Avonbourne Boys' & Girls' Academies
The best in everyone™
Part of United Learning

Equal Opportunities Policy

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Incorporating DISABILITY, RACE and GENDER Equality

Context

Avonbourne Academies are non-selective Academies operating in a selective local education system. The intake of both Academies is predominantly white British working class with a growing proportion of white EAL students as well as a growing number of students from other ethnicities.

The proportion of students eligible for 'Free School Meals' is currently 499 students: 27.1% for the Boys' and 23% for the Girls' Academy. 23.1% (Avonbourne Boys') and 17.2% (Avonbourne Girls') of our students are listed on the SEND Code of Practice including students with Sensory and/or Physical Disabilities.

Aims and Values

We strive at Avonbourne Academies to celebrate diversity, ensure that students are valued and supported equally irrespective of background or personal circumstances and provide all students with equality of opportunity in order to promote the highest possible standards of personal and academic achievement.

Equality of opportunity applies to all members of our community – students, staff, governors, parents and community members.

The Academies oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination, particularly relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and we take measures to quickly and effectively tackle and record incidents if they arise.

Students are educated to celebrate diversity, have respect for their own and other people's rights and have awareness of other people's differing lifestyles, perspectives and opinions.

All staff foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among students from all ethnic groups.

Procedures are in place to ensure that all forms of discrimination, bullying and/or harassment of staff or students are dealt with promptly, firmly and fairly in line with relevant United Learning guidance such as anti-bullying and dealing with racist incidents. All forms of harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant Academy policies. Other key related documents that support our Equality Policy include our Academy Anti-Bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Whistle-Blowing Policy, SEND Policy and United Learning Equality Guidance.

Our policy is also guided by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Expectations of stakeholders:

1. Everyone must be properly prepared for lessons

2. Everyone must be on time for lessons

3. Students must follow staff instructions

4. Everyone should engage with their learning and work to the best of their ability

5. Treat others as you yourself like to be treated

6. Everyone must have due regard for other people's needs, perspectives and rights

This code of conduct allows all stakeholders to remain safe from emotional and physical harm and to develop as learners and positive contributors to the community and our society. It also enables the Academies to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. We believe that it is important to meet the diverse needs of students to ensure inclusion for all so that all students are prepared for full and positive participation in a culturally diverse society of people with a wide range of needs, opinions and abilities.

Our commitment to race equality including religion or belief:

This policy has been written to meet the Academies' statutory duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. General and specific duties are required as follows:

We recognise our statutory duty to

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations in all areas of Academy life between people of different racial groups

We endeavour to:

- ensure that all students and staff are encouraged and able to achieve their full potential
- respect and value differences between people
- prepare students for life in a diverse society
- acknowledge the existence of racism and take steps to prevent it. Ensure clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff deal with all forms of bullying and harassment promptly and that action is taken in line with the Local Authority guidelines
- recognise that diversity has a positive role to play within the Academies
- ensure that staff foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among students from all ethnic groups
- cater for dietary and dress requirements of different religious groups
- enable students and staff to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith and actively encourage all students to understand these
- educate stakeholders that intolerant behaviour is always unacceptable. All of our policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities, including race equality
- train staff to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice

Our commitment to gender equality:

We aim to ensure that schemes of work reflect non-stereotypical issues. We challenge out of date biased stereotypical attitudes towards gender. The Local Governing Body will eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex and promote equality of opportunity for all staff.

Gender reassignment:

We ensure that staff or students at the Academies are not discriminated against because:

• of gender reassignment as a transsexual. Staff or students may prefer the description transgender person or trans male or female. A wide range of people are included in the terms 'trans' or 'transgender' – transgender in this context means someone proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex
• someone thinks someone is transsexual – discrimination by perception is not tolerated
• someone is connected to a transsexual person, or someone wrongly thought to be transsexual – discrimination by association

The Academies will work with members of staff, students and carers in contexts where someone is treated differently (but lawfully) due to gender reassignment. A possible example of this is competitive sport as outlined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Our commitment to age equality:

Avonbourne Academies wish to be recognised by the community as an organisation which provides good employment for people of different ages. We wish individuals who apply to us as an employee or as a trainee to know that they will receive fair treatment and be treated solely on their ability.

Therefore, our policies aim to ensure that people of different ages receive treatment that is fair, equitable and consistent with their skills and abilities.

Avonbourne Academies are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all ages. All people have a right to equality of opportunity irrespective of their age.

Our commitment to equality for those who are pregnant or on maternity leave:

Avonbourne Academies follow and are committed to the United Learning Family Leave and Pay Policy. Key aspects of this policy include:

- up to 52 weeks statutory maternity leave regardless of length of service
- transparent and open discussions of flexi and part time working
- the right to return to a job after taking Statutory Maternity Leave. Any job will carry seniority, pension rights and terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have applied had the employee not been absent

Our commitment to equality regardless of sexual orientation:

We ensure that staff and students are not discriminated against because:

- they are heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual or asexual
- someone thinks they have a particular sexual orientation – discrimination by perception
- they are connected to someone who has a particular sexual orientation – discrimination by association

In the Equality Act 2010, sexual orientation includes how you choose to express your sexual orientation, such as through your appearance or the places you visit, and we support staff and students with this except for any breaches of law or conduct as outlined in our staff code of conduct and safeguarding policy.

Disability

The definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is any physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. This includes but is not limited to mobility difficulties, deaf or hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems.

We offer a supportive environment for any employees and students with a disability, and we always endeavour to make reasonable and necessary adjustments to improve access and inclusion for all of our stakeholders.

Avonbourne Academies:

- are committed to taking positive action to welcome people with disabilities and to enable them to reach their full potential
- will, in all policies, procedures and activities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, provide consideration to the means of enabling disabled students' participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the Academies
- will meet our statutory requirements under the Equality Act not to discriminate against people with a disability either in the process of recruitment or whilst employed/ studying at the Academies
- will give clear information and advice about the practical issues, which may be encountered by an individual in their chosen programme of study

Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour (verbal or physical) that may be personally humiliating, offensive, abusive, intimidating or undermines the individual involved. Harassment on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and disability are both unlawful and unacceptable. Harassment on any other grounds or circumstances is unacceptable. Bullying is also unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All stakeholders have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

We aim to achieve a culture which is free from harassment (and bullying) and to foster this by ensuring:

- staff and students are able to challenge all forms of harassment and bullying
- incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively
- individuals have the confidence and support to bring complaints without fear of ridicule or reprisal
- individuals take personal responsibility to ensure that the dignity of students and staff is not abused or demeaned

Good Practice includes:

Teaching and Learning

- All students have access to the mainstream curriculum
- Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel all contributions are valued
- Teaching is responsive to students' needs, with the teacher taking positive steps to include all groups or individuals
- Student grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under continual review and are analysed by ethnicity, gender and background

- Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that students appreciate the value of working together. All students are encouraged to question, discuss and collaborate in problem-solving tasks
- Teachers encourage students to become independent and to take responsibility for their own learning
- Teachers challenge stereotypes and foster students' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities
- Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of students, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the Academies

Curriculum

Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all students. The curriculum builds on students' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- students learning English as an additional language
- students from minority ethnic groups
- students who are gifted and talented
- students with special educational needs
- students who are looked after by the local authority
- students who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion

The Academies monitor and evaluate effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for students of all backgrounds. Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity.

All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students. The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages students to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

Extra-curricular activities and special events (e.g. productions) cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

Attainment and Progress

- The Academies have equally high expectations of all students and are committed to encouraging and enabling all students to achieve the highest standards
- The Academies recognise and value all forms of achievement
- Student attainment and progress are monitored by ethnicity and evaluated to identify trends and patterns of underachievement
- Action is taken to remove disparities between different groups of students
- All methods of assessment are monitored to ensure that they are, as far as possible, free of cultural or linguistic bias
- All students are appropriately supported in assessments so that they are able to show fully both what they know and what they can do
- Particular attention is paid to identifying and meeting the needs of groups that are particularly disadvantaged

Personal Development and Pastoral care

- The pastoral support system takes account of religious and ethnic differences,

and the experiences and needs of refugee and asylum-seeker children
• The Academies provide appropriate support for EAL students and encourages them to use their home and community languages
• The Academies takes into account, and meets the needs of, Traveller and Forces students
• All students are provided with appropriate career advice and guidance
• Work experience providers are asked to demonstrate their commitment to Equal Opportunities. Placements are monitored
• Support is given to victims and perpetrators of harassment and unacceptable behaviour. External agencies are used, where appropriate

Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusion

• Our procedures for disciplining students and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all
• It is recognised that cultural background may affect behaviour. The Academies take this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour
• All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline
• Exclusions and attendance are monitored, and action is taken in order to reduce gaps between different groups of students
• Students, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group is always unacceptable and will be challenged and sanction as appropriate

Admissions and Attendance

• The Admissions policy and criteria are equally open to students from particular racial groups
• The admissions process is monitored to ensure that it is administered consistently and fairly
• Provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance. This includes staff as well as students
• Pupil attendance is monitored according to vulnerable groups, including Ethnicity

Staff Recruitment

• The Academies adhere to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in line with statutory duties and United Learning guidelines
• Steps are taken to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the staff structure
• Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the Academies are informed of the contents of this policy. New staff are familiar with it as part of their induction programme
• The skills of all staff, including non-teaching and part-time staff, are recognised and valued.
• All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge
• Staff information and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy
• Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and reflect the diversity of the local and wider community
• Ethnic Monitoring of Employees: we routinely monitor job applications and staff by grade and by ethnic groups

Partnership with Parents/Carers and the Community

- Progress reports to parents/carers are accessible and appropriate, in order to ensure that all parents/carers have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue
- All parents/carers are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the Academies
- Information and meetings for parents/carers are made accessible for all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of all groups
- The Academies work in partnership with parents/carers and the community to address specific incidents and to develop positive attitudes to difference
- The Academies take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented groups of parents/carers and sections of the community
- Information material for parents/carers is easily accessible in user-friendly language and is available in languages and formats other than English, as appropriate
- Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups
- Our premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community

Responsibilities for Equal Opportunities Policy
The Local Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the Academies comply with all legislation including Race Relations legislation, enforces general and specific duties. The Equality Act 2010 and public sector equality duty will guide Academy policy on equal opportunities
- Ensure that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented

The Principal will:

- Work in partnership with the Local Governing Body to ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and are given appropriate training and support so that they can fulfil their responsibilities
- Treat seriously all incidents of discrimination and harassment, including racism, homophobia, sexism and ableism or discrimination of any kind and investigate and take appropriate action against staff or students who discriminate
- Ensure that additional grants and resources are appropriately targeted and monitored
- Identify a member of staff responsible for co-ordinating equality work and dealing with reported incidents of discrimination or harassment

All staff will:

- Deal with incidents of discrimination and harassment and know how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping
- Ensure that they do not discriminate on any grounds
- Keep up to date with all Equal Opportunities' legislation, including Race Relations Legislation

Teaching staff (In addition to all staff) will:

- Ensure that students from all vulnerable or minority groups, have full access to the curriculum
- Promote equality for all and diversity through teaching and through relation with students, staff, parents and the wider community
- Monitor teaching and curriculum developments to ensure high expectations of all students and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the Academies and the wider community

Visitors and contractors will:

- Be aware of and comply with the Academies Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to discrimination, harassment and race equality.

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