



# ST EDWARD'S ACADEMY

## Equality Information and Objectives

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Approved by:

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School name: St Edward's Academy

Policy owner: Unity Schools Partnership

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## 1. Aims

St Edward's Academy aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Legislative requirements, under the Equality Act 2010, dictate that all schools have a duty to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and to foster good relations between those groups. This is an important aspect of what we hope to achieve at St Edward's Academy as 21<sup>st</sup> Century educators.

There are a range of duties incumbent upon us to ensure we take positive action to establish environments where all pupils are supported to engage fully. These duties, dictated by the DfE, encourage schools to promote a range of whole-school approaches and activities to develop respectful school communities and to support mental health and well-being. St Edward's Academy aims to set an example as a Church of England secondary school to ensure equality of opportunity for all our children and young people. The Church of England's vision for education is at the heart of what we must do at St Edward's.

Our vision for education is deeply Christian, with Jesus' promise of 'Life in all its fullness' at its heart. In line with Church of England teaching, our vision is for the common good of the whole community:

- **Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills:** enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.

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- **Educating for hope and aspiration:** enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely when things go wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.
- **Educating for community and living well together:** a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.
- **Educating for dignity and respect:** the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.

At St Edward's Academy, our overarching aim is that all members of our community are supported to live 'Life in all its fullness'. To achieve this, our vision for St Edward's is one of HOPE – we will become the best that we can be through Humanity, Optimism, Perseverance and Excellence and develop so that we can live 'Life in all its Fullness'. St Edward's is founded on Christian values and we exist to educate young people towards excellence in all dimensions of their lives, recognising the uniqueness of each and the equality of all:

**Humanity:** We are a community of confident and compassionate voices; a community which prepares young people to take their place in the world where we can work together to solve problems, hold restorative conversations and reach resolutions. We are a community that cares for each other and promotes the greater good for each individual and group.

**Optimism:** We want our children to be happy and to feel positive about themselves, their time at school and their futures. We have a carefully planned PSHE curriculum where children learn about how to look after themselves and others. Pupils learn that they can fully participate in the life of the school and the wider community. We are optimistic that we can all make a difference to improve our own lives and those of others.

**Perseverance:** All students are trained to develop independence and to develop a 'Growth Mindset'. We know a lot about how young people learn and think and believe in teaching them about self-regulation; self-efficacy and meta-cognition. By understanding ourselves, we learn to empathise with others and celebrate the important contribution of each individual to the whole community.

**Excellence** All children are stretched and challenged so that they can excel. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven into the fabric of our curriculum. We use assessment to drive excellence – making sure that we know every child, label no-one and place no ceiling on achievement. This allows for academic achievement at the highest level and the best possible pathways to adult life and the world of work.

A key priority at St Edward's is to ensure that all of our students feel safe, happy and supported in the school environment. This is not a priority of ours alone, but is a national drive, recognised by the DfE and in the Ofsted framework.

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This academic year, we aim to commemorate and celebrate diversity, promote tolerance and inclusion and support students to be emotionally and mentally healthy. This will ensure that St Edward's is a place of fairness and equality of access and provision.

Key to our approach is the value we place on the achievements and strengths of *all* members of the school community. Fundamental to our methodology, we strive to understand, challenge and remove the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes and experience for those people who have protected characteristics within school and the wider community. Those people with protected characteristics are defined as those who may be susceptible to discrimination because of a variety of reasons including their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status, because they are less able or due to their socio-economic background. These include *all* members of community: students, teaching and support staff, volunteers, parents, carers, governors, multi-agency staff linked to the school, visitors to school, contractors and others.

We value diversity and believe that equality at St Edward's should permeate all aspects of school life. Equality is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At St Edward's Academy, students are actively encouraged to promote equality, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. By promoting the values of St Edward's, students and staff feel empowered to challenge opinions or behaviours which are contrary to equalities legislation. They know that we are not only concerned with equality due to statute; we passionately promote equality and challenge inequality because it is the right thing to do to help all members of our community to live 'Life in all its fullness'.

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination;
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives;
- This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools.](#);
- This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Unity Schools Partnership and the local governing board will support the school in:

- Ensuring that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents/carers;
- Ensuring that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years;
- Delegating responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher.

The Equality link governors are Andria Scantlebury and Claire Hollingbery. Their work is supported by Sarah Garner who is also the Unity Schools Partnership Equalities lead. They will:

- Meet with the designated member of staff for equality regularly (and other relevant staff members) to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed;
- Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document;
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training;
- Report back to the full governing board and Unity Schools Partnership regarding any issues.

The Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils;
- Support the named equalities lead (Catharine Wensley) in monitoring success in achieving the objectives and barriers to be combatted;
- Report back to governors.

The designated member of staff for equality is Catharine Wensley (Deputy Headteacher). The designated member of staff for equality will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils;
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary.

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 8.

### 4. Eliminating Discrimination

- St Edward's Academy is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.
- Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

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- Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting, it is recorded in the meeting minutes.
- New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every September.
- Students receive regular reminders of their role and responsibilities in adhering to the tenets of the Equality Act 2010. This forms part of the fabric of the school's values that ethos: that all members of our community should live 'Life in all its fullness' through HOPE. Humanity is key to the St Edward's Academy experience.
- The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and named equality link governors. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate

## 5. Advancing Equality of Opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, St Edward's Academy aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying);
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils and staff to pray at prescribed times);
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school activities).

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing;
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information;
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying);
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils.

## 6. Fostering Good Relations

St Edward's Academy aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding through different aspects of our curriculum. For example, students learn about a range of religions and cultures through RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. As part of teaching and learning in English, pupils are introduced to and examine literature from a range of cultures;

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- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute. For example, a great deal of work is undertaken both through and additional to the taught curriculum on racial equality;
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community;
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our student ambassador group has representatives from different Year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents/carers to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures;
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach. For example, we have developed a relationship with the Chair of Spectrum (the global organisation within GlaxoSmithKline for LGBTQ+ recognition). This work took GSK from the low hundreds as an inclusive LGBTQ+ employer to number 21 on the Stonewall list. Our key link was also named (@ number 33) one of the top future LGBTQ+ leaders in science by The Times. We have benefitted from advice on good practice as well as visits to the school to work directly with students.

## 7. Equality considerations in decision-making

- St Edward's Academy ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.
- The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:
  - Cuts across any religious holidays;
  - Is accessible to participants with disabilities;
  - Has equivalent facilities for boys, girls and our transgender and non-binary students;
  - Can be accessed by all students, including the disadvantaged.
- St Edward's Academy keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.
- Although, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, school trips have ceased, we take our obligation to grow our students' cultural capital seriously. When making decisions about parity of access and opportunity, equality considerations are at the forefront.

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## 8. Equality Objectives

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as *protected characteristics*). For schools, this means that it is unlawful to discriminate against students and staff or treat them less favourably because of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Identity

We will also ensure that all employees are treated fairly, taking into consideration either of the following *protected characteristics*:

- Maternity and pregnancy
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

Under the Act, the school is expected to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups;
- Foster good relations between different groups.

As a public organisation, we are required to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty. This is done via our Equalities Statement and Equal Opportunities Policy
- Publish Equality Objectives which are specific and measurable

Our Equalities Statement and Equal Opportunities Policy is in line with national guidance and contains information about how the school complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We also give guidance to staff and outside visitors on our approach to promoting equality.

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken in order to ensure that we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.

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## St Edward's Academy Equality Objectives

### Objective 1

**To use performance data to monitor student achievement and respond to variations between groups of learners, subjects, courses and Key Stages. This monitors trends over time and makes comparisons with other schools locally and nationally.**

a) Why we have chosen this objective:

We seek to diminish the difference in outcomes between students with protected characteristics and their peers, in line with the best performing schools nationally.

b) To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Set disadvantaged students more challenging Minimum Expected Grades to remove the risk of unconscious bias in our expectations of student attainment;
- Continue to ensure all staff are trained to monitor data for their classes and to act promptly on any gaps between groups of learners;
- Focus staff training on closing gaps – for example, training on raising attainment for underachieving boys;
- Provide quality first teaching in all lessons and evidence-based, time-limited interventions to support SEND students and other learners where necessary.

c) Progress we are making towards this objective:

- We have significantly closed the gap over time for disadvantaged students so that they are in line with or better than other students nationally;
- We are always vigilant and are using Covid Catch-up funding to support and target all forms of disadvantage. This is aimed at prevention to ensure that gaps do not widen again as a consequence of the national school closures;
- Our staff training programme has a focus on SEND students this academic year as we have identified gaps between national attainment and progress figures and the outcomes of our SEND support students (students in receipt of an EHCP have successful outcomes);
- The SEND support team has been expanded to provide additional high quality support and intervention.

## Objective 2

**To raise the awareness and skills of staff to promote fairness, equality and good relations in the context of their role.**

a) Why we have chosen this objective:

To ensure that the whole school community is fully reflected in all aspects of school life, in line with our HOPE values and our ethos that all members of our community should live 'Life in all its Fullness'

b) To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Train all members of staff and governors involved in selection and recruitment on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Training for all relevant staff will be completed by the end of this academic year. Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those on the selection and recruitment team have a sound and current understanding of the legal requirements;
- Contribute to Trust and Diocesan working parties on Equalities. Three members of the St Edward's senior leadership team represent the school on the USP Equalities steering group. Munira Said (Assistant Headteacher) was selected by the Diocese of Chelmsford to represent the Diocese in an international Anglican Diversity and Inclusion forum;
- Train all teaching staff to promote fairness equality and good relations through the curriculum. For example, by training teachers about Black History and on the effective delivery of our Black History lessons; training teachers to deliver sessions confidently and sensitively when teaching specific topics in PSHE or Religious Studies. This includes our work on LGBTQ+ equalities;
- Use assemblies and staff training sessions to promote fairness, equality and good relations by celebrating diversity and promoting awareness and understanding through our teaching;
- Review displays and teaching materials to check they reflect the whole school community;
- Ensure that a fully representative group of students are selected when we set up student committees or ask students to represent the school in any way;
- Deliver unconscious bias training to all staff. This has been sought through the Unity Schools Partnership Equalities steering group (three members of the school's senior leadership team represent St Edward's in this forum). Our preferred training is sourced through Hackney Learning Trust.

c) Progress we are making towards this objective:

- We provided training for staff on Black History to ensure high quality delivery of all Black History sessions across the curriculum;
- Assemblies, form time and PSHE sessions have promoted equalities and encouraged discussion, understanding and tolerance;
- Members of the senior leadership team have contributed to Diocesan and Trust-wide equalities training and development;
- Individual training and support for staff who are teaching sensitive topics where they need to develop their confidence in managing discussions.

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### Objective 3

**To ensure that all students, staff and volunteers are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school.**

a) Why we have chosen this objective:

We will provide an environment that welcomes, protects and respects *all* members of our school community.

b) To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:
  - o Cuts across any religious holidays;
  - o Is accessible to participants with disabilities;
  - o Has equivalent facilities for boys, girls and our transgender and non-binary students;
  - o Can be accessed by all students, including the disadvantaged;
- Promote staff well-being through a variety of support streams. Staff are receiving regular welfare contact with their line-managers during the national school closure when they are predominantly working from home. They have the option of setting up MS Teams to talk with colleagues. Weekly well-being tips are shared through the dedicated well-being bulletin (produced by Angelina Chapman, Assistant Headteacher). Staff well-being is reinforced at each Wednesday whole staff briefing and through INSET. This is supported by phone calls so that all staff feel confident about discussing any issues and concerns. Some teaching staff have chosen to attend the site to run their remote learning provision. This falls in line with the Covid-19 response risk assessment as staff are allocated a specific room which only they are permitted to use. Our support streams have helped to create a safe environment to share concerns;
- Regularly review the Accessibility Plan and SEND information report to make sure we are meeting the needs of all our students;
- Promote our Anti Bullying Policy and follow up immediately on any forms of discriminatory bullying;
- Ensure staff, students and parents/carers feel confident about telling us about anything which makes them feel unwelcome, unsafe or uncomfortable;
- Use assemblies and staff training sessions to promote fairness, equality and good relations. For example, by celebrating diversity and promoting awareness and understanding through our teaching.

c) Progress we are making towards this objective:

- All trips and visits are planned and reviewed for equality of access;

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- SEND Information Report and Accessibility Plan has been reviewed, updated and shared with Governors. Both are available on the school website;
- Assemblies, Tutor Time and PSHE continue to celebrate and promote diversity and equality. This is applicable to both our in-school curriculum and through our online remote learning provision (which mirrors our full curriculum for each subject (including the pastoral curriculum) for each Year group and Key Stage;
- Staff, students and parents/carers have a wide range of communication channels to share concerns and to celebrate successes. We seek to reply on the same day that any concern is raised and will reply immediately the next day if a concern is raised outside of school hours;
- Staff and student well-being is at the heart of what we are doing during the pandemic and is being monitored and supported through online sessions and regular phone contact, as well as through attendance on site for our vulnerable learners.

## 9. Monitoring Arrangements

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Equalities Governors will update the equality information we publish, at least annually.

Our Equalities objectives are reviewed and updated by Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Equalities Governors at least every 4 years.

This document is approved by Unity Schools Partnership and the local governing body.

## 10. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy and Addendum to Behaviour Policy
- SEND Information Report
- Accessibility Plan
- Covid-19 Risk Assessment