



**Bexhill**  
Academy

# **Equality Scheme and Action Plan**

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## **Background and influences**

Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities. Much of this work is in response to new legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings. Legislation requires schools both to eliminate direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment and to promote equality for pupils/students, staff and others who use academy facilities. These developments reflect the growing awareness of the need to view different equality strands beneath one umbrella, rather than seeing them as separate factions competing with each other for time and resources.

Furthermore, narrowing (and ultimately closing) the gap between the progress and attainment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers is central to current educational priorities and the recognition of diversity and promotion of inclusive and equality practices are central to achieving this vision.

## **Equality Scheme**

### **Why we have developed this Equality Scheme**

This Equality Scheme for Bexhill Academy brings together schemes and action plans for Race, Gender and Disability equality, meeting the statutory duties in these areas. However, it goes far beyond these strands to include sexuality, religion & faith, age and every aspect which has the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community such as against those with special educational needs or potential language barriers. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments.

### **Our existing individual policies are as follows:**

**Equality Policy**

**Racial Equality Policy**

**SEN Policy**

**Gender Equality Duty Scheme**

**Disability Equality Scheme**

**Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy**

**Friendship and Anti-Bullying Policy**

Our equality scheme is inclusive of our whole academy community – pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors - who have been involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Scheme is to set out how our practice and policies can address discrimination, promote inclusive practice and ensure that those in our community requiring extra support receive it.

This scheme will be monitored annually, its impact measured against identified outcomes and reviewed every three years.

### **Our academy within the wider context**

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation.

At Bexhill Academy, we have pupils and staff from different racial, ethnic and faith groups. Approximately 25% of our cohort of have SEND and we have students and staff within our community with a variety of disabilities. The definition of disability within this scheme covers a broad spectrum of impairments, including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, multiple sclerosis, hearing and sight impairments, mobility difficulties, people with mental health conditions or learning difficulties or physical or mental disabilities. We also have a responsibility to ensure that our looked after

children (CLA) are provided with every opportunity to access all aspects of academy life. Support for individual students is considered on an individual basis to ensure that all aspects of the academy, including the environment and the curriculum are fully accessible. This includes working closely with ISEND to ensure that students who currently have disabilities that prevent them attending the academy in person, receive an appropriate educational support package. The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is 37%. Our pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

### **Overall aims of our scheme**

- To eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- To promote equality of access within our academy and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across the academy, support is organised using the following themes:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

Issues relating to adults within the academy community are embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan

### **Our approach**

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our academy community, within all aspects of school life.

### **We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:**

- Shared Humanity. Underlying our diversity are commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our academy and within our local community, including through the promotion of British Values.
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities

- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

## **Our vision**

Our vision is one of shared humanity which aspires to value all cultures and diversity within our academy community, local community, the UK and the wider world.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore do not achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences, so to promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

## **Our duties**

We recognise and accept our duties and responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, including the requirement to involve the whole academy community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

Our statutory duties are contained within:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2006 (which introduced the gender equality duty)
- Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education and Inspection Act 2006 (which introduced the Community Cohesion duty)

They are also guided and shaped by a range of other national and local initiatives such as the 'Thrive 'Agenda.

**We ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of academy life, including the provision of extended services.**

**These opportunities include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.**

- the participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children and young people and their parents
- preparation for entry to further education and training
- academy policies

- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of free school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam access arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions, including the use of restorative techniques and engagement for learning practices
- exclusion procedures
- activities and academy trips
- the academy's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils for teaching purposes
- access to academy facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the academy or Theatre in Education (TIE).
- academy sports
- employees' and staff welfare
- charity activities

### **The roles and responsibilities within our academy community**

Our Principal will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils and visitors and contractors are informed about the Equality Scheme
- oversee the effective implementation of the scheme
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the scheme
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the academy's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the scheme and report to the board of Attwood Academies Trust, at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our Academy Trust will:

- liaise regularly with our designated board member.
- ensure that the action plans arising from the policy are part of the Academy Improvement Plan
- support the Principal in implementing any actions necessary
- inform and consult with parents about the scheme
- evaluate and review this scheme every two years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this scheme

- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the scheme
- with the Principal, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this scheme as detailed in the Academy Improvement Plan.

Our students will:

- be involved in the ongoing development of the scheme and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the scheme
- be represented on the Equalities Working Party to develop access issues

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the ongoing development of the scheme
- have access to the scheme through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the scheme
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the scheme
- be informed of any incident related to this scheme which could directly affect their child

Our staff will:

- be involved in the ongoing development of the scheme
- be fully aware of the Equality Scheme and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole academy issue and support the Equality Scheme
- make known any queries or training requirements
- given the opportunity to contribute to the review of the scheme.

### **How we developed our scheme**

The development of this scheme has involved representatives of our college community. We have discussed it with them and listened to what they have to say.

- Pupil, staff, parent and board representatives on our Equalities Working Party meet annually to review relevant policies and schemes and to review equality provision.
- Our designated board member was given a month to present further recommendations following a meeting.
- Our partners in the community. We shared the policy and action plan with our FKWS team and School Nurse.

A representative sample of the above stakeholders will be kept informed of our progress in achieving our action plan; it will also be published on the website.

### **How we identify actions attached to the scheme and prioritise them**

Key to this process will be the implementation of **Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs)**

We use this tool as a common sense measure of determining whether a policy, practice or project will impact on all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). It helps us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that positive duties are promoted equally. It is a way to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of college life.

*Further information about EQIAs can be found in Appendix A*

In addition, we know our academy well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, disability and gender. Our action plan directly reflects this consultation.

We also complete a Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) which means we are constantly monitoring the make-up and needs of our staff and pupils – and assessing how well we are meeting those needs. Our data management system is robust, clearly focusing on equality of attainment.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

We have in place the following mechanisms for pupils, staff and parents to make less formal contributions in assessing how well we are meeting needs:

- surveys completed at Parents Evenings - these are anonymous
- a web address for pupils to contact a member of staff or Peer Mentor
- email and telephone contact with parents – voluntary
- Appointment of Parent Communications Officer
- An annual survey of pupils on issues relating to Equalities and anti-bullying measures
- PSP/PEP involving parents/carers and pupils
- Student Councils, Student Leaders and peer mentors

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action.

We make use of organisations and traded services such as the following:-

- TYS
- FSKW
- C.L.A.S.S.
- ESBAS
- ISEND
- Young Carers
- Sussex Police
- Virtual School for CLA
- The Traveller Education and English as an additional language Service (TEALS)
- SEN Team

We have established good links with our local and our wider community and have recently obtained a parent partnership award which reflects the quality of these links. We welcome visitors into our college. From them, we learn about equality issues outside academy and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within college.

Some of our local partners include:

FSKW Team  
 Fire Service  
 Schools Police Liaison Officer  
 Local Area Safeguarding board

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work and improve existing approaches.

### **Commissioned services (procurement)**

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services such as maintenance, cleaning and security. When procuring goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the academy community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

### **Our Staff**

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, technicians, cover supervisors and trainee teachers) from discrimination on the grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation,

religion or belief, or age. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

We support staff with a confidential staff welfare scheme.

### **Responding to equality-related incidents**

We recognise that prejudice-driven harassment or bullying behaviour is underpinned by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, ageism, hate crime or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our academy ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider academy community through our actions and responses.

We will record and collate information about all incidents and will report as required to the local authority. We and the County Council will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

The Pastoral Team meet each morning to highlight vulnerable students with their line manager. Bullying and racist incidents are recorded and dealt with appropriately. In line with the anti-bullying and friendship policy, all equality related incidents will be recorded and placed on an individual's behaviour log and the LA will be informed of any bullying incidents annually.

### **Monitoring and reviewing**

Monitoring is the responsibility of our Leadership Team and our Trust Board and will take place annually. The scheme will be reviewed every two years.

All stakeholders (pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors) will be expected to promote this scheme.

Parents/carers will access this scheme via the academy website and will be reminded of its purpose and the importance of their ownership of it.

## Appendices

### EQUALITY SCHEME: ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2018

ECM Aim:	Duty addressed:	Aim and how it was identified:	Target group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff etc	Action:	Who's responsible?	Dates from and to:	Outcome(s):
<b>Being healthy</b>	Disability/ All	To increase social and emotional skills for pupils with SEMH (social, emotional and mental health difficulties)	Pupils with SEMH	Train TAs to deliver small group work sessions/SULP to support targeted pupils in developing social and emotional skills Continue to identify eligible pupils to form small groups	PJ/DD Pastoral Managers team	June 2015 to June 2016	Improved ability by pupils to handle difficult situations
	All	To promote healthier eating including a healthy start to the day.	Whole academy, particularly pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.	To establish a breakfast club, with provision to breakfast for all students.	AF	June 2015 to June 2016	All pupils beginning the day with breakfast. Concentration for some improved.
<b>Staying safe</b>	Race	To monitor and respond to all incidents of racism and racist bullying	Whole academy and specifically pupils from BME backgrounds	To review and update existing policies and practice relating to race equality and racism. Use of external agencies to deliver workshops/assemblies on race.	Pastoral Managers/Student Guidance Manager	June 2015 to June 2016	Robust system in place for recording racist incidents in line with county process
	SMSC	To promote good relations between people from different backgrounds	Whole academy	Extend use of external speakers.	TH/Pastoral Managers Form tutors	June 2015 to June 2016	Improved understanding of Britain and the diversity within it

<b>ECM Aim:</b>	<b>Duty addressed:</b>	<b>Aim and how it was identified:</b>	<b>Target group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff etc</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Who's responsible?</b>	<b>Dates from and to:</b>	<b>Outcome(s):</b>
	Sexual orientation/ Gender	To improve awareness of and consequently reduce any homophobic and transphobic bullying	Whole academy	Review friendship and anti-bullying policy Develop curriculum materials to explore issues related to sexual orientation and gender stereotyping Introduce external speakers	Pastoral Managers Student Guidance Manager PSHEE team Form tutors	June 2015 to June 2016	Monitoring incidents of homophobic bullying Increased staff confidence in responding to incidents
<b>Enjoying and achieving</b>	Disability	To better understand the needs of young carers within our academy community	Young carers	Gather and record information relating to Young Carers annually Encourage some Young Carers to join academy support group. Forge stronger links with Young Carers	TH/PJ Pastoral Managers	June 2015 to June 2016	Improved access and communication with young carers Setting up a Young Carers register The implementation of a Bexhill Academy Young Carers Support Group.
	Disability	Improved tracking system in place for monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable pupils  To ensure ne 2014 SEN Code of Practice is embedded	SEND pupils FSM pupils  SEND students	Develop Vulnerable group register Set up structured conversations Termly data analysis To ensure appropriate access arrangements are in place for all internal assessments and public exams.  Adoption of revised statutory processes Whole school training programme.	DD/Progress Leaders  DD	June 2015 to June 2016	Under-performance quickly addressed No child left behind Pupils achieve outstanding outcomes All staff addressing the personalised needs of vulnerable groups
<b>Making a positive contribution</b>	All	To increase the participation of pupils/students from minority, marginalised or vulnerable backgrounds in academy life	Minority, marginalised and vulnerable pupils	Identify which groups are under-represented in the Learner Voice processes within the college Set up group of pupils to develop actions which better involve the target group Use parent voice to identify activities where all pupils can participate.	EG/Pastoral Managers	June 2015 to June 2016	Increase the diversity of pupils/students involved in the decision making processes of the academy.

<b>ECM Aim:</b>	<b>Duty addressed:</b>	<b>Aim and how it was identified:</b>	<b>Target group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff etc</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Who's responsible?</b>	<b>Dates from and to:</b>	<b>Outcome(s):</b>
	Gender	To promote opportunities for boys and girls to learn more about career opportunities which challenge gender stereotyping	All students	Provide activities that allow pupils to explore gender stereotyping in careers To ensure that the curriculum meet the needs of boys and girls Assemblies on stereotyping/discrimination Develop relationship with local FE providers to extend the input by them for Post 16 options	TH/CS/FO	June 2015 to June 2016	Increase in opportunities for students to access relevant work and training based experiences.
	Disability	To promote learning opportunities appropriate to AEN needs.	Years 9-11	Explore opportunities for more work-related learning Access courses offered by FE colleges for the 14-19 age group	DD/CS/MF	June 2015 to June 2016	Personalised learning programme meets the needs of all AEN pupils Economic well-being developed

## **Appendix**

### **East Sussex Children's Services - Equality Impact Assessments**

A suggested approach for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments in schools.

#### **What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)?**

An EQIA is a considered way of determining whether a policy, practice or project will affect all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a disproportionate impact on one or more particular groups.

EQIAs should help us ensure we are not unlawfully discriminating against certain individuals or groups and that we are promoting our positive duties on equality. It is a way to ensure we are meeting the diverse needs of all our pupils and staff.

EQIAs should help ensure that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

This does not mean undertaking EQIAs for all policies and practices as of now. It is a process of thinking that can be included in the review of policies as part of the policy review cycle. EQIAs can also be considered for all new policies and specific projects, e.g. use of the school playground.

It is not about more paperwork. It is a common sense approach to thinking through how policies and actions will impact on race, disability, gender and other equality areas.

Impact on these areas could be positive, neutral or negative.

If the impact on different groups is not justifiable, what solutions can we come up with to overcome this situation?

#### **Key questions:**

What are the aims of the policy, practice or project?

What are the specific outcomes you hope to see?

Who are the intended beneficiaries of this policy or practice? (e.g. all staff/students?)

Can you identify any potential adverse or negative impacts in the implementation of this policy, practice or project for certain individuals or groups – on the basis of their ethnic origin, cultural background, faith, disability, SEN, gender, sexual orientation, age, and other criteria (for example EAL, asylum seekers)?

Identify whom and how?

Are there any positive impacts? On whom and how?

What evidence do you have to inform your thinking? This can include data, e.g. attainment data.

***If you think there may be negative impact on certain individuals or groups it is important to draw together relevant, reliable data and information.***

Who can you involve in your policy/practice review or project proposal which will help you identify any differential impact?

***Involving the children, young people, staff and members of the community who may be affected by your policy, practice or project will provide the best opportunity of identifying impact, exploring solutions and supporting implementation.***

If you have thought through the impact of a policy or action and involved people in this thinking, you may still not have uncovered the likely differential impact on certain individuals or groups. This is will often be the case. The important point, is to encompass any pertinent information in this respect into the monitoring and review process and allow flexibility to respond to new information.

**Adopted by Trust Board:**

**Signed:**

**Chair**