

# **Dixons Academies**

## **Policy Documentation**

### **Policy: Equality**

**Responsibility for Review: Principal**  
**Date of Last Review: December 2016**

**This policy relates to;**

- **Accessibility plan**
- **Admissions (students - including SEN and vulnerable students)**
- **Anti-bullying Complaints procedure Curriculum**
- **Child Protection & Safeguarding**
- **Disability**
- **Exclusions**
- **Grievance policy and procedures**
- **Pay policy**
- **Positive behaviour**
- **SEN policy**
- **Staff recruitment and appointment**

# Equality Policy

## 1. Mission

As a Dixons Academy, our mission is simple: we celebrate diversity and relentlessly focus on the highest standards of student achievement.

Dixons City Academy is committed to the principle that all staff and students should be treated with dignity and respect and that all staff and students will have equality of opportunity and outcome, regardless of their social and physical characteristics. We take seriously our duty to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

Dixons City Academy is proud of its history as a non-denominational diverse community where individual difference is respected and celebrated, that works together in harmony. We are proud of the fact that our outcomes do not mirror the differential educational achievement that is seen in the wider society. We strongly believe that whilst individual difference should be valued, that in order to maintain community cohesion, there must be a strong common experience that all subscribe to. As such, there are many aspects of Academy life that all subscribe to, for example, a core curriculum experience that has a strong focus on academic and personal development and our dress code.

## 2. Mainstreaming Equality into Policy and Practice

As well as the specific objectives set out beneath this information; the academy operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice in the following ways.

### *Teaching and Learning*

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students
- monitor achievement data by key cohorts and action any gaps
- take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- use materials that reflect the diversity of the academy, population and local community without stereotyping
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour or prejudice
- provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- seek to involve all families in supporting their students education
- encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning
- use teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole academy population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students

### *Admissions and Exclusions*

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on the basis of any 'equality cohorts'.

Exclusions will always be based on the academy's Positive Behaviour Policy. We closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

### ***Recruitment***

We recognise that by valuing and promoting equality and diversity for all employees and job applicants, and avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and delivery of services, we will be able to deliver first class education.

To do this we will:

- appoint on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the academy reflects the diversity of our community
- review our recruitment procedures and documents regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant skills and abilities and documents avoid stereotyping or use of words that may discourage groups with protected characteristics from applying
- shortlisting will be completed by more than one person wherever possible
- take reasonable steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market
- ensure that applicants are not asked about a health or disability before a job offer is made others than where necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to reasonable adjustments), to establish reasonable adjustments for fair interview and/or to carry out equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process)
- ensure applicants are not asked questions about protected characteristics (see page 4)
- not make assumptions about immigration status based on appearance or apparent nationality. All employees regardless of nationality will be required to produce specified documents before employment to satisfy current legislation
- monitor diversity data as part of recruitment to help us avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity
- consider equality aspects such as 'equality cohorts' when appointing staff to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

### **3. Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Dixons City Academy and training and development, opportunity for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits and termination of employment. The policy covers staff working at all levels and includes Governors, Consultants, Contractors, Trainees and Agency Workers

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

#### ***Employer Duties***

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- All staff promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. .
- Monitoring of potential bullying and harassment of staff.
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff identified through appraisal. All staff will be given appropriate access to training for their job and in order to enable them to

- progress
- Monitoring of performance for pay and promotion decisions
- Review of conditions of service, benefits and facilities to ensure they are available to all employees and there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them
- Monitoring of physical features of premises to consider whether they place disabled employees or applicants at a disadvantage
- Redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not discriminatory
- Disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination whether they result in warning, dismissal or other action
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

## **4. Equality and the Law**

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Disability Equality Duty (2005), Equality Act (2006) and the Equality Act (2010).

### ***Public Sector Equality Duty***

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a student or prospective student by treating them less favourably on the basis of a 'protected characteristic.'

The protected characteristics are:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity

A person's age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and in regard to the provision for goods and services. It does not however apply to students, and so the academy is free to arrange students in classes based on their age group with materials appropriate to them.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty, which applies to all schools, including both LA maintained and Academies. The academy must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relationships across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard in this context means that when significant decisions are being taken, thought must be given to the equality implications.

### ***4a. Race Equality***

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

#### **4b. Disability**

This section should be read in conjunction with the academy's Disability Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Plan.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. We will take advice as required from professional partners with regard to individual status under the Disability Act.

People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities.

Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people.
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, by making reasonable adjustments even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- prepare and publish equality information and objectives which cover the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them
- review and revise this Scheme every three years

#### **4c. Gender Equality**

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment
- promote equality between men and women

Under our specific duty we will:

- prepare and publish equality information and objectives which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them
- review and revise this Scheme every three years

#### **4d. Sexual Orientation**

The Equality Act 2010 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and this made discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

#### **4e. Community Cohesion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

The duty to prevent extremism became law in 2015 following the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015.

### **5. Consultation and Involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this information and the objectives within it have been informed by the input of staff, students and families. The academy regularly gains stakeholders views through surveys and parental engagement sessions.

Consultation includes:

- Feedback from the annual parental questionnaire, parent meetings or governors' meetings.
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET.
- Feedback from the academy leadership team and PSHE lessons.
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans / Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support.
- Feedback from Student Council.

### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### ***The role of Governors:***

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this document and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the academy is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on the protected characteristics.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our academy on grounds of the protected characteristics.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the academy environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make academy communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the academy, whatever a child's status in relation to the 'equality cohorts'.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our academy on account of their 'equality cohort'.

#### ***The role of the Principal:***

- It is the Principal's role to implement the academy's equality objectives and is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the Principal's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the equality objectives, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Principal ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to the equality information and objectives, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Principal promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

- The Principal treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

***The role of all staff (teaching and non-teaching):***

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the academy’s equality information and objectives.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on the ‘equality cohorts’ and stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia or other discrimination relating to the various ‘equality cohorts’ and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Principal.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

**7. Tackling Discrimination**

Harassment or victimisation on account of any equality cohort is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

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 a student’s individual circumstances.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is genuine occupational requirement. This must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This will only be used in exceptional circumstances at Dixons.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a ‘provision, criterion or practice’ is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic. Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that a person has a protected characteristic irrespective of whether they do (this does not include marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity). Third party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed in relation to a protected characteristic (other than marriage / civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity) by third parties such as parents/carers, clients or customers.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / Principal where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Principal and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

***What is a discriminatory incident?***

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a prohibited act”) in connection with the Act. For example, making an allegation of discrimination.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their 'equality cohort'.
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes.
- Graffiti relating to any of the 'equality cohorts'.
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing discriminatory badges or insignia relating to any of the 'equality cohorts'
- Bringing discriminatory material into the academy.
- Verbal abuse and threats.
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's 'equality cohort'.
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion.
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups.
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of their 'equality cohort'.

### ***Responding to and reporting incidents***

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole academy.

Our procedure for responding and reporting for students is outlined below:

- Incident
- Member of staff to investigate further (if incident reported) or challenge behaviour immediately
- Response to victim and family
- Response to perpetrator and family
- Incident form to be completed and filed
- Incidents to be reported to governing body on a termly basis
- Action taken to address issue with year group / academy if necessary e.g. through advisory / mentoring/ assembly

As a member of staff, if you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance procedure. If you are uncertain or need advice on how you should proceed, you should speak to the Operations Manager.

## **8. Review of Progress and Impact**

In line with all policy documentation, we review statutory policies annually and others at least every three years or when there are changes to legislation or practice. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our equality objectives annually and review the entire information and objectives on a three-year cycle.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

## **9. Publishing the Objectives and Demonstrating Compliance**

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish information to demonstrate how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to prepare and publish objectives, we:

- Publish our information and objectives on the academy website.
- Raise awareness of the objectives which are identified on the Academy Improvement Plan through assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.