

# Acorn Trust

## Equal Opportunities Policy



Written by:	J Buckley, Trust Business Manager with EA Audits
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Next Review Date:	Summer 2019
Chairs Signature	

## **Mission Statement**

The Acorn Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust established with the aim of providing outstanding learning and opportunities for the children within its care.

Children are our nation's most precious resource. Their school life and learning experience will shape them for the whole of their lives

## **Safeguarding Statement**

At the Acorn Trust we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

This policy applies to all current and prospective members of the School Community.. This policy is available on the School website and on request. It should be read in conjunction with each school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **Overview**

The Acorn Trust promotes equal opportunities throughout all areas of its schools. The Trust opposes less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief), age, race or disability ("the protected characteristics").

All members of our schools communities are expected to comply with this policy. Our Equal Opportunities Policy is consistent with our Trust's values and ethos and has been built on our own existing good practice. This policy is consistent with all of the Trust's policies.

All policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

### **Aims**

The aims of this policy and the Acorn Trust's ethos as a whole is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language.
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the Schools communities
- Value diversity
- Promote good relations between all members of the Schools communities
- Comply with the Trust's equality duties contained in the Equality Act

## **Admission**

The Trust treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and each School's Admissions Policy. Each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the Schools' selection criteria. All schools within the Trust accept applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs.

In accordance with each school's terms and conditions, parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, special needs or disabilities or other circumstances which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School.

The Trust monitors the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds.

## **Educational services**

The Trust affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services, facilities irrespective of any protected characteristic subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare.

The Trust will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

In both curricular and extra-curricular activities, pupils are encouraged to explore the viewpoints and values of different cultures that make up contemporary society and to benefit from the richness of experience that the exchange of cultural expectations and knowledge can bring.

Each school within the Trust will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination;
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive necessary educational and welfare support;
- Ensure that all children are included, valued and supported;
- Monitor the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds;
- Ensure that publicity materials present appropriate and positive messages about minority racial groups;
- Make staff aware that schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources should demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity, to encourage children to value and respect others;
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff;

- Foster and encourage positive attitudes and behaviour towards all members of the community through the planned teaching of relevant knowledge, skills and values;
- Celebrate cultural diversity through school events, such as dance, drama and music;
- Ensure that, although assemblies are broadly Christian, they emphasise the importance of values such as respect, open-mindedness and tolerance;
- Provide careers guidance that does not promote stereotyping in employment and encourages pupils not to be influenced by such factors when choosing a career;
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support;
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School; and ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive practices
- Take reasonable steps to help avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional.

### **Religious belief**

Although the Acorn Trust's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the Trust is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of its schools communities..

### **Reasonable adjustments**

The Trust has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils, such as, allowing dyslexic pupils extra time with examinations, providing visually impaired pupils with text in larger font and providing reasonable adjustments to the school uniforms for disabled pupils.

Each school within the Trust:

- will inform and consult with parents about the reasonable adjustments, if any, the school are legally required to make for their disabled child.
- recognises that they have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for the public where services are provided to the public e.g. parents' evenings and school concerts.
- is not legally required to make physical alterations as part of the reasonable adjustments duty. However, the school monitors and reviews the school's physical features to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to disabled pupils. All schools within the Trust have an Accessibility Plan and an Access Audit in

place and a hard copy can be made available by the school office upon request.

From 1 September 2012 every school is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for those disabled pupils who are put at a substantial disadvantage as part of the school's reasonable adjustments duty. The Trust carefully considers any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to each school.. Further information on each school's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in their SEN Policy.

### **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator**

Every school within the Trust has a SENCO who works closely with the Headteacher and meets with the Headteacher on a weekly basis.

The SENCO has a range of responsibilities including ensuring Individual Education Plans are in place, liaising with parents and other professionals in respect of a pupil's special educational needs, advising and supporting other staff at the School and ensuring that relevant background information about pupils with special educational needs is collected, recorded and updated.

The Acorn Trust will have due regard to the SEN Code of Practice when monitoring and reviewing provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The approach to assessment may be varied as appropriate

### **Concerns and complaints**

The Acorn Trust will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination or harassment.

Pupils who feel they are being discriminated against should talk to a member of staff. Alternatively, if parents or pupils feel this policy has been breached they should raise their concern or complaint through the School's Complaints Procedure which is available on the School website and upon request.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and that appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination where necessary.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the aims of the policy are carried out in accordance with the Acorn Trust's equality duty.