

Staffordshire University Academies Trust		Trust Policy Document			
Approved by:	Trust Board	Issue date:	June 2022	Review date:	Following Trust review
Policy Owner:	CEO	Page: 1 of 2			
Audience:	Trustees ☒ Parents ☒	Staff ☒ General Public ☒	Pupils ☒	Local Academy Council ☒	

The Equality Duty for SUAT Academies

It is SUAT's belief that there can be no fair society if age, disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment remain as markers of disadvantage; and there can be no lasting or deep-rooted progress for disadvantaged groups unless we make a robust case for fairness which involves everyone. Our academies are committed to equality both as an employer and as a service provider.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 contains a general duty known as the public sector equality duty (PSED). Since 5 April 2011, public sector organisations (including maintained schools and Academies) must comply with a key aspect of the Equality Act 2010.

To comply with this duty SUAT requires its academies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic;
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups/people, who share a relevant protected characteristic and groups/people who do not; by taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- Foster good relations between different groups/people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; by encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Having due regard involves thinking consciously about how the schools existing and proposed policies and decisions impact on equality.

People who are protected under the Equality Act have what's called protected characteristics. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Marriage and civil partnership are also protected characteristics under the Equality Act but it's not covered by the public sector equality duty.

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Specific Statutory Duties

In implementing the duties of The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 SUAT requires its academies to comply with two specific duties, which are intended to help them comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. These are:

- Publication of information as since 6 April 2012 every academy has had to publish information to show that it is complying with the duty and at least on an annual basis after that.
- In relation to Equality objectives our academies must prepare and publish one or more objectives which further the three aims of the Equality Duty. Any objective must be specific and measurable.

Purpose of the duty

SUAT believes that the broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of the MAT itself and our academies. If we do not consider how a function can affect different groups in different ways, it is unlikely to have the intended effect. This can contribute to greater inequality and poor outcomes. In implementing the general equality duty into our business practices we aim to consider how our behaviours could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations in our communities. This requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of all relevant SUAT policies and the delivery of services, including internal policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

SUAT understands that compliance with the general equality duty is a legal obligation, but also believes that it makes good business sense. As an organisation we are seeking to be able to provide services that meet the diverse needs of our users enabling us to carry out our core business more efficiently. A workforce that has a supportive working environment is more productive. It will also be beneficial to draw on a broader range of talent and to better represent the communities that our academies serve. It will also result in better informed local decision-making and policy development.

Overall, the Trust believes that it will lead to services that are more appropriate to the user, and services that are more effective and cost-effective. This can lead to increased satisfaction with our academies.

