

# Equality Statement

## Isca Academy



I S C A A C A D E M Y

I N S P I R A T I O N F O R L I F E

Approved by:

Local Governing Body

**Date:** January 2022

Next review due by:

January 2023

## **Introduction**

At Isca Academy we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents, carers and other stakeholders, irrespective of their protected characteristics or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of learners will be monitored by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics and we will utilise this data to support learners, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

At Isca Academy we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. The CEO and Headteacher have responsibility for all equalities matters and members of the local governing body in their various roles consider equalities matters that appertain to these responsibilities.

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## 1. Aims

Isca Academy aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 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

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### **Public Sector Duties (applies to all schools):**

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics below):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

## 3. Protected Characteristics

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

This legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education (our students).

Employers (schools) are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

- (a) **Age** - A person of a particular age (e.g. 32 year old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds). Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- (b) **Disability** - A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions. HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
- (c) **Gender reassignment** - A person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with this 'Gender Identity'. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' is not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as children with gender dysphoria. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any school environment. (The Intercom Trust in Devon supports schools in supporting children undergoing gender reassignment).
- (d) **Marriage and civil partnership** – Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- (e) **Pregnancy and maternity** - Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
- (f) **Race** - A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- (g) **Religion and belief** - Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but students may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- (h) **Sex** - A man or a woman.
- (i) **Sexual orientation** - A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian when very young, promotion of sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'questioning' or 'coming out' when they are in secondary school or college. Schools with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against lesbian, gay or bisexual students.

#### Notes:

It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the student is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a student because his parents are gay men or lesbians. It would be race discrimination to treat a white student less favourably because she has a black boyfriend.

Schools are allowed to treat disabled students more favourably than non-disabled students, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with students without disabilities.

#### **4. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, students and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher.

The equality link governor: James Tarling will:

- Meet with the designated member of staff for equality every term and other relevant staff members, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues

The Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and students
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors

The Staff Equality Champion / s will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst all staff and students
- Meet with the equality link governor once per term to raise and discuss any issues
- Support the Headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training if possible

All staff will:

- Ensure that all learners are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the Equality Plan.
- Strive to provide materials and opportunities within the curriculum that give positive images representing people with protected characteristics, and challenges stereotypical images.
- Challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents on CPOMS, drawing them also to the attention of the Deputy

Headteacher (Inclusion) or the Designated Persons for Child Protection where appropriate.

- Support the work of associate staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

## **5. Eliminating discrimination**

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training annually or as issues emerge and the need arises.

The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and an equality link governor. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

## **6. Advancing equality of opportunity**

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, Isca Academy aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. students with disabilities, or gay students who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular protected characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim students to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular protected characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all students to be involved in the full range of school societies)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how students with different protected characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement and implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available, identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics and identifying any issues which could affect our own students

## **7. Fostering good relations**

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies and lessons as well as organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of students within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of students from a range of backgrounds. All students are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

## **8. Tackling Discrimination**

- Harassment across any of the protected characteristics is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.
- All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur.
- They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.
- Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present. All incidents are reported to the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion) using CPOMs and incidents are reported to the Headteacher and Governors on a termly basis.

### **What is a Discriminatory Incident?**

Harassment, hate and direct discrimination involves hurtful behaviour or treating someone badly because of one of the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender identity, pregnancy / maternity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief or sexual orientation), or other factors such as socioeconomic status.

This can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.



A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into the school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's protected characteristic(s);
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of their protected characteristic(s).

### **Responding to and Reporting Incidents:**

All staff should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole Academy. Information should be passed to the Deputy Head (Inclusion) using CPOMs and they will then follow up as appropriate.

## **9. Equality considerations in decision-making**

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to students with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

## **10. Our Academy Equality Objectives**

- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all appropriate curricular opportunities, with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity
- To tackle prejudice and promote understanding in relation to people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with different views/ behaviours and people with SEND.
- To demonstrate zero tolerance towards the use of discriminatory language by students, staff or visitors in school
- To continually consider how well the school ensures equality of opportunities in a diverse society for all its students.
- To narrow the gap in attainment across all key groups and ensure that all children achieve their potential

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

- The school will update the equality information we publish, [described in sections 4-8 above], at least every year.
- This document will be reviewed by the governing body at least every 4 years.
- This document will be approved by the governing body.

## **12. Links with other policies**

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- SEND policy
- Health and safety policy
- Intimate care policy
- Uniform policy
- Outdoor education and offsite activities policy