Equality and Diversity Policy

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Reviewed by:	Executive Team, Trustees
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1. Aims

Aspire is committed to treating all of our people equally well.
We will:

- Get to know all our people
- Consistently model inclusive behaviours
- Call out stereotyping
- Ask people what they need from us to be their best selves.

Aspire values difference and diversity and will not discriminate based on any characteristic. We will build a culture based on openness, fairness and transparency. Difference is valued, understood and respected across all our schools.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Develop an ethos which respects and values all people.
- Actively advance equality of opportunity.
- Prepare pupils to embrace a life in a diverse society.
- Promote good relations amongst people within the communities within which we work.
- Eliminate all forms of unfair indirect and direct discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation or other oppressive behaviour across aspire.
- Deliver equality and diversity through our school policies, procedures, training and practice.
- Make reasonable adjustments and do our utmost, within available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to school provision and activities.
- Take effective action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by protected characteristics, stereotyping and cultural misconceptions.
- Monitor the implementation of equality and diversity within our schools.
- Ensure that our policies and procedures are fair, transparent and in line with our culture and ethos, and our legal and statutory responsibilities.
- Ensure decisions, behaviours and actions align with our Leading with Love framework.

This policy applies to all employees, pupils, members and trustees. The policy underpins all Aspire school policies and procedures.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy has been written to comply with 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 based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools and complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

All people at Aspire are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. All Aspire schools and provisions are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all. Behaviour, actions or words which transgress this policy will not be tolerated and will be managed in line with our behaviour and disciplinary policy.

The Board of Trustees will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Executive Headteacher.

A member of the full Board of Trustees will:

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

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils.
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to trustees.

The designated member of staff for equality will:

- Support the Executive Headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and pupils.
- Meet with a member of the full Board of Trustees annually to raise and discuss any issues.
- Support the Executive Headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary
- Support all school staff in having regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 5.

Aspire is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its pupil population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged.
- Ensuring anyone with a protected characteristic as described within the Equality Act 2010 does not experience discrimination (e.g., age, disability, sex, gender identity/reassignment, gender dysphoria, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership).
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Encouraging people to bring their whole, authentic self to work and school, with the knowledge that Aspire values difference and diversity.
- Aspire will evaluate this policy and its impact on a yearly basis

4. Eliminating discrimination

Aspire is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and whilst Aspire complies with non-discrimination provisions it aims to go above and beyond legal and statutory requirements to ensure each school operates in a climate where difference is valued and understood, where everyone experiences equal opportunities and where everyone feels part of an inclusive community.

Policies at Aspire include reference to the importance of promoting equality and diversity and employees and trustees of Aspire are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act. From January 2024 new staff induction emphasizes the aims of this policy and all staff will receive refresher training every September.

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, Aspire 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. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people who have a particular characteristic.
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in all activities.

Aspire has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, an allocated member of SLT and a trustee who they can liaise with. They can discuss any issues and make senior leaders and trustees aware of these as appropriate.

5. Equality Objectives

In developing our objectives we have considered the following aims:

- Increase attendance and participation of students who have previously felt discriminated against (e.g. neuro-diverse)
- Narrow gaps in performance
- Increase understanding between religious and ethnic groups through PHSRE and cultural experiences
- Encourage non-stereotyped career options

Our objectives for 2023-2027 are to:

1. Increase variety of careers experiences and teaching
2. Increase our personal development offer.
3. Ensure that all schools and services are welcoming and pupils and staff feel they belong in order that they can bring their whole selves to school.
4. Reduce discriminatory language and behaviour between children and families and towards staff.
5. Acknowledge the inequalities and challenges women at work face, and look to reduce those inequalities and challenges, increasing understanding and equipping staff through education, signposting and support.
6. Ensure we have a comprehensive People Strategy that takes account of all characteristics of staff
7. Increasing opportunities for flexible working, including flexible working in adverts and encouraging staff and managers to consider options for flexible working for the diverse range of roles we have across Aspire.

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, Aspire will:

- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement, 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, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils.

6. Fostering good relations

Aspire 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.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives and interventions to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school.
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

Aspire considers equality, diversity and inclusion in its decision-making, and the schools always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the particular School or provision considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays.
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities.
- Has equivalent facilities for all.

Starting in January 2024, individual schools and provisions will add an Equality Impact Assessment to the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is to be completed by the member of staff organising the activity and will be stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

We aim to advance equality of opportunity and will publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing. Each student and member of staff at Aspire is treated as an individual with individual characteristics but in order to ensure we are improving our schools for groups of students or staff we will monitor what we do based on the protected characteristics.

8. Monitoring arrangements

The Board of Trustees will update the equality information we publish, [described in sections 4 to 7 above], at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by the Executive Team at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

9. Links with other policies or procedures/documents

This document links to the following policies or procedures/documents:

- Accessibility statement
- Accessibility plans
- Risk assessments
- Behaviour and disciplinary policy