



Special Partnership Trust



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Date Last Reviewed: November 2024

Review Date: November 2026



Special Partnership Trust

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Special Partnership Trust recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Trust and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is the aim of the Trust to ensure that no employee, volunteer, pupil or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment/employment or because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".
- 1.2 The SPT opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment. All employees or volunteers whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect.
- 1.3 Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- 1.4 Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass pupils, parents, carers, visitors or colleagues because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Trust's goods and services.
- 1.5 This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with The Equality Act 2010 and other statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

## **2. Aims**

- 2.1 To ensure that our workforce is truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
- 2.2 To ensure that all children/students have equal access to an appropriate curriculum which is not based on their race, gender, faith, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual potential.
- 2.3 To enable everyone to contribute to, gain from, and be valued as a member of the school/Trust community.
- 2.4 To respect and celebrate all within the school/Trust community for their individuality, whatever their race, gender, faith, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual potential.
- 2.5 To provide an efficient means to investigate any incidents or concerns where the equal opportunities of members of the school/Trust community have been compromised.

## **3. Our Commitment**

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff/pupils are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures regularly to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and Trustees and has been shared with trade unions and/or employee representatives.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.
- The policy will be shared with all staff and is available on the Trust and associated Academy websites.

#### **4. Children/Students**

- 4.1 All children/students within the Trust will have equality of access to an appropriate curriculum irrespective of their race, gender, faith, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual potential.
- 4.2 All children/students with have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Planning for curricular activities will be based on the School Long Term Plans, which will be adapted through the Medium Term and Short Term planning structures to meet the individual needs of the children as identified in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Single Plan Outcomes (Education Health Care Plans).
- 4.3 Careful consideration will be taken of the activities planned to ensure that stereotypes are avoided and that positive images of all groups are promoted.
- 4.4 The school buildings (within the Trust) will be constantly monitored by a Member of the LGB to ensure that all teaching areas continue to remain accessible to all children/students; such development will be informed by the individual school's accessibility audit and plan.
- 4.5 The schools within the Trust, as outlined within our individual school offer, will ensure that all children/students have access to appropriate resources to meet their individualised programmes of work.
- 4.6 The timetabling of specialised resources will be carefully arranged (at a school level) to ensure that all children/students have equal access to them to support their personalised learning needs.
- 4.7 At all times, a positive and encouraging ethos will be provided which allows for individual responses and views, and encourages children/students to give their own views and opinions; this will be one of the roles of each of the school councils.
- 4.8 Children/student views will be obtained at Annual Review meetings at each of the schools within the Trust in accordance with Code of Practice guidance.
- 4.9 All staff will be aware of their influence as role models.

- 4.10 Constant vigilance of equal opportunity issues is essential. Any incidents or concerns will be reported, without delay to the Headteacher, who will investigate and take appropriate action, discussing all outcomes with the CEO.

## **5. Responsibilities of Management**

- 5.1 Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Headteacher who will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each Headteacher will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;

Central SPT staff will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees, volunteers and job applicants, including the development of periodic departmental audits.

## **6. Responsibilities of staff**

- 6.1 Responsibility for ensuring that there are no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day-to-day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their Headteacher if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

## **7. Third parties**

- 7.1 Third-party harassment occurs where a Trust employee, pupil or volunteer is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties. The Special Partnership Trust will not tolerate such actions against its staff/pupils/volunteers. The individual concerned should inform their supervisor/Headteacher immediately that this has occurred. The Special Partnership Trust will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure any harassment does not happen again.

## **8. Related Policies**

- 8.1 All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Trust policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

## **9. Rights of people with a disability or impairment**

- 9.1 The Special Partnership Trust attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

## **10. Equality Training**

- 10.1 A series of regular briefing sessions could be held for staff on equality issues These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information will also be included in induction programmes.
- 10.2 Should it be required; training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

## **11. Monitoring**

- 11.1 The Special Partnership Trust deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- 11.2 The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion/beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained. Please refer to the SPT Freedom of Information/Data Protection Policy for further information.
- 11.3 Where appropriate, Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect the Special Partnership Trust policies may have on those who experience them. The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

11.4 If monitoring shows that the Trust, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Trust, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues.

## **12. Grievances and discipline**

12.1 Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Special Partnership Trust Grievance Procedure.

12.2 Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Special Partnership Trust Disciplinary Procedure.

## **13. Review**

13.1 The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed bi-annually under the direct supervision of the Director of the Trust.

