



Equality Policy

Longsands Academy and Astrea Sixth Form St Neots Equality Policy

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Aim

This single policy replaces separate policies on race, disability and gender to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It reflects the legal duties set out in the **Equality Act 2010** and **non-statutory guidance** set out by the government in December 2011 and March 2012.

Part One sets out the aims to promote equality of opportunity and comply with the Act; Part Two sets out the legal duties which are referred to in Part One.

Part one

The primary aim of Longsands Academy/Astrea Sixth Form St Neots is to enable all students to take part in educational as well as social and emotional learning by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

Longsands Academy/Astrea Sixth Form will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation). This means:

- We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet students' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled students, enabling our students to take as full a part as possible in all the activities and wider curriculum on offer. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the learning environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for students, staff and visitors to Longsands Academy/Astrea Sixth Form. We are also committed to ensuring staff with a disability have equality of opportunity. We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards students and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curriculum will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action. We will regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- We will monitor the progress and achievement of students by relevant protected characteristics. This information will help Longsands Academy/Astrea Sixth Form to ensure that individual students are achieving their potential, that the provision is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified which inform the setting of our equality objectives.
- We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the work they do. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our staff who have a disability. The Academy/Astrea

Sixth Form welcomes a diverse range of candidates and encourages those who are currently under-represented to join.

- Staff will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language (EAL). Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for them, where reasonable adjustments are required. By planning ahead, staff will ensure that all students are able to take part in extended-curricular activities and residential visits.
- We will seek the views of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
- Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively. Training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying. We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form will raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, anti-homophobia/gay pride, gender equality, developing community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- We will regularly seek the views of students, parents, advisory staff and visitors to the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form, to ensure that the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all users. We will regularly review our accessibility plans.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice.
- Longsands Academy/Astrea Sixth Form will establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning. These equality objectives will be reviewed in line with statutory guidance.
- When drawing up policies, it is best practice to carry out an equality impact assessment (EIA) to ensure a policy does not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of pupils with protected characteristics. As a minimum, the TMB must consider to what extent a new/revised policy, practice or plan meets the Public Sector Equality Duties (eliminates discrimination, advances equality and fosters good relations for all the protected characteristics) and recommend changes/mitigations should it feel the policy, practice or plan could be improved to fulfil the Duties.

Part Two

1-Our Legal Duties

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010. This legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education.

Employers are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

2-The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

Age - A person of a particular age, a range of ages or making reference to a group of persons defined by age or a range of ages. Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to educational establishments as places of work.

Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions. HIV, multiple sclerosis, a visual impairment, a severe long-term disfigurement and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

Gender reassignment - A person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has fully or partially undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex. 'Trans' is a term to describe a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' is not covered by the Act but the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form will treat Intersex students and staff with the same degree of equality as those with gender dysphoria. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any Academy/Astrea Sixth Form environment.

Marriage and civil partnership – A person has this characteristic if they are married or in a civil partnership. Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to educational establishments as places of work.

Pregnancy and maternity - Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.

Race - A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. In relation to protected characteristics this is a reference to a person of a particular racial group or a group of persons in the same racial group.

Religion and belief - Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of religion or belief. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent an Academy from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.

Sex - A reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of being a man or a woman and making reference to groups of people of the same sex.

Sexual orientation - A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian when very young, promotion of sexual orientation equality is as relevant. Academies with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against lesbian, gay or bisexual pupils.

It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the student or member of staff is associated.

3-‘Prohibited Conduct’ (acts that are unlawful):

Direct discrimination - Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic

Indirect discrimination - A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context.

Victimisation - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.

Discrimination arising from disability - Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) **and failure to make reasonable adjustments.**

Gender re-assignment discrimination - Not allowing reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave.

Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination - Unfavourable treatment because of pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman or girl because she is breastfeeding. **Discrimination by association or perception** - For example, discriminating against someone because they “look gay”, or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Academies are allowed to treat disabled students more favourably than non-disabled students, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to give them a similar equality of access to their education as those students without disabilities.

4-Public Sector Duties (applies to Academies):

An Academy must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people’s needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
- Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

In practice, ‘due regard’ means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in Academies must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking an action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.

5-Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans (Schedule 10) Academies are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example steps and lifts.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Accessibility Plans which will increase disabled pupils' access to the Academy curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment
- Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that Academies owe to pupils and staff with a disability generally, regardless of whether the Academy knows that a particular pupil or member of staff has a disability or whether the Academy currently has pupils or staff with a disability. The Academy will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments that it may need to make, working with the **relevant admissions authority** as appropriate.

For more information, download guidance from the DfE: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools> and Equality Human Rights website: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com> which includes the guidance for education providers

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion.

Aspects of educational legislation have also promoted equal opportunities, for example the Education Act includes a duty for local authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

Responsibilities

1-Transitional Management Board/Local Education Consultative Committee;

- Ensure that the Academy complies with equality-related legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Principal.
- Ensure all other Academy policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

2-Principal

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical

capability to carry out the duties. Academies should no longer require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire. Neither should an Academy seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.

- Ensure that all staff and students are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

3-All staff

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

4-Students

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

5-Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)

- To be aware of, and comply with, the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form's equality policy.
- To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) on Academy/Astrea Sixth Form premises.

Appendix 1

Equality Objectives 2019-23

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 has three aims under the general duty for Academies:

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

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

We have considered how well we currently achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

Objective 1: To rigorously monitor the achievement of all students and analyse their performance in groups, including recognising those with protected characteristics and ensure measures are implemented to close any gaps so all students achieve and succeed.

Success Criteria: Continuing to regularly monitor the progress and achievement of all students throughout the year, focussing on groups such as disadvantaged/Pupil Premium and SEND and comparing these results to in-school and national figures. Continue with the frequency of Quality Assurance by Senior Leaders, Middle Leaders and TMB members in the form of lesson observations, learning walks, class and student voice. Use the milestones identified in the Academy Improvement Plan to measure impact.

Objective 2: To monitor and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds needs through pastoral systems and roles including progress leaders, SEN Department and Pupil Premium co-ordinator.

Success Criteria: To provide resources and support, education/emotional/social interventions and enrichment activities.

Objective 3: Focus on fostering good relations across protected characteristics including LGBT & SEND.

Success Criteria: Over the last academic year we have had a wider diversity of students coming in to the Academy. Success criteria will be utilising our Personal Development curriculum to teach students about different ethnicities, origins and backgrounds, sexuality etc. to help foster good relations across all protected characteristics. Utilising relevant interventions to support students in managing their emotions and provide support groups to ensure student voice is listened to and heard.

Appendix 2

Definitions

Equality - In an educational context, this refers to treating people equally and without discrimination (equality), whilst treating people fairly and according to their needs (equity). This means that whilst we aim to avoid discrimination by treating people equally, we must also consider the needs of individuals and so some people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve equity of opportunity.

Inclusive - Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.

Diversity - Recognising that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Cohesion - People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Community - From the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings:

- The Academy/Astrea Sixth Form community – the students we serve, their families and the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form's staff.
- The community within which the Academy/Astrea Sixth Form is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area.
- The community of Britain – all Academies by definition are part of it.
- The global community – formed by international links

Gender dysphoria is a recognised condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. Biological sex is assigned at birth, depending on the appearance of the infant. Gender identity is the gender that a person "identifies" with, or feels themselves to be.