

## Equal Statement and Objectives 2023-24

To be reviewed: Sep 2024 By MO'R/JV/KV/C&S

### Read alongside the Single Equality Policy

#### 1. Introduction

This statement, alongside the Single Equality 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.

Cedars Trust aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 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

#### 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. 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. 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.

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 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.

#### 4. Eliminating discrimination

The trust 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.

Staff and trustees 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 annually.

The trust has a designated member of staff (Director of Inclusion) for monitoring equality issues, and an equality link trustee. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and trustees aware of these as appropriate.

#### 5. Advancing equality of opportunity

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

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that 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 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 societies)
- In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:
  - Analyse progress data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing and determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and share 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

The trust 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 of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in Beliefs and Values, Citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures

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

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 Academy. For example, Student Voice has representatives from different Key Stages 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 to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures through our Family Learning initiatives.

We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

## 7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The trust 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 pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls and those who do not identify as either.

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

## 8. Roles and responsibilities

### The Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure 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
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteachers and Director of Inclusion.
- Ensure that the academy complies with equality legislation
- have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Board of Trustees
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy
- be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups

### The equality link trustee is                     . They will:

- Meet with the Director of Inclusion every term 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 Board of Trustees regarding any issues

### The Leadership Team will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to trustees.
- 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

### The Director for Inclusion will:

- Support the headteachers in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils
- Meet with the equality link trustee on a termly basis to raise and discuss any issues.
- Support the headteachers in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

**All academy staff** are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 9.

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 academy'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

## 9. Equality Objectives

These are our specific and measurable Equality Objectives. They are based on our analysis of data and other evidence. They focus on those areas where we have agreed to take action to improve equality and tackle disadvantage. We will regularly review the progress we are making to meet our equality objectives.

### Objective 1

To ensure that the curriculum celebrates the diversity not only in our community but across the UK. To develop a curriculum where all children and young people are represented and that they develop a greater understanding of diversity through the texts that they read and the experiences they encounter throughout the curriculum.

**Why we have chosen this objective:** Cedars Academy has a predominantly white, British student population, staff and Board of Trustees. We have a growing number of EAL children or children from families of different ethnicity, we also have a number of LGBTQ+ families in our community. We aim to increase our pupils' understanding of diversity, ensuring that children from all background are represented.

**To achieve this objective, we plan to:** Review the curriculum alongside representatives from a range of cultures and backgrounds, ensuring a good range of representation.

**Progress we are making towards this objective:** We have reviewed the diversity represented in class texts and mini-libraries and subject leaders have reviewed the curriculum offer.

### Objective 2

To review and further developed the provision of PSHE and RSE curriculum in order to embed the explicit teaching of the protected characteristics at a level appropriate to the stage of development.

**Why we have chosen this objective:** To ensure that our pupils are well-prepared for an ever-changing and diverse society and that they consistently display our core value of 'respect' in their interactions with other people.

**To achieve this objective, we plan to:** Embed the equality values throughout the curriculum and our wider provision.

**Progress we are making towards this objective:** Opportunities to discuss the protected characteristics have been identified in the long term PSHE planning. Evidence for Learning is used to keep evidence of discussions in these lessons. Regular opportunities are planned for discussion around the protected characteristics in Personal Development time in class groups.

### Objective 3

Have in place a reasonable adjustment agreement for all staff with disabilities by July 2023, to meet their needs better and make sure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed.

**Why we have chosen this objective:** We have a growing number of staff with neurodivergent diagnosis and/or presentation.

**To achieve this objective, we plan to:** Work with our staff team and guidance from Equality and Human Rights Commission to establish effective policy that is clear and accessible to everyone.

**Progress we are making towards this objective:** This is completed – all staff with disabilities have been met with and reasonable adjustments agreed as required.

#### Objective 4

Train all members of staff and trustees involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination by the beginning of the next academic year. Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those attending have a good understanding of the legal requirements.

**Why we have chosen this objective:** Cedars Academy has a predominantly white, British staff and Board of Trustees that do not reflect the growing number of EAL children or children from families of different ethnicity or LGBTQ+ backgrounds. Training will ensure we are able to take into consideration all backgrounds and cultures when making decisions for the whole academy.

**To achieve this objective, we plan to:** Use National College materials to ensure ease and consistency of training across the trust.

**Progress we are making towards this objective:** We have identified the key training packages and will share these in the Spring term 2023. These were shared with staff. **We will now share with Trustees.**

#### 10. 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.

##### a. 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

##### b. 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

#### 11. 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 Leadership Team. 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 Director of Inclusion and 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 Sep 2024