Equal Opportunities Policy

Reviewed June 2026

The Stour Academy Trust

Our Statement of Commitment;

We are a diverse and inclusive Trust, committed to equality by providing equitable opportunities for all. We welcome our moral responsibility to eliminate discrimination, foster good relationships and advance equality of opportunity across our school community.

We recognise that everyone has the right to be their authentic self with rights and responsibilities to be treated and treat others fairly and with respect. We recognise that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all the same. When people face particular difficulties, they need extra support to help them achieve success and we aim to do this for everyone in our school community.

Our approach recognises protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010 - disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin), maternity and pregnancy, age. Our inclusive culture fosters an environment where all can feel proud of their identity and abilities.

The Stour Academy Trust Values;

Our values underpin our inclusive approach which promotes a safe, friendly and caring space for all.

Inclusion

Our approach ensures equity through a pedagogy that adapts the curriculum to deliver an inclusive, personalised learning approach.

We welcome diversity and difference as strengths and recognise that inclusion is an active process. As part of this we take a pro-active approach to addressing inequality or discrimination.

We recognise that everyone has a positive and valuable contribution to make.

Nurture

We support the school community in leading a happy and fulfilling life. We recognise that there can be challenges at times and our approach to nurture develops skills to enable moving forward with confidence.

Collaboration

Our collaborative approach facilitates equitable group working where all are enabled to share responsibility, to have collective ownership, to make substantive

decisions and work interdependently.

Innovation

Our approach enables the whole school community to put their ideas into practice in the real world. We celebrate everyone's unique talent and support all to prepare for life beyond the school.

Ambition

Our approach is underpinned by high ambition for all. Our environments promote the courage to try, to persevere and to see mistakes as opportunities to learn.

The success of our approach is underpinned by our passionate belief in working collaboratively and as part of this we actively seek out opinion from our stakeholders.

Our equality objectives;

- To work collaboratively with families in ensuring the best outcomes for all children and in particular those with protected characteristics
- To actively promote extra-curricular activities for children with protected characteristics
- To ensure that we promote a sense of belonging, where every child can see themselves, their community and the diversity of our nation reflected
- To promote mental health and wellbeing in children with protected characteristics, recognising there may be specific challenges that they face
- To provide equitable opportunities to enable all to access and achieve in their learning

Legal framework;

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

- We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
- We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

All learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, are of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- 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 non-binary, girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity
- we monitor and evaluate inclusion through quantitative and qualitative data, including participation, progress and lived experiences of pupils.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- 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, racism and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between male and female and people who identify as non-binary and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.
- we respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice
- we work in co-production with parents and carers, ensuring their views are actively sought, responded to and demonstrable influence provision, policy and improvement

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development.

Policies and procedures aim to benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whatever their age
- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we 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 and boys, non-binary, women and men
- we recognise that pupils may experience multiple and overlapping forms of disadvantage and we take action to address these intersectional barriers
- we recognise that discrimination, exclusion or marginalisation may increase

safeguarding risk and we respond promptly through our school safeguarding systems
- we ensure that provision for pupils with SEND is co-produced with families, algiend to EHCP outcomes where relevant, and regularly reviewed.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely.

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to 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 consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- LGBTQIA+ as well as heterosexual.
- non-binary, women and men, and both girls and boys
- we ensure pupils' voices are systematically gathered and used to inform decision-making.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit.

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, non-binary people, both girls and boys
- LGBTQIA+ as well as heterosexual.

Principle 8: We base our policies and practices on sound evidence;

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information which shows our compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and on the basis of which we decide on specific and measurable objectives. Evidence relating to equalities is integrated into our self-evaluation documentation.

Principle 9: Measurable objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the consultations we have conducted (principle 6) and the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8).

The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

Our equality objectives are integrated into the school improvement plan.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

- The Trust is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1–3:
    - prejudices around disability and special educational needs
    - prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
    - prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

- There is guidance for staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

- We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and, if requested, provide a report to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities;

- The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

- A member of the Board of Directors has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.
- Each headteacher across the Trust is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.
- A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

This training includes targeted professional development in inclusive practice, including adaptive teaching, anti-discriminatory practice and meeting diverse needs.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other Trust policies are dealt with, as determined by the CEO and Board of Directors.

Monitoring and review

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

The Stour Academy Trust regularly report to the Board of Trustees on equality data and the impact of actions taken to reduce disparities.

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Accessibility Plan