



*Thinking Schools Academy Trust*  
**“Transforming Life Chances”**

Thinking Schools Academy Trust

**Equality Policy**

This policy was adopted on	September 2021
The policy is to be reviewed on	September 2025

## **1. Introduction**

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust (The Trust) is committed to ensuring that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups whilst having an inclusive approach and focus on the wellbeing and progress of every child. We aim to ensure that students, parents, governors, employees, contractors, partners, clients and those who may potentially join the Trust community, are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect.

The trust is committed to being an inclusive educator and employer by enabling all students and employees, to utilise the same facilities, take part in the same activities and experiences, regardless of whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation.

The Trust believes that the Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people.

## **2. Equality Statement**

In accordance with Trust and Academy ethos and values we respect the equal human rights of all our students, educate them about equality and respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the school community.

Where appropriate we assess (“Equality Impact Assessment”– appendix 1) specific projects or processes and implement all necessary resulting actions in relation to religion or belief, socio-economic background, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity

We promote community cohesion at Academy, local, national and global levels, comparing our school community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to ethnicity, religion or belief, and socio-economic background.

## **3. Policy & Scope**

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics).

This means that schools cannot discriminate against students and employees or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. Age, marriage and civil partnership are also “protected characteristics” and relevant to employees but are not part of the school provisions related to students.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. All organisations have a statutory obligation and a regulatory requirement to be inclusive. The Trust has a moral obligation to embed a diverse and inclusive culture for all our students and Employees. The trust operates on principles of fairness, transparency and equality of all opportunities for all students and Employees.

This Policy sets out how the Trust and its schools meet the two specific duties within the “Equality Act”.

The Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Two Specific Duties:

- Our schools to publish information to show compliance with equality duty
- Our schools to publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years, which are specific and measurable.

#### **4. Thinking Schools Academy Trust 6 Principles**

The Trust’s approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

**1 All learners are of equal value**

Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation

**2 We recognise and respect diversity**

- Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- Gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men and any other gender identities are recognised.

**3 We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys, girls, women, men, and any other gender identities and an absence of sexual harassment

**4 Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:**

Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation

**5 We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist, and take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:**

- Disabled and non-disabled people
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Girls, boys, women, men, any other gender identities and LGBTQ+

- 6 We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:**
- Disabled people as well as non-disabled
  - People of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
  - Both women and men, girls and boys, any other gender identities and LGBTQ+

## **5. Responsibilities**

The Trust Governing Body are responsible for:

- Making sure the Academies/Schools follow all of its equality and diversity policies and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality.
- Recognising the importance of inclusion and having an inclusive school
- Having an understanding of unconscious bias and how it might appear in a school
- Ensure inclusion is embedded within their own practice
- Improvement and development of their own self-awareness and ways to mitigate bias in their own behaviours

The Head teacher/Principal/Line Manager is responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on equality and diversity
- Putting the Trust's equality policy into practice
- Ensuring that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out
- Following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- Improvement and development of their own self-awareness and ways to mitigate bias in their own behaviours

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination.
- Actively responding to any incidents of unfair discrimination, related to protected characteristics perpetrated by students, other staff or visitors.
- Keeping up to date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training.
- Complaints from parents, students and the community will be dealt with in line with the academy's complaints procedure, and as such appropriate staff will deal with the relevant stage of the complaint.
- Improvement and development of their own self-awareness and ways to mitigate bias in their own behaviours

Students are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their language and actions.
- Obeying all of the Academy/School equality and diversity policies.

## **6. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation**

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our students and the way we provide access for students to facilities, services, trips and visits.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students –designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- We ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day-to-day operations of our schools/academy's.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all, working together and the need for all to embrace diversity.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.
- We are committed to training our managers and all other employees regarding their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help the Trust provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

## **7. Breaches of this policy**

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.

## **8. Links to other policies and documentation**

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the approach outlined in this policy underpins all decision making in relation to our academy/school transformation plans, policy reviews, self-evaluation, the academy/school prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references to equalities in the behaviour, attendance, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies, as well as minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and the student councils.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the ways we comply with this are found in all our related HR policies.

## **9. Monitoring and review of the policy**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Human Resources Department to ensure it is achieving its objectives. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved.

Monitoring will also include reviewing the make-up of the workforce and assessing how this policy is working in practice and considering any action to take to address issues that may arise.

## **XXXX School Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – Project/Process**

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of our policy, practice, function or service on different groups of staff and students, and consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

### **Part 1: EIA Details**

<b>Name of the policy, practice, service or function being assessed, and a brief overview of its aims and objectives</b>		<b>Is it new or existing?</b>	
<b>Who is responsible</b>		<b>Date of completion</b>	
<b>EIA completed by</b>		<b>EIA approved by</b>	

### **Evidence Gathering and Engagement**

**What evidence has been used for this assessment?**

**Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?**

**Groups that may be affected:**

Consider the impact on different groups of Staff

<b>Are there concerns that the policy/project/process could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)</b>	<b>Existing or potential adverse impact</b>	<b>Existing or potential for a positive impact</b>
<b>Age</b> (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		
<b>Disability</b> (physical and mental health disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		
<b>Gender reassignment</b> (Trans staff, and non-binary staff)		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>		
<b>Race</b> Staff from minority ethnic backgrounds (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		
<b>Religion or belief</b> Staff and students with different religions and/or beliefs (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		
<b>Sex and gender</b> Gender (including men, women and pregnancy/maternity, surrogacy and adoption)		
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (LGBTQ+Q+ actual or perceived)		
<b>Socio-economic backgrounds</b>		
<b>Geography</b>		



Any adverse impacts are explored in the Full Impact Assessment below.

## **Part 2: Full EIA**

### **Identify the aims of the policy/service/function and how it is implemented.**

*EG) The aim of the redundancy process is to remove a deficit position in the school's budget, created by government cuts to funding. It will be implemented in accordance with existing law and good practice, advised by HR*

### **Assessment of impact (with regard to protected characteristics: disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity)**

*EG) The following adjustments will be made to the redundancy selection process if required:*

*Addition support with completion of audit*

*Adjustments to interview process to ensure all candidates can participate equally*

*Ensure that staff who are on maternity leave are invited to consultation meetings or provided with information in writing*

### **Consideration of alternative measures or adjustments.**

*EG) The redundancy process will be subject to consultation with unions and staff and will be responsive to suggestions made.*

**Consultation**

*EG) Early consultation will take place on XXX with unions and staff*

**Data to support the Assessment**

*EG) The deficit, if left unchecked, will be XXX in 2012/13 and a deficit of XXX in 2013/14*

**Monitor for adverse impact in the future and publication of results of such monitoring**

*EG) We will assess the outcome of consultations in order to ensure that no groups of staff are more adversely affected than others.*

**Publication of results of the impact assessment**

*EG) The assessment will be made to the Governing Body and published through the minutes.*

### Part 3: EIA Action Plan

Actions recommended as a result of this impact assessment.

Issue/Objective	Action required	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications	Comments

### Part 4: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor the impact once it has been put in to effect?	Timeframe	Lead person

External review	Timeframe	Lead person

Review date	Timeframe	Lead person