

<b>Staffordshire University Academies Trust</b>		<b>Trust Policy Document</b>			
<b>Approved by:</b>	Trust Board	<b>Issue date:</b>	October 2020	<b>Review date:</b>	October 2022
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<b>Audience:</b>	Trustees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pupils <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local Academy Council <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Equality Policy

### Purpose

Tackling inequality is a major priority for Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT). We want to ensure that our young people stay healthy and safe; secure an excellent education and reach the highest possible standards of achievement; enjoy their childhood; make a positive contribution to society and the economy; and have lives full of opportunity, free from the effects of poverty. To achieve this, we must focus extra attention and support on those children, young people and families struggling against disadvantage and discrimination. We are proud of the progress we have already made in tackling inequality, both as a provider of education and as an employer. We are, however, very aware of the need to do more.

In this Equality Policy we set out our commitments for tackling inequality and discrimination. We have taken a rigorous approach to prioritisation to identify the key equalities issues we must address against our Strategic Intent. In addition, we also present the action we will take on issues that we are unable to prioritise this year, but to which we will return in future years.

Our commitment as a Trust is to ensure the delivery of services tailored and personalised to meet the needs of all children, young people and families. That means building on our excellent work in actively engaging and involving people, listening and responding to their views and needs, and adapting our policies in this light. Our commitment to listen and respond also means sharpening the way we make and implement policy.

We need to be confident that, through the actions we set out in this Equality Policy, we as a Trust will be taking positive steps to promote equality and eradicate discrimination for all. Every child should have the chance to make the most of their talents and fulfil their potential but not every child gets the same opportunities and not every family is able to take up those that are available. Some of our families struggle more than others against disadvantage and discrimination. Some children are at greater risk than others of harm and / or ill health. Some children, young people and families are victims of discrimination which deprives them of dignity and opportunity whilst demeaning and undermining the strength of our society.

This, our explicit Equality Policy, shows how our policies and programmes seek to tackle discrimination and ensure that we support children, young people and families needing extra assistance to overcome disadvantage.

In the policy we set out our equality priorities for 2020-2022.

### Principles

In creating this Single Equality Policy, we have adopted the following principles:

- **listening and responding, involving and consulting** - we will discuss the priorities in this Policy with disabled adults, young people, and with different stakeholders
- **levelling up** - we will take a levelling up approach, applying the highest requirement of the law across all equalities strands
- **joining up** - we have aligned our equalities planning and our overall planning and reporting

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systems more closely than they have been in the past. The Trust Board and the Local Academy Councils will drive our work. All of our planning, however, must play a vital role in delivering opportunities for children, young people and families

- **transparency** - we have sought to produce a policy that it is easy for everyone to understand and respond to – young people, social workers, teachers, parents and those who make policy amongst our stakeholders
- **outcomes** - we must outline the expected outcomes for all priority actions and we will develop these further in the year ahead, through our arrangements for monitoring and developing policies and programmes to meet our Strategic Intent

### Monitoring Impact

We know that looking at all our policies, while they are being developed, and asking hard questions about how they will make life better for vulnerable pupils, is the right thing to do. We also know that doing that properly takes time and can be difficult.

The monitoring of progress against our priorities, and action to tackle inequality, will be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Teams in each of the academies, in association with the Chair of the Local Academy Council. The evaluation of our impact on inequality will, therefore, be central to all that we do and will be reported annually to the Trust Board.

Our equality priorities for 2020-2022 are set out below.

The Senior Leadership Teams, and the Trust Board, are responsible for leading activity across SUAT to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Our Strategic Intent drive all aspects of our vision for SUAT and include a focus on equality and diversity.

Our three year Strategic Intent document, for the period 2020-22, sets out our objectives, and our equality priorities are part of that framework. Our priority has to be about securing the wellbeing of children and young people, and safeguarding the young and vulnerable.

To achieve these aims, we will focus on:

- improving further the quality of our service for our Vulnerable children and their families
- enhancing inclusion in sport and PE
- reducing bullying

1. To close the gap in educational achievement for children from disadvantaged backgrounds - we will focus on:
  - supporting improvements in the EYFS
  - closing further the gap between the attainment of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
  - removing barriers and providing better support for pupils with disabilities
  - ensuring equal access to all aspects of school life
  - raising the attainment of all pupils and closing gaps between those who are currently at risk of falling behind and their peers, including:

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- pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) and other learners, by improving further the implementation of the SEND framework and the quality of SEND support in the Trust
  - children and young people in care and other learners, by contributing to placement stability and providing more personalised support for their education.
2. To ensure young people are participating and achieving their potential to 18 and beyond - we will focus on:
    - enhancing access, participation and attainment post-16 of disabled learners, learners from minority ethnic communities, and young people from vulnerable groups.
  3. To keep children and young people on the path to success - we will focus on:
    - reducing rates of exclusion from our Academies
    - ensuring equal access for disabled young people and for young women and men from minority ethnic communities to positive activities
    - seeking to contribute to a decrease in the proportion of our young people not in education, employment or training two years after leaving our secondary Academies
    - addressing youth crime issues through the taught curriculum, as part of our community cohesion and British Values work
  4. To lead and manage the system - we will focus on getting our approaches right internally, and working with our partners to increase collaboration with our stakeholders.

This means we will:

- support the development of diversity within the workforce working with children, young people and families
- discuss, monitor, and act on, equalities in:
  - our staffing and performance management structures
  - all emerging policy
- develop understanding, capacity and compliance, on promoting equalities and assessing impact in the individual academies
- ensure our evidence collection and analysis responds to equalities priorities be an exemplar in:
  - our role as an employer
  - the way our external communications and our web sites promote access, challenge stereotypes and represent equalities
  - the use of procurement policy to promote equalities
  - how we involve and consult specific groups of children and young people in developing policy within SUAT

These are our top priorities. In some cases, they carry forward commitments made in our Race, Disability and Gender Equality Policies. In other cases, they are new commitments.

Delivering them will make a vital difference for some of our young people and families.