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## **LINKS ACADEMY**

### **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY SCHEME**

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## **1. RATIONALE**

- 1.1 Links Academy is committed to equality of opportunity and aims to be a school where everyone:
- is respected and respects others
  - takes part in the life of the school
  - achieves to his or her potential
  - develops skills essential to life
  - exercises choice
- 1.2 We believe that no-one should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of: race, disability, physical ability, age, health, income, religion/belief, colour, ethnic origin or nationality, marital status, gender or transgender, sexuality, nationality, trade union or professional association membership.
- 1.3 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that unlawful discrimination (either direct or indirect) and other undesirable behaviour, including harassment or victimisation, does not occur (as outlined in law under the Equality Act 2010).  
In our school, we recognise that this applies to:
- all prospective and existing employees, students and governors, girls, women, men and transgender people
  - people from different ethnic backgrounds, travellers, asylum seekers and refugees
  - people of different religions and from different faith backgrounds or those who have no faith
  - people of all sexual orientations and transgendered people
  - students who have English as an additional language (EAL)
  - students with special educational needs
  - children in public care
  - other children, such as sick children, young carers, those children from families under stress, pregnant schoolgirls and teenage mothers
  - any student and young person who is at risk of disaffection and exclusion.
- 1.4 At Links Academy we celebrate diversity of culture, race and talents and endeavour to ensure that everyone is given opportunities to value their own contribution to the School and to have this noticed and valued by others. Our mission is to ensure that students of all backgrounds will be part of our community. We seek to give all students equality of opportunity, irrespective of gender, ability (both physical and mental), race or religion. We seek to close the gap between the achievements of different groups of young people so that all have equal opportunities in their adult life and empower them in all areas of life to contribute purposefully to society. This is fully reflected in our School's vision and values, which seeks to promote good relationships between everyone in the School community, building an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence.

## **2. SCHOOL CONTEXT**

- 2.1 Links Academy is a school, serving a large area of St. Albans and Harpenden. The students are from St. Albans and Harpenden itself and neighbouring villages. We also have students who live outside this area but attend St Albans and Harpenden schools.

### 3. AIMS

- 3.1 To provide an environment that will promote equality of opportunity for all our students.
- 3.2 To eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination.
- 3.3 To guarantee that no one receives less favourable treatment on grounds of their age, ethnic origin, colour, disability, creed, marital status, nationality, race, religion, culture, gender or sexual orientation.
- 3.4 To eradicate bullying, harassment, prejudice, human stereotyping and unfair discrimination.
- 3.5 To value, celebrate and learn from our diverse population.

### 4. LEGAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Our school is committed to meeting its public sector statutory duties as detailed below. We understand that the duties apply to service delivery and employment and staff management as well as policy development and implementation.

- 4.2 **General Duty under the Equality Act 2010:**

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- **advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- **foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 4.3 **The Specific Duties of the Act**

The specific duties of the Act enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

**The specific duties require schools to:**

- Publish annually information quantitative and qualitative, showing compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- To set every four years one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty.

- 4.4 **Protected Characteristics**

The Equality Act 2010 protects pupils from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for school provisions are:

- age (for staff only)
- disability
- ethnicity and race
- gender (sex)
- gender identity and reassignment
- pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation

#### 4.5 **Disability**

At Links Academy we implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

4.6 Provision for disabled pupils is closely linked with the existing provisions for pupils with special educational needs. These are the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

### 5. **PROCEDURES**

#### 5.1 Roles, responsibilities and published information

The Board of Governors, supported by the Headteacher and staff, is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

#### 5.2 **Commitment to implementation**

The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the action plan is delivered effectively. Every term, managers and key staff will report to the Headteacher on actions and progress. Every year there will be a report on equality and diversity to a Governors' meeting.

All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work.

<b>Responsibility for</b>	<b>Key person</b>
Single equality scheme	Headteacher
Disability equality (including bullying)	Headteacher
SEN/LDD (including bullying incidents)	SENCO
Accessibility	Headteacher
Gender equality (including bullying incidents)	Headteacher
Race equality (including racist incidents)	Headteacher
Equality and diversity in curriculum content	Headteacher
Equality and diversity in pupil achievement	Headteacher
Equality and diversity – behaviour and	Headteacher
Participation in all aspects of school life	Headteacher
Impact assessment	Headteacher
Engagement /Stakeholder consultation	Headteacher
Policy review	Headteacher
Communication and publishing	Headteacher

#### 5.3 **Commitment to review**

The school equality scheme will be aligned with the School Improvement Plan. Its implementation will be monitored within the school's self-evaluation and other review processes

5.4 The basic principle underlying the new specific duties is that of 'transparency' which

ensures that we fulfil the aims of the Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. Transparency means being open about the information on which we base our decisions, on what to publish and how.

#### 5.5 **Published Information**

At Links Academy we will publish equality information annually on the school website and in our shared School Policies area. We will publish the Policy, Equality and Diversity Audit.

#### 5.6 **Commitment to action**

##### **Governors will:**

- Provide leadership and drive for the development and regular review of the school's equality and other policies
- Provide leadership and ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior staff for the communication and implementation of school policies
- Highlight good practice and promote it throughout the school and wider community
- Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and pupils
- Congratulate examples of good practice from the school and among individual managers, staff and pupils
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents
- Ensure that the school carries out the letter and the spirit of the statutory duties (and ensuring the provision of 'returns' to the local authority)

##### **The Headteacher and senior staff will:**

- Initiate and oversee the development and regular review of equality policies and procedures
- Consult pupils, staff and stakeholders in the development and review of the policies
- Ensure the effective communication of the policies to all pupils, staff and stakeholders
- Ensure that managers and staff are trained as necessary to carry out the policies
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policies
- Hold line managers accountable for effective policy implementation
- Provide appropriate role models for all managers, staff and pupils
- Highlight good practice from departments, individual managers, staff and pupils
- Provide mechanisms for the sharing of good practice
- Ensure a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively

**Line managers will:**

- Respond to consultation requests by creating opportunities for pupils and staff to share their comments, suggestions and feedback, ensuring that all voices are heard
- Implement the school's equality scheme, holding staff accountable for their behaviour and providing support and guidance as necessary
- Be accountable for the behaviour of the staff team, individual members of staff and pupils
- Use informal and formal procedures as necessary to deal with 'difficult' situations
- Behave in accordance with the school's policies, leading by example
- Respond appropriately to the behaviour of pupils and staff, as a whole, and individuals (praising/challenging as necessary)
- Contribute to managing the implementation of the school's equality scheme

**All staff: teaching and non-teaching will:**

- Contribute to consultations and reviews
- Raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development
- Maintain awareness of the school's current equality policy and procedures
- Implement the policy as it applies to staff and pupils
- Behave with respect and fairness to all colleagues and pupils, carrying out the letter and spirit of the school's equality scheme
- Provide a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents
- Contribute to the implementation of the school's equality scheme

**5.7 Engagement, Participation and Involvement**

The development of the policy has been inclusive of the whole school community, taking into account the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010:

- 5.8 We have welcomed the participation and involvement of people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities.
- 5.9 When deciding what to do to tackle equality issues, we will consult and engage both with people affected by our decisions - parents, pupils, staff, members of the local community – and with people who have special knowledge which can inform the school's approach, such as specialist advisory teachers and relevant special interest organisations.
- 5.10 Evidence of this engagement will be included in the published material showing how the duty has been addressed.

**5.11 Tackling Discrimination**

Links Academy will tackle discrimination by monitoring the outcomes of opportunities at school and by dealing with and reporting all incidents.

**Action in Cases of Discrimination Against Students**

All staff must challenge incidents of prejudice or discrimination. Incidents are to be recorded using a Behaviour Incident report forwarded to the appropriate line manager who is responsible for reporting to

the Headteacher.

### **Serious Incidents**

If a student or a group of students are found to be in breach of the Equality policy, the School will apply an appropriate sanction, which will be recorded in a special file and the student's personal file.

The following sanctions may be used:

- isolation
- removal to Wollam Crescent
- fixed-term exclusion and
- permanent exclusion

### **Discrimination by Staff**

Staff are required to adhere to the Academy Equality Policy. The complaints procedure will be invoked if it is found that the equal opportunities policies have not been adhered to. Disciplinary action may follow.

### **Discrimination against Staff**

If a member of staff believes that they have been subject to discrimination they should report the matter to the Headteacher. If they feel unable to discuss the matter with the Headteacher they may refer to Chair of Governors, who will respond.

The Headteacher will make a record of the interview with the member of staff and both should sign it as an accurate record. The Headteacher is responsible for conducting an investigation within four working days and informing those concerned of the outcome. The disciplinary procedure is followed if a member of staff is found to be in breach of the Equality Policy.

## **6. MONITORING**

6.1 It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that there is a procedure in place to monitor and evaluate:

- the progress of students of all groups compared with the progress made by other students in the School;
- the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post is discriminated against;
- behaviour incident forms and exclusions to ensure that students from minority groups are not unfairly treated and
- the impact of additional support on standards achieved. Any changes to the policy required as a result of monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and or changes in the law must be disseminated to students, parents and staff.

## **7. LINKED POLICIES**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Rewards Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs
- Teaching and Learning Policy

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on a bi-annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Academic Improvement Committee and the Governing Body in February 2018

It is due for review on January 2020 up to 24 months from the above date.

Signature ..... Date .....

Headteacher

Signature ..... Date .....

Chair of Governors