



SOKE EDUCATION TRUST  
SUSTAIN • EMPOWER • TRANSFORM

# EQUALITY POLICY

Chief Executive Officer	Sign and Date	
Chair of the Board	Sign and Date	
Approved Date	September 2019	
Review Date	September 2020	

## 1. Introduction

Soke Education Trust is committed to the advantage of equality of opportunities for all members of Soke Education Trust. The Trust Board aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, parent or pupil or other member of the Trust is treated less favourably than anyone else.

Equality does not mean treating everyone the same; it means treating people fairly, with respect, having regard for their rights and wishes. Sometimes, this might mean giving people extra help so that they have the same chances.

This policy is concerned with all pupils' access to the curriculum and the recruitment and opportunity of all staff.

The Equality Act 2010, replaces and consolidates previous anti-discrimination legislation, including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 with a single Act. The 2010 Act introduces changes that the Trust needs to take account of.

The Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), sometimes referred to as the general duty that applies to Schools, Academies and all Public Bodies.

The combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. In common with all public bodies, Soke Education Trust will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a relevant 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.

In practise, due regard means that the Trust Board and the Leadership teams within each school in the Trust will:

- Be aware of the duty to have due regard when making decisions or taking action and will assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics
- Consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought and they will keep them under review on a continuing basis
- Integrate PSED into the implementation of all the functions within each school and the Trust as a whole and ensure that the analysis necessary to comply with the duty is carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind. It will never be a question of ticking boxes or just following a particular process

It is unlawful to discriminate in the following areas, termed protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

- Pregnancy – the act extends this protection to pupils
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

## **2. Aims and objectives**

- To comply with the legislation of the Equality Act 2010
- To continue to maintain the Trust's position as a provider of the highest quality education and, as a good employer, providing development opportunities for all staff.
- To ensure that equality remains high on the strategic agenda at each individual school within the Trust
- To establish good management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response
- To ensure that all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil
- To ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for and appreciation of, one another as individuals
- To ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the equality policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure.

## **3. Staffing**

We recognise the need for positive role models and fair distribution of responsibility among staff. Therefore, we aim to:

- Give learners' access to a balance of male and female staff at all key stages where possible
- Encourage the career development and aspirations of all school staff
- Provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of learners
- Ensure that access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process
- Equalities policies and practices are covered in all staff inductions
- All temporary staff are made aware of equality policies and practices
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact

## **4. Curriculum**

We seek to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in which the basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught progressively and systematically. Furthermore, the Trust aims to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. The curriculum avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all pupils. The content for the curriculum has never been within discrimination law and the new Act explicitly excludes it. However, the delivery of the curriculum is explicitly included. Therefore, we seek to ensure that the curriculum is not delivered in a discriminatory way. For example:

- Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds are called upon to express their views in class discussions
- Girls and boys have equal access to all areas of the curriculum including sport

When curriculum policies are reviewed due regard is given to equal opportunity implications.

## **5. Tracking pupil progress**

We aim to ensure that all barriers to learning are removed for all our pupils, especially those with protected characteristics. To achieve this, we:

- Track the progress of pupils by analysing data by race, gender and disability
- Track the progress of all our pupils by analysing data
- Carry out regular assessments of all our pupils
- Set up targets for English and mathematics

## **6. Special issues for some protected characteristics**

- **Gender reassignment**  
The Trust Board will ensure that gender variant pupils, or the pupils of transgender parents are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.
- **Race**  
The Trust Board will make sure that all member of the Trust including pupils of all races are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. An annual audit is carried out to monitor the learning experience of these pupils.
- **Sexual orientation**  
The Trust Board will make sure that all homosexual, lesbian or bi-sexual members of the Trust including pupils of homosexual, lesbian or bi-sexual parents are not singled out for unfair treatment.
- **Disability**  
The Trust Board will make all reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantage to any disabled member of the Trust including pupils. When considering what a reasonable adjustment is, the governors of each individual school will take into account the circumstances of each case. Factors which the governors will consider include: the financial or other resources required for the adjustment, its effectiveness, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements and whether aids have been made available through the Special Educational Needs route.
- **Positive Action**  
Under the Act, the Trust Board can now lawfully make New Positive Action provisions to allow us to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, members of the Trust including pupils with particular protected

characteristics. These measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim. The Trust will use these provisions as appropriately as possible.

- **Specific duties**

In order that the Trust fulfils its obligations under the Act it will update the published policy and information annually and publish equality objectives for each individual school at least once every four years. The objectives will be measurable and focus on real improvements and positive outcomes.