



Zest Academy Trust

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Approved & Adopted By Trust Board: 15/07/2016

Review Period: Biennial

Policy Date Last Reviewed/Approved: 11/05/2026

Person Responsible: CEO

Version Number: 7

Zest Academy Trust, Waterloo Road, Blackpool, FY4 3AG
T 01253 315370 E admin@zestacademytrust.co.uk W www.zestacademytrust.co.uk

CEO Mark Hamblett

Registered in England No. 8087508 Company Limited by Guarantee

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

At Zest Academy Trust we are committed to providing an environment in which all pupils are challenged to be the best they can be and one in which pastoral care and well-being underpin academic, co-curricular excellence. In one that staff are able to perform at their best and grow within the profession.

We believe in providing an environment which values our staff as individuals helps to provide a quality educational experience for all pupils as we seek to ensure that the learning experience blends the best of education opportunities underpinned by our ethos.

At Zest Academy Trust we focus on developing the whole person, aiming to ensure that each pupil leaves here ready for the challenges of life and has an understanding their responsibilities towards others. We want our pupils to leave the Academy well equipped to engage positively with a rapidly changing world with a clear appreciation of and respect for the views and potential of others.

Introduction

By celebrating diversity and actively promoting equality, we want pupils and staff to feel valued, know that they are valued and respect others within a culturally inclusive environment. In order to ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of the Academy's ethos.

We aim to promote inclusion, actively tackle any form of discrimination and actively foster social cohesion in all areas of Academy life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards creating a cohesive community.

Scope

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of the Academy community, including parents/carers and visitors.

The Academy is committed to a zero-tolerance policy in relation to less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic under The Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are defined as:

- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender identity or reassignment

- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race and ethnic origin, including colour
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes (including ‘banter’) that undermine or threaten an individual’s self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated.

Policy Aims

The aims of this policy and the Academy’s ethos as a whole are to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the 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 individual Academy’s community
- Comply with the Academy’s equality obligations contained in The Equality Act 2010
- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- Provide a learning environment and curriculum where all individuals feel valued and feel they have a sense of belonging.
- Celebrate and value diversity at Academy and in society as a whole.
- Prepare pupils for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and global community.
- Include and value the contribution of all families and our wider community to our understanding of equality and diversity.
- Provide and promote positive information about the diversity of UK society.

- Actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of the Academy's community learn from these experiences.
- Embed equality and inclusion throughout staff development, our curriculum and co-curricular provision.

To achieve our aims, we will

- Involve, where reasonably practicable, all relevant members of the Academy's community in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures
- Collect and analyse data to monitor any potential disadvantage amongst the pupil or staff body and to ensure processes are bias-free
- Promote openness at all stages of engagement of the admissions and recruitment processes, recognising that early awareness of need leads to better provision and appointments.
- Help to overcome any potential barriers to learning by providing for pupils' diverse needs and learning styles including any learning or pastoral support needs and/or disabilities a pupil may have.
- Help to overcome any potential barriers for staff progression by providing relevant staff development and the application of appropriate policies.
- Offer a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that provides equal opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of difference, to maximise their potential.
- Ensure the wider Academy curriculum promotes and celebrates equality and diversity, remaining aware of a hidden curriculum and agenda and subjects that may suggest unconscious gender bias.
- Operate a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour.
- Actively challenge stereotyping, bias and discrimination within all aspects of Academy life and literature, ensuring we learn from these experiences.

- Work in partnership with staff, families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and help tackle discrimination, recognising that inclusion cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the Academy 's community.

The Legal Framework

Discrimination can take the following forms, including:

- *Direct Discrimination* - This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their (or a family member's) actual or perceived protected characteristic.
- *Indirect Discrimination* - This occurs by applying a provision, criterion or practice, which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic, and which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- *Victimisation* - This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.
- *Harassment* – This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose OR effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- *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.
- *Discrimination by association* – This includes treating a person less favourably because they are linked or associated with a protected characteristic.

Responsibilities

It is the Trustees' responsibility to:

- Ensure that the Trust complies with its equality obligations.

Ensure that the Trust's policies and procedures are monitored in light of this policy and the Academy's wider equality obligations

- From time to time be involved alongside the Headteacher/Principal in dealing with serious breaches of this policy.

It is the Strategic Management Team's responsibility to:

- Ensure effective implementation of this policy and its procedures.
- Ensure that all staff are sufficiently aware and trained within equality & diversity.
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice within the Academy, be it by staff, pupils, parents or visitors
- Have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimization or harassment.
- Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, this policy.
- Monitor Academy data to identify where bias may be playing a role in decisions or outcomes. This will be done within the GDPR and confidentiality of personal information protocols and will be reported in such a way that does not identify any individuals.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Academy.
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by pupils, employees, contractors, parents/carers, visitors, and any others in the course of the Academy's' activities.

- Ensure transparency in assessing the impact of the Academy's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and accountable for future goals.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Positively role model inclusive and anti-discriminatory behaviour, including a spirit of inclusion and willingness to be open to challenge.
- Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.
- Be alert to and actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimization, harassment or bullying, including banter.
- Promote an inclusive curriculum, identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the Academy's culture, taking all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation from taking place.
- Make effective and reasonable adjustments where appropriate to meet the individual needs of staff, pupils and visitors.

The Academy expects staff to commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour by attending/undertaking relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources. It is important to appreciate that an employee is **personally responsible** for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment, whether or not the employer is also liable. Any attempt to instruct, cause or induce another person to discriminate, harass or victimise a third person will also amount to unlawful discrimination and any employee doing so will be subject to disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of pupils to:

- Positively promote inclusive and anti-discriminatory behaviour, including a willingness to reflect on attitudes and/or behaviours and be open to challenge.
- Support any measures introduced by the Academy to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and report any issues associated with equality and diversity to their class teacher.

These responsibilities run alongside the Academy's behaviour expectations. The Academy places a high premium on:

- Respect for Self
- Respect for Others
- Respect for our Environment and our Community

This is fundamental to all that goes on at the Academy. Any actions, words or attitudes which show a lack of respect for others will be taken very seriously. Instances of discrimination and bullying will be dealt with firmly and sensitively. We require pupils to avoid any form of unfair bias, discrimination and unkindness to another member of the community. We also require anyone made aware of any such behaviour to report it. *Incidents are recorded on our Anti-bullying Log*

The Academy's approach to wellbeing means we aim to educate, help and support pupils to understand their responsibility towards others, feel heard and valued and learn from their experiences. Bullying and discrimination will not be tolerated. Anyone who continues to bully or discriminate against others will have to meet with the Headteacher together with their parent/guardian/carer to discuss their behaviour.

Inclusion Within the Life of the Academy

No pupil or staff member should be made to feel uncomfortable because they differ from the majority, e.g., in ethnic or social background, in terms of academic ability, having English as an additional language or a special educational need and/or disability.

Pupils with particular areas of disadvantage, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities will be given assistance to achieve their potential by differentiation of tasks, positioning in the classroom, equipment that supports academic progress and additional support where appropriate.

Curriculum

The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for pupils, including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for traditionally and newly disadvantaged groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and wider curriculum.

The curriculum will aim to:

- Normalise diversity in the content and examples utilised
- Stress the contribution and achievements of all kinds of individuals and cultures, actively challenging bias and stereotyping
- Reinforce the importance of embracing difference and of equality of opportunity as a desirable aim
- Provide inclusive and accessible activities, including educational trips and co-curricular provision.

Resources and activities should be monitored for possible bias, reinforcing stereotypes and ethnocentric elements.

Training and Development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation.

The Trust will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution made by our staff, trustees, parents, pupils and wider community
- Equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions to discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote inclusive behaviour generally.
- Ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
- Respond to changing and emerging training needs, providing opportunities for reflection, feedback and shared learning.

The Look and Feel of the Academy

- Ensure that the everyday look and feel of the Academy reflects our diverse pupil body.
- Ensure that our caterers are celebrating our diverse culture regularly and the types of food offered reflect the diverse community of the Academy.
- Ensure that our behaviour code, staff dress code and uniform code takes into account issues of diversity and inclusion.

Links with the Wider Community

Community links are at the heart of what makes this a strong and safe environment.

All visitors to the Academy whether in a teaching role or as visitors, contractors or casual users of Academy premises will be expected to act in accordance with the principles of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Admissions

- The Academy treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the individual Academy's Admissions Policy. The Academy accepts applications from, and admits, pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.
- Parents must inform the individual Academy when completing the registration form of any special circumstances affecting their child (such as learning support needs) which may affect the child's ability to fully participate in the education provided by the Academy.

Religious Belief

- The Academy respects the rights and freedoms of individuals of all religions and faiths (or no religion or faith).
- Absence from Academy for religious observance is allowed and should be marked as authorised where the Academy is satisfied that the day has been set aside by the religious body and the parents of the child are members of that religious community.
- The Academy recognises that religious observance has an important part to play in valuing the spiritual development of all members of our community, strengthening social cohesion, developing a strong sense of self and celebrating shared values.
- Adaptations will be made to the Academy's uniform code for religious observance.
- Where possible religious observance will be facilitated, perhaps through allocation of prayer space or provision for resting whilst fasting.

Reasonable Adjustments

- The Academy acknowledges its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage, for example by taking positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting a group because of a protected characteristic.

- The individual Academy will inform and consult with pupils and parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the Academy are able to make for their child. The Academy will carefully consider any proposals for additional resources or changes to provision that support full access to Academy life.
- The Academy has a duty make reasonable adjustments (case by case considerations) for staff or pupils who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid, are undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.
- The individual Academy is not legally required to make alterations to the Academy's physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustment duty. However, the Academy monitors and reviews the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to pupils or staff with disabilities.

Raising Concerns

- The Academy will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who believe they have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment. Pupils should report discrimination to any staff member. Staff should report discrimination to the School Business Manager. Alternatively, they wish to utilise the grievance procedure.
- Any member of the Academy community who harasses another on the grounds of any protected characteristic will be subject to the Academy's disciplinary measures in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure
- If parents or visitors feel this policy has been breached, they should raise their concern with the relevant Headteacher/Principal.
- All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to Headteacher/Principal. We recognise that pupils need to learn from mistakes to develop a strong sense of self and an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others. Ill-considered, rather than deliberate, incidents should therefore be dealt with immediately and informally, where possible taking the opportunity for a teaching or tutor discussion. These should all be reported through the appropriate systems.
- Intentional and/or sustained incidents should be reported directly to the Headteacher ideally within 24 hours of the incident.

- Pupil infringements of this policy will be recorded on the Academy's *Anti-bullying Log*.
- Staff and visitor infringements of this policy will be reported to the Business Manager.

Staff Recruitment

The Academy is committed to:

- ensuring that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- Recognising that diversity broadens people's range of role models, helps others overcome unconscious bias and improves organisational change.

Application and recruitment processes will be monitored to identify any areas which may require the Academy to consider changing its recruitment methods. Such changes might include alterations to our advertising methods, our application processes and our interviewing methods.

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

Monitoring and Review

- This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to address any issues
- Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action.
- This policy document will be reviewed and publicised, at least biennially and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant incidents or new developments in national, local and organisational policy, guidance and practice.

Appendix 1

Terminology

Affinity Bias	The tendency to connect with people who look and seem most like ourselves and avoid those who are different.
Ally	Ally is a term used for people who support a social group other than their own, by acknowledging disadvantage and oppression, taking action on the behalf of others.
Allyship	Allyship is using your position of privilege to make a more inclusive culture.
Asian	Refers to a huge group – including Indian, South-East Asian and Chinese
BAME	(Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic) first used in the 1970's during the antiracist movement/ fighting discrimination. Definition includes anyone who isn't white British – including travellers, etc. Useful when making comparisons to the majority group but should not be used to talk about one group.
Black (or Black, African & Caribbean)	Used to specifically refer to Black heritage
Black Lives Matter	The International human rights movement - began in 2013 by a Californian woman Alicia Garza who wrote a Facebook post in response to the man who shot dead teenager - Trayvon Martin
Cisgender or Cis	Refers to a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Often used by the allies, who by using this term recognize that trans people exist and matter.
Culture Fit	Individual attitudes, values, behaviours, and beliefs being in line with the core values and culture of an organization.
Discrimination by association	Direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
Direct discrimination	Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race religion or belief, sexual orientation).

Discrimination	Discrimination is the act of making unjustified distinctions between people on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation, as well as other categories listed as protected characteristics
Discrimination arising from disability	Occurs when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment. Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct and indirect discrimination.
Diversity	Applies to a range of characteristics such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, religious belief, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability and age, and refers to the differences that can occur within each characteristic. Recognising the strengths that difference brings to an organisation.
Equality	Treating all people the same, assuming they will all benefit from the same support.
Equity	Treating people differently, in accordance with what support they need to achieve equality of opportunity or address unique barriers.
Gay	Someone who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex
Gender	Gender is a social and cultural construct of “female” and “male”. Although our sense of gender can align with our assigned sex, it goes well beyond chromosomes.
Gender dysphoria	Gender dysphoria often occurs in transgender or genderqueer people. Gender dysphoria is often used to describe when a person feels uncomfortable identifying as the gender they were born with, and feeling distress with their gender identity.
Gender expression	How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.
Gender Identity	Gender identity is personal: it’s how we see and define ourselves.
Genderqueer	Someone who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders.
Harassment	Occurs when a person is subject to “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.
Hate Crime	A criminal act directed at an individual because of their real or perceived religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Hate crimes can also be committed against property
Homophobia	A strong dislike or fear of homosexual people
Identity	The qualities of a person or group that make them different from others

Inclusion	Inclusion is the result of welcoming, respecting, supporting, involving, valuing and empowering those around you equally.
Intersectionality	The inter-connected nature of social categorisations; recognising that demographic groups (e.g. Black, women, Asian) are not homogenous, and that individuals may identify within many different groups.
Intersex	The term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological characteristics do not fit within traditional societal assumptions about what it means to be male or female.

Indirect Discrimination	Occurs when a condition, provision, policy or practice applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.
Islamophobia	The fear of Islam - refers to prejudice or discrimination against Muslims and incorporates the perceptions that Islam has no values in common with other cultures, is inferior to western beliefs and is a violent political ideology rather than a religion.
LGBTQ+/LGBTQI	The acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning (or queer), intersex + other gender variants. This is the most inclusive, all-encompassing term for the gay community, including those with non-cis gender identities.
LGBTQIA	LGBTQIA is an acronym and refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual or allied.
Mansplain	Mansplain is a combination of two words – “man” and “explain”. Mansplaining refers to a man explaining something to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing.
Microadvantages	Microadvantages are facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice and choice of words that are even more subtle than micro-affirmations, but equally as important in making a person feel appreciated and valued.
Microaffirmations	Microaffirmations are subtle acknowledgments of a person’s importance and accomplishments, which creates a feeling of being valued and a sense of belonging.
Microaggression	Microaggressions are seemingly harmless but impactful everyday slights and exclusions that negatively highlight an individual’s Otherness.
Multiracial, mixed heritage, dual heritage, mixed-race, mixed-ethnicity – or simply “mixed”	Terms describing a person who has parentage or ancestors from more than one ethnic and/or racial group. Some people can get confused between interracial and biracial. An individual can be described as biracial if their heritage is mixed; interracial, on the other hand, is used to describe relationships or interactions between individuals from different racial groups.
Neurodiverse	Neurodiversity describes a spread of neurological differences (learning and developmental difficulties, ADHD and Autism are examples).
Non-Binary	Refers to a person who doesn’t identify as only male or only female, or who identifies as both.

Pan	Refers to a person whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.
Person of Colour	The term " person of colour " is primarily used to describe any person who is not considered "white"
Perception discrimination	Direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.
Prejudice	Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience
Privilege	Unearned benefits given to people owing to membership of a specific social group relating to aspects of their identity. Those aspects can include race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and religion, as well as privilege related to wealth and class.
Pronoun	Words used to refer to people's gender – for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people prefer gender-neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.
Protected Characteristic	Grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
Psychological Safety	Psychological safety is a belief that you will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.
Questioning	Used to describe a person who may be processing or questioning their sexual orientation and/ or gender identity
Racism	Refers to the discrimination including harassment, violence and unequal treatment targeted at an individual or a group on account of their cultural, linguistic or religious identity
Scapegoating	Unfairly blaming an individual or group of people for circumstances that have a variety of causes
Stereotyping	A set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong
Systemic Racism	Where (intentional or unintentional) prejudice, bias and barriers based on ethnicity are embedded into the thinking, systems and structures of organisations or society. What works for white people is the 'default' in society.
Third-party harassment	Occurs where, during the course of their duties, an employee is harassed by an individual or individuals who are not under the direct control of the School and the harassment relates to a protected characteristic.
Tokenism	The practice of doing something only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are treated fairly.
Trans or transgender	Refers to a person whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transitioning	The steps a trans person takes to live in the gender with which they identify. For some it could involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.
Transphobia	The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.
Unconscious Bias	Deep-seated assumptions we make about people who are different than us without even realising it – usually called implicit bias or unconscious bias.
White Privilege	The benefits unconsciously enjoyed and consciously perpetrated from being or being perceived as white.