



Atlantic Academy
Part of Athena Learning Trust



Bideford College
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Atlantic Academy & Bideford College

Student equality policy

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1 Introduction

1.1 Atlantic Academy & Bideford College (“the school”) is committed to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and aims to promote a positive and diverse culture in which all students are valued and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

1.2 The school opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment, and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent provisions.

1.3 The following groups have been identified as key recipients in terms of the implementation of this policy:

- Looked after children or children in need.
- Children with SEND.
- Children at risk of exclusion.
- Children from an ethnic group, including those from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller background.
- Children missing in education.
- Children with medical conditions affecting attendance at school.
- School age/teenage parents.
- Young carers.
- Children within, or at risk of joining, the criminal justice system (i.e. those at risk of child criminal exploitation).
- Children with mental health issues.
- Children in receipt of free school meals.
- Children living in areas of deprivation.
- Gifted and talented children.
- Children who are questioning their gender or who have expressed a desire to be treated as non-binary or transition to a different gender from that assigned at birth.
- Children who are LGBTQ+.

1.4 This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including volunteers and students on placement), young people and visitors at our school, and should be read in conjunction with the following policies: SEND, admissions, uniform, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, employment policies, accessibility plan, RSE.

1.5 Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action. Discriminatory treatment, bullying or harassment of staff or students by visitors will also not be tolerated.

2 Compliance

2.1 This policy has been developed in response to the Equality Act 2010 and replaces previous policies relating to race, gender and disability equality. It has been designed to help the school meet the public sector equality duty to:

2.1.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct.

2.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.1.3 Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.2 We will ensure that we do not discriminate against students on the basis of:

2.2.1 Disability.

2.2.2 Gender reassignment.

2.2.3 Pregnancy or maternity.

2.2.4 Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.

2.2.5 Religion or belief.

2.2.6 Sex or sexual orientation.

2.2.7 Any combination of those listed above (the protected characteristics).

2.3 Staff, trustees and governors will:

- Actively promote equity and equality of opportunity in all areas of school life.
- Ensure that members of the school community know their rights and respect the rights of others.
- Aim to ensure that prejudice or discrimination in all its forms is actively rejected.
- Raise awareness of equity and equality issues for all members of the school community, and through our links with the local community.
- Establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum and enable each individual to fulfil his/her potential regardless of ability, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

2.4 Equality principles based on the above aims will be embedded in our daily practices, policies and the processes of decision making, including:

- Admissions, induction and attendance.
- Students' progress and achievement.

- Students' personal development and wellbeing, particularly in relation to safeguarding.
- Parental involvement.
- Working with the wider community.
- Behaviour management.
- Staff recruitment and professional development.
- Curriculum access and participation.
- Teaching styles and strategies.

3 Publication of information and equality objectives

3.1 The school acknowledges its legal duties to publish information on compliance with the three strands of the public sector equality duty and, in addition, to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

3.2 The school will work across its community to analyse data and existing practices to set out the actions taken in compliance of the equality duty, and to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives to support the development of the school and its community.

3.3 The information on the equality duty will be updated annually and the objectives every 4 years (at trust level).

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The board of trustees has overall responsibility for this policy and for ensuring compliance. The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at the school is the principal/headteacher.

4.2 It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Treat colleagues, young people and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity.
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities.
- Report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.

4.3 As part of their induction, all staff members will receive training on this policy, and will receive further training sessions (as required) to ensure that they remain aware of their responsibilities. Such training will:

4.3.1 Ensure all staff are aware of and comply with current equalities legislation and government recommendations.

4.3.2 Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.

4.3.3 Provide support for staff to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.

4.3.4 Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.

4.3.5 Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.

4.3.6 Ensure that the school is aware of and participates in relevant awareness days.

5 Duty to make reasonable adjustments

5.1 The school will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments where there is a need to ensure that a disabled person has the same access to everything as a non-disabled person, as far as is reasonable. We will take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by a disabled individual, as far as is reasonable.

5.2 The duty to make reasonable adjustments covers all aspects of academy life, including the way the curriculum is taught, classroom organisation, and timetabling, access to facilities, clubs and visits, sports and policies.

5.3 In making reasonable adjustments, the school is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled students. Staff will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.

5.4 The school will monitor the physical features of the academies' premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the school will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. Please see the Accessibility Plan for further information, which can be found on the school website.

5.5 Parents should notify the principal/headteacher in writing if they are aware or suspect that their child has a disability, and provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information about their child's disability upon request. Providing such information will enable the school to support the student as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. The school will have due regard to any request made by a parent or student (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.

6 Uniform policy

6.1 The school's uniform policy is consistent with this policy. The same uniform policy applies equally to all students, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, all academies will consider reasonable requests to alter the uniform; for example, for genuine religious requirements and in making reasonable adjustments for disabled children for example, sensory needs, in order to avoid substantial disadvantage.

6.2 Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by students when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred to the principal/headteacher, whose decision will be final, subject to the complaints procedure.

7 Admissions policy

Admissions criteria are defined under the school's admissions policy and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

8 Religious beliefs

The school respects the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and each academy will comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice wherever possible. An example where a request may be refused is if the religious observance takes place during lesson time. Whilst the academy will explore other ways to accommodate the request, such as amended timetabling, this may not be possible.

9 Curriculum delivery

9.1 The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for students, including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying, and raising attainment for certain groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and social curriculum. Positive and proactive steps will be taken to prevent discrimination against or victimisation of any student in the provision of education or access to any benefit, facility or service, including educational trips, work experience and leisure activities.

9.2 The school recognises and promotes awareness of the possibility of bias (for example, gender or racial), and works to eliminate such bias in both teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias.

9.3 The school may take positive action to give students of a particular racial group, or students with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the needs of the students in that group; for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

9.4 All students are encouraged to work and play freely with and have respect for all other students, irrespective of any protected characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the school, and students are encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

10 Exclusion policy

The decision to suspend or permanently exclude a child is a last resort and will be made in accordance with the behaviour policy and procedure and alongside the suspension and permanent exclusion policy. These policies apply to all students, and any decision to suspend or exclude will take into account our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

11 Gender identity

11.1 The school is aware of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 towards students identifying as transgender and non-binary and will be sensitive to their individual needs, whilst also recognising the needs and sensitivities of other students. Students who have confirmed that they have commenced the process of transitioning and, therefore, fall under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment will be provided with appropriate pastoral care and support.

11.2 All schools have separate toilet facilities for biological male and female students aged 8 years or over, and separate changing accommodation and showers for those aged 11 and over. Our schools have gender neutral/accessible toilet and changing facilities for all students who wish to use them, comprising of a single room for use by one student at a time, that can be secured from the inside.

11.3 When supporting pupils who are questioning their gender identity the school will:

11.3.1 Consider its statutory safeguarding duties and the need to promote the welfare of all children.

11.3.2 Take a cautious approach following requests to support social transition (i.e. change pronouns, names etc. to the gender that differs from the one assigned at birth), with the aim of working alongside parents and seeking clinical input if there is any doubt about what is in the best interests of the child.

11.3.3 Subject to any safeguarding and data protection considerations, inform parents of any disclosures around gender identity relating to their child, other than in exceptional circumstances; e.g., where staff have reasonable grounds to conclude that doing so would put the child at risk of harm.

11.3.4 Respect both gender-critical beliefs and gender-affirming beliefs, whilst ensuring that the school remains a respectful place where bullying of any kind is not to be tolerated.

11.3.5 Follow guidance published by the Department for Education, the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, and advice from any relevant sporting bodies, and comply with all legal duties relating to biological sex.[HO5]

12 Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination and harassment

All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment must be reported to senior staff and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible (and, in any event, within 24 hours of the incident). All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise) will be addressed in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

13 Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

13.1 The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this student equality policy in each academy is the principal.

13.2 Additional support would also be provided to any parent or significant person wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on our website.

13.3 The student equality policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle by the education performance committee (trustees) following feedback from schools.