

## **Equality Policy**

Through its Equality Policy, Astrea Academy Dearne aims to provide a framework which eliminates unlawful discrimination and harassment, promotes equality of opportunity and promotes good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. Through the Equality Policy, Astrea Academy Dearne will ensure that no member of its school community, or any other person through their contact with the school, is disadvantaged.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community; students, staff, governors, parents and members of the local community.

### **Mission statement**

Astrea Academy Dearne believes that all children and adults should be treated equally and fairly irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, cultural background, gender, sexuality, disability, domestic circumstances, age, illness, employment status, membership of trade unions or political beliefs. The school is committed to its values. These values will be underpinned in practice by the principles of equality of opportunity and combating discrimination, direct or indirect, through the actions of those employed by and associated with the school. Astrea Academy Dearne is committed to taking positive steps to help redress the effects of discrimination and disadvantage, ensuring that equality of opportunity is integral to all its activities.

The purpose of our Equality Policy is to ensure that, in everything it does, the school promotes diversity and equality of opportunity, eliminates discrimination, and brings about positive change for those experiencing disadvantage. It provides a framework for good practice in developing equality of opportunity and access in the school, in the school workforce and in relation to the services the school delivers to the community.

The Equality Policy of Astrea Academy Dearne also takes into consideration good practice guidance from the CRE, Equal Opportunities Commission, Audit Commission and the Disability Rights Commission.

The school also recognises the objectives of any policy set down by Barnsley Local Authority including the corporate Equalities & Diversity Policy in order to ensure a joined-up approach in promoting equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relations between communities and groups across the Local Authority.

### **1. Introduction and Legislative Compliance**

1.1. This policy sets out Astrea Academy Trust's expectations for all our schools and those regularly joint working with parents, local authorities and social care partners, as well as external agencies and community groups who continually work together to ensure pupils in our care receive the best educational experience.

1.2. All schools must ensure that all pupils; including those with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equalities Act 2010, are able to flourish and thrive within the school community.

1.3. The protected characteristics in which pupils must not be discriminated against are: age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

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1.4. As a result, inclusion is a term used to describe the process of ensuring equity of learning opportunities for all children and young people. It is a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging. Inclusion is about the quality of their experience; how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school.

1.5. The inclusion focus for Astrea is concerned particularly on those groups of pupils who may have been marginalised historically or who have underachieved or who are currently underachieving when compared to their peers.

1.6. In this respect, this policy is concerned specifically for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those experiencing disadvantage – either through socioeconomic or care factors, those who are More Able (MABLE), those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and those who are identified as a minority ethnic group (MEG).

1.7. Inclusion does not mean that all pupils necessarily learn in the same way or together, but that practices are adapted to take account of all learners' needs, and without discrimination against any identified protected characteristics; this is equity in learning.

1.8. All pupils, including those identified as having SEND, have the same common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and enables them to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

1.9. All schools must operate in accordance with the law as set out in the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability regulations 2014
- The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) regulations 2014
- The Equality Act 2010

1.10. All schools in England must have regard to the Code of Practice (2015) as it provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. Schools must fulfil their statutory duties towards children and young people with SEN or disabilities in light of the guidance set out.

1.11. Under the Equality Act (2010), all schools have duties towards individual disabled children and young people. They must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services required by disabled children and young people to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage.

1.12. The Teachers' Standards (2012) makes clear the expectation for all teachers to "adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils". Teachers must "have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; Page 2 those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them." (Standard 5)

## **2. Equality and Inclusion**

2.1. All pupils should be equally valued in school. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) states that "avoiding discrimination and promoting equality supports the agenda of improving attainment and progression for all pupils. Good education and skills are crucial for opening up opportunities and increasing the chance of a successful life".

2.2. In addition, in England, equality and diversity are specified factors that must be considered during school inspections, such as those led by Ofsted.

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2.3. Schools have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality and to foster good relations for “an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.” (EHRC, 2014)

2.4. With this in mind, all schools must ensure that a culture of tolerance, which embraces diversity, is promoted across the school community, so that all pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people.<sup>1</sup>

2.5. Educational inclusion, therefore, is about equal opportunities, which lead to success, for all pupils, whatever their age, gender or gender identification, relationship preference, ethnicity, impairment, prior attainment, or socio-economic background.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), sometimes also referred to as the ‘general duty’ that applies to public bodies (including maintained schools and academies) and which extends to all protected characteristics: race; disability; gender; age; religion or belief; sexual orientation; pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011 and consists of three main elements. In carrying out its functions, Astrea Academy Dearne will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Where schools are concerned, age will be a relevant characteristic in considering their duties in their role as an employer but not in relation to students.

To fulfil its specific duties under the law the school will:

- Publish information on its website to demonstrate how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

### 3. Aims and Objectives

The general aims of the Equality Policy are to:

- Identify and eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- promote good practice in equality of opportunity in the school’s activities; and
- ensure that the school’s commitment to equality is widely known, understood, and communicated.

The specific aim of the Equality Policy is to work with its students, employees, parents, contractors and key stakeholders to:

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As a School: Provide a truly excellent educational experience which is driven by the school's values and which meets the needs of all students, enabling them to achieve success.

As an Employer: To have a workforce which is representative of the community the school serves; to value and celebrate the diversity of its staff; to strive to be a place where people want to work; to be a leader in good practice; to ensure fair treatment and equality of opportunity to all; to recruit the best person for the job based on careful analysis of job requirements and performance.

As a Community Leader: To champion equality of opportunity, challenge racism and all forms of discrimination, and contribute to making the local community a place where people live together safely in peace, respect and friendship.

As a Major Procurer and Commissioner of Services: To use its spending power wherever possible to influence other organisations in promoting equality of opportunity.

Astrea Academy Dearne undertakes to:

- Meet its legal obligations under all relevant legislation;
- Treat everyone fairly and with respect for culture, values and beliefs;
- Operate openly and with accountability in all areas of its work;
- Encourage and enable the involvement of people in decisions which affect them.

### **3.1 Disability**

Astrea Academy Dearne will promote equality of opportunity for those with disability by:

- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires treatment that is more favourable.

### **3.2 Gender Equality**

Astrea Academy Dearne will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

### **3.3 Race Equality**

Astrea Academy Dearne will promote equality and challenge racism by:

- Celebrating the richness and diversity of different cultures through the curriculum;
- Capitalising upon opportunities within the academic and pastoral curriculum, to deal with issues of prejudice;

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- Regularly reviewing our displays, website and publications to ensure that these are inclusive;
- Regularly reviewing/auditing curriculum content and materials used, including in the Library, to ensure that negative images are not used and positive images are promoted wherever possible;
- Challenging inappropriate racist or stereotypical comments made in lessons, in social environments, or in any part of the school's business;
- Banning all racist leaflets, badges, insignia (or similar) from school;
- Recording all and any racist incidents;
- Maintaining close links with the Local Authority Advisers for guidance on policy and resource development;
- Monitoring the impact of our policies through feedback gained from parental and student questionnaires, assessment data about the progress and achievement of pupils from different ethnic groups and the frequency of racist incidents in school.

### **3.4 Sexual Orientation**

Astrea Academy Dearne will actively seek to:

- Identify and actively promote best practice in tackling prejudice as a direct result of sexual orientation
- Challenge inappropriate or stereotypical comments made in lessons, in social environments, or in any part of the school's business;
- Record all and any homophobic incidents.

## **4. Embedding Equality into Practice**

As well as the specific actions set out within this Policy, the school will operate equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice as set out below.

### **4.1 Teaching and Learning**

Astrea Academy Dearne aims to provide all its students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential, to do this the school will:

- Monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability and intervene to reduce any variation where it occurs;
- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which the school provides support to individuals and groups of students;
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and target setting;
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school's population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;

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- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve and engage all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of its students.

## **4.2 Admissions**

The school subscribes to Barnsley Local Authority's admissions arrangements. These arrangements are fair and transparent and comply with the National Code of Practice on Admissions. They do not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

## **4.3 Exclusions**

Where it is necessary to implement an exclusion as a consequence this will always be in line with the school's Behaviour Policy which is available to access via the school's website.

## **5. Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section relates to the services and activities of Astrea Academy Dearne as an employer.

### **5.1 Overview**

Astrea Academy Dearne will seek to comply with all current legislation and statutory regulations covering the relevant areas of equal opportunities.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and are made in full compliance with employment law. The school will ensure, wherever possible, that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of its community.

Astrea Academy Dearne is committed to valuing and supporting its employees to realise their full potential and to create a diverse workforce that broadly reflects the community in which it operates. The school's commitment to families and employees is one of continuous development, through training and awareness raising, which will help to ensure this policy is fully effective.

To ensure this commitment is met, the school will:

- Monitor recruitment and retention, including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Offer continuing professional development opportunities for all staff generally and specifically in relation to equality;
- The Senior Leadership Team will offer support wherever needed to ensure equality of opportunity for all;
- Publish equality data relating to staff.

### **5.2 Employer Duties**

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As an employer, the school will ensure that it eliminates discrimination and harassment in its employment practice and actively promotes equality across all groups within its workforce.

### **5.2.1 Age Discrimination**

Astrea Academy Dearne will not discriminate against applicants or staff because of their age. This includes activities relating to recruitment, selection, promotion, training, redundancy and retirement practices.

The school is committed to complying with the European Directives on Age and the Department for Education's Code of Practice on Age Diversity in Employment. To comply with the above the school will, on a priority basis, evaluate recruitment, training, promotion and exit of staff by age; explore job role alteration to enable people to work longer should they physically become less able and consider the results of its monitoring on an annual basis.

### **5.2.2 Disability Discrimination**

Astrea Academy Dearne acknowledges that disabled people are not all the same and that each person may have different needs. The school will remove barriers that may prevent disabled people from accessing work by providing any reasonable adjustments where appropriate to do so.

The school will also provide regular training to all relevant staff on disability issues and continue to seek improvements in the areas of education delivery and access to communication by enhancing and increasing the availability of, for example; loop systems, Braille facilities, information available in other appropriate formats, and sign language interpretation.

### **5.2.3 Gender Discrimination**

Astrea Academy Dearne is committed to achieving equality of opportunity regardless of gender. The school will ensure that all individuals receive equal access to services and resources, employment opportunities including career development, participation in the decision-making process, equal pay for the same or broadly similar work and for work rated as equivalent or of equal value.

The school will provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who may have undergone, or are about to undergo, gender reassignment.

### **5.2.4 Race Discrimination**

As an employer and education provider, Astrea Academy Dearne has a statutory duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

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The terms 'black' and 'minority ethnic groups' are used by the school to refer to those people who may experience racism, discrimination, prejudice or victimisation on the grounds of their colour, race or national origin and as a result experience inequality in their lives.

Astrea Academy Dearne will work towards eliminating any institutional discrimination from its structures, policies and procedures by continually reviewing and striving to improve in these areas, as well as in its operations.

#### **5.2.5 Discrimination on the Grounds of Sexuality**

Astrea Academy Dearne is committed to removing the discrimination that people face in their lives due to their sexuality and life choices. The school will ensure that wherever it is possible, Conditions of Service for staff offer the same benefits to people regardless of their sexual orientation and specifically, that those in same sex relationships receive the same benefits as are available to all other employees. This includes the provision of special leave, parental leave and time off for dependents.

#### **5.2.6 Discrimination Against People with Dependents/Caring Responsibilities**

Astrea Academy Dearne will ensure that its employment practices prohibit unfair discrimination against people with dependents/caring responsibilities in promotion or career progression, recruitment and selection, redundancy, retirement, support systems, training and development, requirements and duties of the school/business. There are a number of 'Work-life Balance' initiatives open to all employees including (but not limited to) job sharing, term-time working, voluntary reduced hours, special leave and parental leave.

#### **5.2.7 Discrimination Against People due to their Religion/Belief**

Astrea Academy Dearne is committed and will work towards the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination against people due to their religion and/or belief in order to ensure equal treatment in all our policies, procedures, employment and other practices, as well as access to education.

#### **5.2.8 Discrimination Against Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Astrea Academy Dearne is committed to eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination against asylum seekers or refugees by ensuring equality of opportunity in the provision of education and, in the case of refugees, equality of opportunity in employment.

### **5.3 Recruitment and Selection**

Astrea Academy Dearne recognises the value of a diverse and mixed workforce. The school is determined to ensure that every job applicant, internal or external, applying for a vacant post will receive fair and equitable treatment. We seek to recruit only the best people for the job. Recruitment is monitored on an ongoing basis at all stages and this monitoring will be regularly analysed with measures adopted to alleviate any adverse impact identified.

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Staff responsible for recruitment, appraisal and other human resources procedures will be trained in all aspects of this policy and other associated policies to ensure that there is no discrimination in these processes.

Job application and selection criteria together with human resources procedures, will be examined and regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and that no group or individual is unfairly put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly.

### **5.3.1 Employment of People with an Offending Background**

Astrea Academy Dearne recognises that people with an offending background can experience discrimination within the community. The school will make efforts to prevent this discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its staff, potential staff or users regardless of offending background so long as this does not create a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the school complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. Astrea Academy Dearne undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. Through Barnsley Local Authority, the school is registered with the DBS to access 'Standard' and 'Enhanced' Disclosures on cautions, reprimands and final warnings, as well as convictions.

Employees are required to disclose any convictions received during their employment, where it is relevant to the job or may impact on their ability to undertake their role.

Employees will also be asked to sign a declaration in this regard annually. Each case will be reviewed on an individual basis by taking into consideration the role and responsibilities of the post holder, the nature of the conviction and the potential impact on their ability to undertake their role and/or impact upon the School.

## **6. Community Cohesion**

Astrea Academy Dearne will promote community cohesion through its ethos and values, pastoral system, and the curriculum. The curriculum will actively advance the ideals of community cohesion and will be designed so that every member of the school community can make progress and experience success.

The school will monitor closely the progress of outcomes for students from different socio-economic, ethnic and religious groups and take action to address any discrepancies in learning and/or attainment. As far as resources allow, the school will consider providing financial support which ensures no student is prevented from taking part in enrichment activities that support learning and the curriculum. The school will strive to ensure that they make available a range of inclusive enrichment opportunities.

The school will work closely with external bodies to ensure that young people in disadvantaged circumstances have every opportunity and support to succeed. The school will work closely with parents and carers to involve them in the wider purposes of its work.

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In addition, Astrea Academy Dearne will contribute actively to community cohesion locally:

- Through its work with other schools, to ensure that students from different religious, ethnic and socio- economic contexts can work together in a common endeavour;
- Through its support for local activities and events that support community cohesion;
- Through social enterprise and charitable fundraising to further the cause of justice and equality locally, nationally and internationally.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Members of the governing body**

- Members of the governing body have responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all statutory and administrative requirements governing the use of public funds.
- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students and responsive to their needs based on race, gender, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic circumstances.
- The governing body will seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at Astrea Academy Dearne.
- The governors will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities and will strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers, students and the wider community.
- The governors will welcome all applications to join the school without discrimination.
- The governing body will ensure that no child is discriminated against whilst at Astrea Academy Dearne

### **The Principal**

It is the Principal's role to oversee the effectiveness of this policy and to plan and decide upon appropriate actions in response to any needs identified.

- It is the Principal's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Policy and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Principal will ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to the Equality Policy so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Principal will promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and promote respect for other people and equal opportunities in all aspects of school life.
- The Principal will treat all incidents of unfairness and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

### **All Staff (Teaching and Associate)**

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- All staff will be made fully aware of this policy and must adhere to its requirements without exception.
- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect and will maintain an awareness of the school's Equality Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability. They will challenge any stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Principal.
- Teachers will support the work of associate staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.
- Any employee who feels that they have grounds for complaint in relation to bullying, discrimination, harassment, or victimisation will be aware of their right to pursue the complaint through the relevant internal policies and procedures.
- All employees will be aware that they have a responsibility for their personal involvement with the practical application of this policy, but that specific responsibility falls upon managers within their area of operation.

## 8. Tackling Discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping and to support the full range of diverse needs according to the individual circumstances of students. Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying will be dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to senior staff through the school's systems and structures as appropriate.

All incidents will be reported to the Principal with racist incidents also reported to the Local Authority and to the Governing Body.

### **What Constitutes a Discriminatory Incident?**

Harassment on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio- economic status can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are detailed below (please note; this list is not exhaustive):

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;

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- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to the victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference (for example; taste in music, religion, dress);
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

### **Responding to and Reporting Incidents**

All staff, teaching and associate, have a responsibility to respond to and/or report incidents of discrimination and should see this as vital to the wellbeing of individuals and the school community as a whole.

The school will make available appropriate training and guidance to ensure all staff can confidently respond to, report and where needed, seek support, in dealing with any and all incidents of discrimination.

### **9. Review of Progress and Impact**

This Policy has been agreed by the Governing Body of Astrea Academy Dearne. There is a programme for review of all school policies and their associated impact. For the Equality Policy, this will be on an annual basis.

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