%
Boys	71%	71%	79%
Girls	63%	63%	50%
EAL	60%	60%	60%
PPG	78%	78%	78%
Non PPG	62%	62%	62%
SEND	67%	67%	67%

The results for the end of Key Stage 2 in 2021/22 were:

Group	Reading	Writing	Maths	RWM combined
All children	88%	73%	85%	73%
Boys	89%	78%	88%	78%
Girls	88%	71%	82%	71%
EAL	92%	75%	100%	75%
PPG	94%	72%	83%	72%
Non PPG	75%	75%	88%	75%
SEND	67%	67%	67%	67%

Equality and Anti-racism Champion

A senior member of staff, Clare Edet (AHT), has special responsibility for equality matters. There are a team of staff working with her to highlight equality across the school. They have used the STEP Academy Trust roadmap to becoming an anti-racist organisation to write an action plan for this academic year. This includes supporting staff with dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

Pupil Premium Plan

Pupil Premium money is used to target underachievement and ensure all children, no matter what their background, have access to the same quality teaching.

Anti-bullying policy

There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents. All staff have access to an online safeguarding programme where all incidents of bullying or racist incidents are logged. Incidents that do occur are dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy.

These are our objectives

- At the end of KS1 and KS2, progress and attainment of all groups of pupils to be brought in line with the national average, or above
- We have set an objective to close these gaps to be equal over the next 2 years
- We ensure our academy teaches an inclusive and diverse curriculum by having equality at the forefront of every decision we make
- We will continue to celebrate our diverse community and consider ways to ensure our children experience different cultures and religions as well as breaking down gender stereotypes.

Appendix B

School Checklist

- The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training.
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides.
- The Equality Policy and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders.
- The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties.
- The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need.
- The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives.
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes – their anti-racism champion.
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference.
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and Pupil Parliament.
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern.
- Visual displays and multi-media resources take diversity into account.
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are organised in line with the equality policy.
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information.
- The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled



Appendix D

EQUALITY ACT 2010 – Useful sources of additional information

[Department for Education](#) (click for link)

- Equality Act Guidance note (and the accompanying summary on the webpage). This document is designed for school leaders, governing bodies and local authorities. It highlights the key points and how the Act applies to schools. Chapter 5 is the key one for practical advice on publishing information and objectives, including some examples of equality objectives.

[Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) – various booklets, particularly:

- Equality information and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities.
- Objectives and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities (18 pages)

[Insted Consultancy](#) – various factsheets including:

- The Equality Act 2010: specific duties for schools;
- Equalities in the Ofsted framework 2012;
- A Model School Policy Statement;
- Model School Policy Statement on Equality.

Government Equalities Office

[Equality Act 2010: Specific duties to support the Equality Duty](#). What do I need to know? A quick start guide for public sector organisations.)

Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying

The Department for Education has published specific guidance on bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying and bullying related to sexual orientation, transgender, disability, race and religion:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

The Gender Identity Research and Education Society have published “Guidance on Combating Transphobic Bullying in Schools”

- <http://www.gires.org.uk/transbullying.php>

And Stonewall have a wealth of material on homophobic bullying on their website:

- <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/schools-colleges>