Equalities Policy and Equality Statement

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Contents

Introduction **3**
Purpose of the policy **3**
Policy Statement & Principles **3**
Roles and Responsibilities **4**
Board of Trustees 4
School employees 4
Reasonable Adjustments **4**
What we do to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation **4**
Uniform policy 4
Admissions policy 5
Religious beliefs 5
Curriculum 5
Exclusion policy 5
Gender identity 5
Recruitment and selection 5
Links to other Policies and Documents **5**
Monitoring **6**
Review **6**

Introduction

The Prince Albert Community Trust is committed to equality and valuing diversity and actively supports practices that promote genuine equality of opportunity and inclusivity for all staff and students across its schools. The Trust is committed to promoting a positive and diverse culture in which all staff and students are valued and supported to fulfil their potential irrespective of any protected characteristic. The Trust recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to promoting the equality and diversity of all those we work with especially our employees, students and visitors. This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including volunteers and students on placement), young people and visitors at our schools. It seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with 'protected characteristics', in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Equality Act.

Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students, staff, parents and carers or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.
Age and marriage and civil partnership are also "protected characteristics", which are covered by this policy, but not as part of the school provisions related to students.
The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** or 'general duty'
This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Two 'specific duties'
This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty.
- Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

The Trust will work across its school communities to analyse data and existing practices to set out the actions taken in compliance of the equality duty and to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives to support the development of each school and its community. These will be set out in each school's Equality Action Plan.

Policy Statement & Principles

At the Prince Albert Community Trust, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and the absence of unfair discrimination is provided for all stakeholders in line with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to demonstrate this equality of opportunity through all aspects of school life by removing barriers to learning and success through our work in the classroom, our pastoral and inclusion support systems, out of hours learning opportunities, our links with the wider community and our recruitment and retention of staff.

We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We seek to demonstrate our commitment to providing equality of opportunity by:

- Treating all individuals with equal value.
- Ensuring that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- Making sure that our schools are safe, secure and stimulating places for everyone.
- Recognising that people have different needs, and understanding that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.
- Considering equality implications before and at the time that policies are developed as well as when they are reviewed.
- Recognising that some students need extra support to help them make progress and be successful and ensuring that all students have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school
- Aiming to ensure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking to students and parents/carers, and through our School Council.
- Challenging stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.
- Celebrating the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.
- Striving to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning.

We implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

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

We aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with special emphasis on promoting equality and diversity, and eradicating prejudicial incidents for pupils and staff. Our Trust is committed to not only eliminating discrimination, but also increasing understanding and appreciation for diversity.

In order to comply with the two specific duties, we will:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty.
- Publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees
The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that the Trust complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. This means that they will ensure that the requirements of the Equality Duty and Equalities Act are met throughout all aspects of the organisation e.g. ensuring this policy is reflected in all policies and practices. They will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the equality policy annually. The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at each school is the Head of School.

Employees
All employees will:

- Treat colleagues, young people and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity.
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities.
- Report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.
- Keep up to date with equalities legislation and it's application by attending appropriate training.

PACT will provide Equality and Diversity training for all staff through an online platform every two years.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments, where there is a need to ensure that a disabled person has the same access to everything as a non-disabled person, as far as is reasonable. We will take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by a disabled individual, as far as is reasonable. The duty to make reasonable adjustments covers all aspects of school life, including the curriculum, classroom organisation and timetabling, access to facilities, clubs and visits, sports and policies.
In making reasonable adjustments, the Trust is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled students and employees.

Staff will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services. For employees with disabilities there will be the same consideration will be given to requests for aids and reasonable adjustments.

The Trust will monitor the physical features of the schools' premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the Trust will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. Please see the Accessibility Plan for further information, which can be found on the respective school website.

What we do to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Uniform policy
Each school's uniform policy is consistent with this policy. The same uniform policy applies equally to all students, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs,subject to considerations of safety and welfare.However, all schools will consider

reasonable requests to alter the uniform, for example for genuine religious requirements and in making reasonable adjustments for disabled children to avoid substantial disadvantage.

Admissions policy
Admissions criteria are defined under each school's admissions policy and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

Religious beliefs
The Trust respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and each school will comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice wherever possible. An example where a request may be refused is if the religious observance takes place during lesson time. Whilst the school will explore other ways to accommodate the request, such as amended timetabling, this may not always be possible.

Curriculum
The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for students including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for certain groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our curriculum. Positive and proactive steps will be taken to prevent discrimination against, or victimisation of, any student in the provision of education or access to any benefit, facility or service including educational trips, work experience and leisure activities. The Trust recognises and promotes awareness of the possibility of bias (for example gender or racial), and work to eliminate such bias in both teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias. The Trust may take positive action to give students of a particular racial group, or students with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the needs of the students in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English. All students are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other students, irrespective of any protected characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the Trust, and students are encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

Exclusion policy
The decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently is a last resort and will be made in accordance with the behaviour policy. That policy applies to all students and any exclusion decision will take into account our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Gender identity
The Trust is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 towards employees and students identifying as transgender and non-binary. The Trust will be sensitive to their individual needs whilst also recognising the needs and sensitivities of all staff and students.

Students who have confirmed that they have commenced the process of transitioning, and therefore fall under the protected characteristic of gender-reassignment will be provided with appropriate pastoral care and support.

For employees, there is a specific policy to support which can be found via the link: Supporting Trans and Non-binary Staff - Guidance 2022.docx (sharepoint.com)

Recruitment and selection
All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent will be treated fairly and equally. We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Selections will be made on the basis of aptitude, ability and/or merit, where appropriate.
Where appropriate, the Trust will endeavour to make all reasonable and effective adjustments during the recruitment and selection process. Where recruitment and selection is carried out by a third party, on behalf of the Trust, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure they adhere to the principles of this policy.

Recording and reporting of incidents of discrimination and harassment

All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment must be reported to senior staff and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident). All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise), will be addressed in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Links to other Policies and Documents

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public-Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school development plan, self-evaluation review, the school web site and newsletters.

Our responsibilities under the Equality Act also inform policy and practice with regards to the behaviour, admissions, SEND and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of meetings involving the Board of Trustees, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and school council.

The Equality Act also applies to PACT in the role as employer, and the way we comply can be found in our recruitment policy.

Complaints

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow our complaints procedure. For employees there is a dignity at work policy: Dignity at Work Policy 2023.doc (sharepoint.com)

Monitoring

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we:

- Review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires and parent meetings.
- Secure and analyse responses from staff surveys and other staff communication.
- Review feedback and responses from students vis school council and other student voice groups.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments or in response to changes in guidance.