

Walsall Academy



Equality Policy

Policy Title	Equality Policy
Policy Reference	WA/EqualPol
Description	This document sets out the Academy's Equality Policy
Status	Statutory
Category	Academy
Person Responsible	Dr Somerfield
Version	V 1.6 September 2025
Other relevant policies	
Adopted by the Governing Board on	March 2025
Next Review Due	September 2026
Data Protection	<i>Data will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation</i>

Version Records		
Version	Date	Description
1.1	November 2020	Policy Review
1.2	November 2021	Annual Review
1.3	January 2023	Annual Review
1.4	October 2023	Annual Review
1.5	February 2025	Annual Review
1.6	September 2025	Annual Review

Introduction

Walsall Academy recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity. We want all students to have access to the curriculum and to make the greatest possible progress, and to value and to take pride in the cultural diversity of their community.

Walsall Academy is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community feel valued, respected and understood and know and feel that:

- Inequality is unacceptable and will be counteracted
- Everyone is treated according to their needs and rights
- Diversity is respected, valued and celebrated
- All students and staff recognise their individual responsibilities
- Every student and member of staff is able to fulfil their potential, unhindered by any form of prejudice, discrimination or harassment

All our structures and policies are evaluated and kept under constant review in order to ensure that no individual is subject in any way to unjustified discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional. We recognise that it is all too easy for the structures of institutions to result in “inequality by default”. We therefore commit ourselves to take positive steps to examine our policies and practice and to change them where necessary.

Students and their families who are admitted to the Academy and any person recruited to the service of the school, whether as a member of staff, a governor or volunteer or a service provider, are made fully aware of our aims and objectives and will be appropriately supported.

Aims

Walsall Academy recognises its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regards for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation 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 – a relevant protected characteristic
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

A protected characteristic is an element of one’s identity which cannot be used to discriminate against them. There are nine legally protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This duty extends to all areas of the Academy, in particular:

- Progress, attainment and assessment
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusion
- Students' personal development and pastoral care
- Resource allocation
- Admission and attendance
- The curriculum, teaching and learning (including language and cultural needs)
- Staff recruitment and professional development
- Partnerships with parents and carers and communities

Responsibilities

Governors

- The Governors have a crucial role to ensure that the Academy complies with the Equality legislation and this Equality Policy and that its procedures are followed.
- As the admissions authority, the Governors, wish to ensure that all groups have equal access to the school and that admissions criteria do not favour one group over another.
- The Governors welcome applications for all posts, especially teaching posts, with a view to reflecting, so far as is practicable, the diversity of the Academy.

The Headteacher

- The Headteacher will give a consistent and high-profile lead on equality issues and will promote this Policy within and outside the Academy.
- The Headteacher will ensure that this policy is readily available and that Governors, staff, students and parents/carers are aware of it.
- The Headteacher is responsible for seeing that the Policy and its procedures are followed and that information about its effectiveness is regularly produced for Governors and staff.
- The Headteacher will make sure that all staff know their responsibilities and that they receive training and support.
- The Headteacher will take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.
- The Headteacher will have due regard when making a decision or taking action to whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with discriminatory incidents. They should be able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equal opportunities and good relations, and avoiding discrimination against any person (child or adult) for reasons of sex, race, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and sexual orientation
- Keeping up to date with the law and practice on discrimination and taking up training and learning opportunities.

All members of the Senior Leadership Team should be able to demonstrate the action they are taking to implement the policy.

Visitors and Contractors

Visitors, service suppliers and contractors will be made aware of the Academy's Equality Policy and its approach to promoting equality in whatever manner is appropriate in each individual case, and of the fact that they are expected to comply with it.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

Eliminating Discrimination

Clear procedures are in place to ensure that racism, homophobia and discrimination in terms of sex, religion or belief, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity are dealt with firmly, promptly and consistently.

In particular, clear procedures are laid down for dealing with perpetrators of discriminatory acts and a sensitive and structured system of support is available to victims of discrimination.

Staff are trained to deal with discriminatory incidents

Advancing equality of opportunity

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

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic, for example, pupils with disabilities.
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activity

In fulfilling the duty the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing

- Analyse data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

In addition to the information about pupils, we will consider how our activities as an employer affect staff with protected characteristics.

Fostering Good Relations

Walsall Academy 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.
- Making pupils aware of our behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues
- Working with our local community including organising school trips and activities around our community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within school, For example, our school council has representations from different year groups.. All pupils are encouraged to participate in our activities such as sports clubs
- Hosting annual culture days where all cultures are celebrated and shared

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken in order to ensure that we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.

For 2025-26 , our Equality Objectives are:

Equality Objectives

Objective 1

To use performance data to monitor student achievement and respond to variations between groups of learners, subjects, courses and key stages, trends over time and comparisons with other schools.

Objective 2

To provide an environment that welcomes, protects and respects all.

Objective 3

To ensure that the curriculum promotes diversity and develops values of respect and tolerance regarding sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment and ability/disability.

Putting the Policy into Practice

- The Chair of Governors or other designated Governor, together with the Headteacher or a designated senior member of staff, will have overall

responsibility for co-ordinating work on equality and for dealing with the reporting of discriminatory incidents.

- Assessment data is collected and analysed to set targets for students. Teaching and learning are monitored through established strategies to monitor attainment and progress and to set targets. Other appropriate procedures will be set up for the assessment of the effects of the Equality Policy for example through consultation and the use of auditing tools to evaluate the impact of the Policy on the students' attainment.
- When reviewing the Academy's policies, the Governors will give specific attention to the effectiveness of relevant policies in tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities and good relations, *(having regard to the diverse character both of the Academy and its local community)*.
- The professional development programme provides training opportunities for all staff and Governors to ensure that they have a shared understanding of the legislation pertaining to equality. New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction. In addition, regular briefings are used to provide updates to staff on topical concerns, ensuring that they're addressed in a timely fashion and do not lead to discrimination.
- Reviews and evaluations of the Policy will take account of the views of all sections of the school community, expressed through general consultation and also through collaboration with representatives such as the parent's advisory group and SEND parents forum. Parents and carers and students will be informed of the outcomes of the consultation process.
- The local community, the LA and other schools will also be part of the consultation process, so that good practice can be identified and shared.
- Where appropriate, this will incorporate own-voice feedback from specific groups likely to be affected by such decisions. 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 pupils with disabilities
 - Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

Publication and Promotion of the Policy

The Equality Policy is communicated by appropriate means in each case to:

- Students
- Parents/carers
- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- Union and staff representatives
- All members of the governing body
- Job applicants
- Contractors and service providers
- School visitors

In particular, the policy is available on request from the school office to all parents and carers and others with a legitimate interest. A synopsis will be included in the Prospectus.

Parent and student views are important, and we gather these through:

- Communication with all parents around this policy
- Parental questionnaires completed at set times of the year for each year group
- Specific parent questionnaires for students with special educational needs
- Student surveys
- Students with special educational needs have their wishes and feelings recorded in their personal provision map
- Staff questionnaires

Communication with Parents and Carers

The Academy will maintain its sound links with parents and carers of students with English as a second language. Interpreters will be found if they are needed for informing parents about their child's progress etc through the service provided by the Local Authority. Similarly, school documentation will be provided in first languages where this is necessary.

Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of the policy by students or staff will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Disciplinary procedures. Should an incident occur, a report is completed and the incident is reported to the Headteacher and investigated by a Deputy Headteacher. The Headteacher will take overall responsibility in resolving the incident. In assessing the appropriate action to be taken against students a balance will be struck between pastoral and punitive elements.

Any breach of Equality legislation by contractors or service providers may result in cancellation of the contract.

All incidents and action taken are reported termly to the governing body by the Headteacher. This will allow the Governors to monitor the number and type of incidents and to assess the effectiveness of the action taken.

Disability

At Walsall Academy we promote a culture of difference and not deficit. We take the following actions to support this:

- Consideration of accessibility for disabled students (see the Accessibility plan)
- A well-established SEND department to support early identification and advise on supportive interventions
- Regular student voice surveys for SEND students to ensure that assumptions are not made about their wishes and views
- Promoting acceptance through our PSHE curriculum and the wider curriculum
- Full participation in local community initiatives, including sporting competitions and careers events aimed at disabled students
- Assessment and application of Access Arrangements to ensure equitable access to assessments and examinations

- Ensure that disabled students have full access to wider opportunities, such as our Session 3 offer and school trips
- Regular training from the Inclusion team to raise awareness of disabilities

Gender and Sex

Walsall Academy is committed to ensuring that students and staff of all genders are supported to achieve to the best of their ability, with barriers to success being identified and dismantled. In this endeavour, we take the following actions:

- A zero-tolerance approach to harmful behaviours (for example, harmful sexualised behaviours) and sexist remarks
- Clear analysis of gender attainment gaps with targeted work to overcome these
- An effort to educate young people about healthy relationships and identify harmful or toxic behaviours
- Mentoring groups to support positive self-identity

Engagement

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Student advocates

At Walsall Academy, we are committed to advocating for those within our community to ensure that we endlessly strive for true inclusion. We have student and staff advocates who support students in a number of ways:

- By monitoring and supporting students during unstructured times of the school day to ensure that students all experience our core values of equality and kindness
- By listening to student views and concerns without giving personal views or passing judgement
- By providing students with information about their options and rights and exploring ways of making positive choices

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