

The Link Academy Trust
Equality Statement 2021

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All Members of the Board of Trustees of the exempt charity are also Directors of the company; the term 'Trustee' used in this document also means Director. This document applies to the Link Academy Trust and its individual academies.

The Link Academy Trust is committed to the principle of equality for all pupils irrespective of race, religion, gender, language, disability or family background, and to the active support of initiatives designed to further this principle. We believe that equality is at the heart of good educational practice. All pupils are of equal value and deserve equal access to every aspect of school life. They have equality to learn and work towards their highest possible levels of achievement. The vision and values which we uphold as a Trust and within our individual academies help to emphasise equality for all staff and pupils at all times. All personnel are responsible for ensuring that we implement this statement and help eliminate discrimination.

Equality means that discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, gender, sexuality, language, pregnancy or maternity, disability or family background is not acceptable. These are referred to as protected characteristics and it is illegal to discriminate against these under the Equality Act 2010. The Trust and its individual academies are committed to improve where required and then to maintain equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to ensure that every member of the Trust community is given equality to achieve their full potential – each individual is entitled to work in a supportive environment. In order to achieve this, we are committed to:

- equal access and treatment for all
- being responsive to changing needs
- educating and informing children and parents about the issues in this policy
- avoiding prejudice
- promoting a positive self-image and mutual respect, regardless of differences
- providing for all, according to their needs, subject to the relevant skills and facilities being reasonably available to the school
- ensuring that equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and ethos of the academies
- using resources and examples which provide a positive image of all groups
- acknowledging the richness and diversity of British society and preparing children for their part in this
- working to an agreed code of conduct which can be modified, monitored and evaluated according to current best practice
- developing a positive attitude to equality by all staff, children, parents, governors and all who participate in the life of the Trust and its academies. We recognise that discrimination can be overt or covert. Covert discrimination relates to the assumptions, beliefs and values acquired over a long period of time which affects instinctive responses.

Following these every day we can help to eliminate discrimination within our Trust.

Gender

We take practical steps to ensure that we do not make assumptions about pupils' participation in activities based upon their gender. Our organisational structure, behaviour policy and curriculum are applied to all, regardless of gender. Classes are formed on a chronological basis and class groupings are flexible. Grouping into sets of girls or boys only is discouraged, except where doing so provides equal access for all.

Participation rates for all genders are tracked by members of staff undertaking after school club provision and all after school clubs are open to pupils of all genders. The Trust's Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum (PSHE) seeks to build upon these principles to ensure that key messages of participation in all areas of school life are communicated to staff and that, for example, disability should not be a deterrent in participating in all aspects of school life at all levels. We analyse our SATs test results by gender in order to ensure that we identify any issues which need addressing related to perceived gender bias. When asking children to carry out tasks or represent the academies, all genders are used equally. All extra – curricular activities are open to all.

Gender Reassignment

It is rare for very young people to want to undergo reassignment. However, the Trust will ensure that gender variant pupils, or the children of transgender parents are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

Sexual Orientation

The Trust will make sure that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils or children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents are not singled out for unfair treatment.

Disability, SEN

The Trust will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantage to a disabled pupil. When considering adjustments, the Trust will take into account the circumstances of each case. Factors which the Trust will consider include: the financial or other resources required for the adjustment, its effectiveness, its effect on other pupils, health and safety requirements and whether aids have been made available through the Special Educational Needs route.

Race, Faiths, Languages and Family Background

We have in our Trust and individual academies populations many different nationalities, faiths and family backgrounds and organisations. Racial discrimination is unlawful and we aim to help our pupils to develop concepts, skills, attitudes and ways of behaving which will promote good relationships and prevent ignorance and prejudice.

Children sometimes experiment with racist expressions which they have heard through the mass media or from the community and do not understand how hurtful and harmful they can be. We aim to treat such incidents sensitively and firmly because all have the right to be protected from insults, abuse and bullying. The Racist Incident Policy details the action to be taken in the event of such an incident. Monitoring will allow us to identify trends which need addressing.

Children and other adults are encouraged to contribute to school life from the richness of their heritage and religion. They share experiences and learn from one another through enquiry, investigative and collaborative work.

Children with English as their second language often need learning support and we have a nominated member of staff who communicates with members of staff to ensure that parents of EAL families attend parent consultation evenings and are fully aware of basic school organisational issues.

The 1981 Education Act and the Education Reform Act of 1988 placed the onus on class teachers to provide access to the curriculum to all children equally. Curriculum 2014 requires a breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation which will enable each pupil to participate at an appropriate level. The match of pupil to a modified curriculum is relevant to the exceptionally gifted child as much as to the child experiencing difficulty in learning. These issues are addressed in the policies for SEND and Gifted and Talented.

Staffing

The Link Academy Trust values diversity amongst the staff. In all appointments the most suitable candidate will be appointed on professional criteria and recruitment carried out in a manner consistent with 'equality for all' practice.

Positive action

Positive action will be fostered in line with current best practice.

- Staff will use examples in their teaching to demonstrate the advantages of a mixed society and the contributions of individuals of all genders, races, age groups, etc
- Team work is encouraged in all aspects of school life to show the advantages of pooling experience, knowledge and various viewpoints
- Positive action, especially by pupils, will be rewarded
- Assembly times will reinforce good behaviour in the area of equal opportunities and involve peer groups in the approval (or disapproval) process
- Clear and consistent messages will be given regarding each academy's values

Equality Objectives 2021-2024

1. To promote diversity within the curriculum and resources with specific reference to SEND, race, religion, different family models, gender and disability and reduce any homophobia, sexism and racism by children in our academies
2. To promote and practise growth mindset and resilience. There will be no public labelling of children by attainment
3. To promote cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our Trust's community
4. To continue to analyse recruitment data and trends with regard to race, gender and disability and report on this to the Remuneration Committee of the Board of Trustees

This statement is reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee on a 4-yearly cycle and must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: 2021