

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## September 2024

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### Introduction

This policy applies to all employees of Spencer Academies Trust (SAT) and our Board of Directors. The purpose of our Policy is to define our commitment to equality, diversity and Inclusion; to reaffirm our commitment to a common set of values and objectives, and to set out a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring equality, diversity and inclusion objectives within our Trust.

Please see Spencer Academies Trust [Equality Objectives 2022-2026](#).

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in both employment and education provision within Spencer Academies Trust and to creating an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation. We aim to ensure all employees, within our One Spencer community feel they are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Where our individual differences and the contributions we make are all recognised and valued regardless of age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Every person in our One Spencer community has a responsibility for making our Trust an inclusive environment where all members of our community feel welcome and can be themselves.

Our policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of our employment, including recruitment and selection, pay and conditions, family friendly leave, flexible working and leave of absence, training and development, professional performance reviews, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and through to leaving employment. Our employee policies also set out how we can make a complaint about unwanted or inappropriate behaviour during our employment. This is not an exhaustive list, for more details see SAT employment policies [Ask HR - Ask HR \(sharepoint.com\)](#) and or Every Compliance Document Library

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, leading by example and ensuring that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives regarding equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. All colleagues are expected to adhere to the principles and shared responsibilities set out in our Employee Handbook, associated Code of Conduct and will undertake on-line training on equality, diversity and inclusion and bullying and harassment and sexual harassment awareness as part of their induction and on-going employment with our Trust. We encouraged the establishment and are committed to developing our employee assistance EAP and our employee network groups for EDI and Health and Wellbeing

## Equality Diversity and Inclusion working group

This group is made up of leaders across all departments, who contribute to our EDI strategy, ensuring EDI is a core consideration in all aspects of management and decision making. The group plays a crucial role in fostering an environment where all at our trust feel valued, respected and supported. The group's aims and purpose are centered around promoting fairness, celebrating diversity and ensuring everyone at the trust has equal opportunities to succeed.

For 2024/27 our three strategic objectives are:

1. Staffing – to attract, retain, develop and support an excellent diverse workforce.
2. Curriculum – to embed EDI into our curriculum
3. Listening – listen and learn from our communities to deliver a high-quality education that works for everyone

Our policy has been developed considering the guidance set out by ACAS on improving equality, diversity and inclusion. At Spencer Academies Trust we are proud to be a disability confident employer. As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to:

- ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- communicating and promoting vacancies
- providing reasonable adjustments as required
- supporting our colleagues with a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work

We are committed working towards becoming a disability confident leader.

## Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including our current and former employees, our children and young people, governors, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies to all our employees, both in the workplace and outside the workplace; on work-related trips or events including social events, when dealing with our colleagues, children and young people, customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally, have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- **Harassment and Sexual Harassment:** and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Sexual Harassment and harassment are dealt with further in our Anti-harassment, sexual harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy.
- **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

- **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

At Sencer Academies Trust we recognise that it is also unlawful to discriminate by association or perception, e.g. treating a child or young person or colleague unfairly based on the Protected Characteristics of their parents or other family members.

Please also see our Anti-Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy and Grievance Policy. Our policies and guides set out how to make a complaint and bring your concerns to the attention of your Principal or Central Team Director. [See SharePoint Ask HR](#)

## Equality Statement

At Spencer Academies Trust we will ensure that equal opportunities and the principles of fairness underpin all aspects of policy, procedure, education provision, consultation and decision making.

We will provide high quality education services, making sure these are accessible without barrier or discrimination. We will improve what we do by continuing to consult with employees, students, parents and governors, their communities and partners about equalities issues. We will promote our equality and diversity policy in our contact with parents, employees, governors and external organisations.

Our colleagues, Directors and governors recognise the importance of EDI and demonstrate a proactive approach to this in their day-to-day work. They will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, recognising individual needs and understanding differences. All behaviours will reach our high standards of conduct (colleagues and students) and the learning environment we provide will be safe and accessible for all children, young people and adults who study or work within our Trust. Where necessary we will implement reasonable adjustments, or additional support, to ensure equality of access to an education and suitable working environments. Our Academies have individual accessibility plans in place where appropriate.

We will adhere to statutory Government legislation and consider other relevant guidance, which aim to make sure that everyone is treated with equity. We will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against members of our Trust community.

## Employment

We are committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to jobs, training, and professional development opportunities. All employment policies refer to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010 and subsequent amendments. The Trust recognises that the Act extends beyond the protected characteristics of an individual employee and that employers have broader responsibilities to employees and situations that maybe covered by the Act.

All recruitment will be within the provisions of the Equalities Act, and applications will be monitored to report on recruitment activity, in line with the act. Age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment but does not apply to students studying in Trust academies.

Employees who are in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the SAT disciplinary policy.

## Student Provision

At Spencer Academies Trust we will ensure that students are provided with appropriate support to recognise their individual needs. This includes protection under the Act extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students. Accessibility plans will be in place and adhered to support children and young people.

## Contractors and Service Providers

At Spencer Academies Trust we will ensure that all service providers that are contracted to provide services to students, employees or visitors will comply with Equalities legislation. Where services are deemed not to meet Trust standards, in relation to equal opportunities and fairness, contracts may be terminated.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Directors are responsible for:

- Ensuring all our policies and practices comply with the equality, diversity and inclusion and meet all our statutory responsibilities in this respect.
- Providing EDI training and awareness for leaders and managers across our Trust.
- Ensure equality data is reviewed and monitored by the Board
- Putting in place an equality audit process for all appropriate policies and procedures

### Principals and Central Team Directors are responsible for:

- Providing consistent and high-profile leadership on equality, diversity and inclusion
- Putting SAT equality and diversity policy and any local equality statements and objectives into practice at academy level
- Ensuring all employees know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary ensure these are put into practice
- Following relevant procedures and acting in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment bullying or victimisation

### Employees are responsible for:

- Respecting their colleagues, our children and young people and the wider community in their language and actions
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination
- Actively responding to and reporting any inappropriate incidents relating to EDI
- Having an understanding through training and development of equality law.
- Engaging and putting into practice EDI e-learning and other CPD opportunities to ensure EDI best practice is always adhered to.

### Students are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their language and actions
- Understanding and promoting all the Academy equality, diversity and inclusion policies.

## Complaints

We will regard any complaints of unlawful (or potentially unlawful) discrimination as a potentially very serious matter. Any complaint will be investigated in accordance with the Trust grievance, anti-bullying or harassment or complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.

## Breaches of this policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against employees who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.

<b>Approved by:</b>	Director of HR	<b>Date:</b> 1st September 2024
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026	

### VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Revision Date	Description of Change	Author
01/02/22	Director of HR	01/09/22	Change of title to EDI	Central HR Team
01/12/22	Director of HR	01/09/22	Link to SAT equality objectives added	Central HR Team
01/09/22	Director of HR	01/09/24	<p>Apart from the changes to reflect our One Spencer vision and our commitment to EDI other than minor changes to wording and layout that do not fundamentally change the policy we have updated our EDI policy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revised EDI statement added</li> <li>▪ Added the EDI working group and our focus for the next 3 years of:</li> </ul> <p>For 2024/27 our three strategic objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staffing – to attract, retain, develop and support an excellent diverse workforce.</li> <li>2. Curriculum – to embed EDI into our curriculum</li> <li>3. Listening – listen and learn from our communities to deliver a high-quality education that works for everyone</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reference to Academy Accessibility Plans added</li> <li>▪ Strengthened our roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	Central HR Team