



# Cedars Academy

## Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

May 2023

To be reviewed: May 2024

By: MO'R/JV/KV and Resources, Audit and Risk Committee

### 1. Introduction

This policy describes the way in which Cedars Academy will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, as well as any volunteers working in the school.

#### Mission statement

*Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, trustees, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially **fit for life**.*

### 2. Context

The legal and local framework for this policy is:

- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- Children & Families Act 2014
- Gateshead Statement on Equality and Diversity

Pupils at Cedars Academy are entitled to be valued equally, irrespective of their age, their ability, their gender, their race, their cultural background, or their religious beliefs. They are entitled to be safeguarded and protected.

They are entitled to have access to educational opportunities that are diverse and of assured quality, and to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that promotes their personal development and meets their individual needs.

The 'curriculum' is understood to mean the totality of what pupil's experience throughout their school lives.

Adults at Cedars Academy are entitled to be valued equally. The Academy values diversity amongst staff, parents, volunteers and helpers. Discrimination on the basis of gender, race, cultural group or age is unacceptable.

In staff appointments, the best candidate will be appointed based upon strict professional criteria. In this area the school complies fully with the LA's Equal Opportunities (Employment) Policy Statement, which states that

This LEA / Board of Trustees confirms its opposition to discrimination in employment and commits itself to a comprehensive programme of equal opportunity. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of staff is based solely on the criteria of merit and ability. No job applicant or

employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, ethnic or national origin, marital status, domestic circumstances, age, sexuality, disability, trade union activity, political and religious beliefs.

### 3. Access

Employees, learners and volunteers are made aware of the existence of this policy and where it can be accessed. This policy is reviewed annually.

### 4. Policy Statement

Cedars Academy will adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by not discriminating against learners, staff, volunteers or anyone involved in external agencies the organisation may be working with on the grounds of:

- sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation

In addition, there will be no discrimination against:

- pregnant females or new mothers
- staff, learners or volunteers undergoing gender re-assignment
- learners due to the behaviour of their parents and/or siblings

When recruiting staff, health related questions will not be asked until after a job offer is made, and then, only if it is necessary for the role.

Cedars Academy may decide to use the 'Positive Action' clause of the Equality Act 2010, which allows for the setting up of courses specifically for a certain group, such as Afro-Caribbean boys or Roma children.

It is expected that every person in the organisation will make a positive contribution to this policy, namely:

- All staff whether paid or voluntary
- All visitors to Cedars Academy
- All learners at Cedars Academy

In addition, Cedars Academy will:

- ensure that the services it provides are accessible to all and endeavour to positively encourage and benefit people from disadvantaged groups
- supply specialist aids and facilities to enable disabled people
- monitor any issues that arise within the organisation and take appropriate action, fully supporting any person in the organisation who is faced with prejudice or discrimination
- undertake an annual evaluation process to ensure that the policy is clear, in keeping with current legislation and being adhered to
- treat seriously any breaches of the policy, regarding them as misconduct which may lead to disciplinary proceedings

### 5. Aims and Values

At Cedars Academy we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

Cedars Academy is a welcoming school and college where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the

whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion or disability. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with parents, trustees and members of the wider community.

We aim to:

- provide a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and achieve all five outcomes of Every Child Matters (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and enjoy economic well-being)
- provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging
- prepare children for life in a diverse society in which children are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age
- plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity
- actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities

To achieve these aims we will:

- involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures
- publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community
- collect and analyse data to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage
- use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to pupils' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning
- ensure that the wider school curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity
- have high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect to others

## 6. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees:

It is the Board's responsibility to:

- ensure that the academy complies with equality legislation
- meet requirements to publish equality schemes
- ensure that the academy's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans
- scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures at least annually
- follow the LA's admissions policy, which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups
- monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary
- have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Board.
- provide information in appropriate, accessible formats
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy

- be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups

The Headteachers:

It is the headteachers' responsibility to:

- implement the policy and its strategies and procedures
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant continuous professional development
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice
- deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with LA guidance
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy
- produce a report on progress for trustees annually

All Staff:

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture
- promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation
- promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society
- keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources

## 7. Policy Planning and Review

In relation to our duty to develop and publish equality schemes in relation to both gender and disability, at Cedars Academy we consider all aspects of diversity and equality within our Development Plan.

7.1 Policy planning and development:

- In the planning and development stage of policy-making, we will ensure we have consulted and taken into account stakeholder views
- All development plans will be designed with an element of impact assessment built in to monitor the success of each activity
- The impact of all policies and procedures on equality and diversity will be reviewed to address any areas of inequality; e.g. Achievement and attainment will be analysed to ensure progress for all, especially in relation to any identified disadvantaged groups; attendance and exclusion data will be reviewed to ensure no over-representation of any one group)
- Our target-setting processes ensure appropriate, challenging targets are set in relation to identifiable groups as well as individual pupils /cohort

## 7.2 Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Each pupil's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, looked-after status
- In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the school meets its duty to positively promote diversity (e.g. lesson plans record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity)
- The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making

## 8. Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the Board of Trustees and LA as required.

### 7.1 Complaints Procedure

#### Stage 1

Any person who experiences, witnesses or is reasonably led to believe that this Equal Opportunities Policy has not been respected, should immediately bring the situation to the attention of the centre's senior staff. The person responsible for this breach will be reminded of the existence and purpose of this policy, and asked to adhere to the policy.

#### Stage 2

If the person continues behaving in an unacceptable manner, the matter will be referred to the Headteachers who will decide the best course of action.

This may result in:

- a warning being issued
- a disciplinary
- a referral to a higher level of authority

Stage 3 The offending person has the right to appeal. He/she can write to the Board of Trustees. The decision of the Board will be final.

UNCRC Reference: Article 23

To be reviewed in May 2024