Equality and Diversity & Equal Opportunities Policy

Date Adopted: 8th June 2022
Reviewed: December 2023
Author/owner: Trustees
Review: Annual

NB. 'Trustees' means the Directors referred to in the Trust's Articles of Association

History of most recent policy changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
V1.0			New policy introduced for the Tarka Learning Partnership Central Trust Team and Schools within the Trust	Requirement for central policy to set out the commitment of the Trust and its Schools to Equality and Diversity and Equal Opportunities.
V2.0			General review of the policy. No changes to content.	

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1.0 Introduction

The Tarka Learning Partnership is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation where all members of its community are treated with respect and dignity. The Trust aims to create a culture of diversity within its schools, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution.

The Tarka Learning Partnership's aim is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by its values, are embedded in the day to day working practices with all individuals it has contact with.

The Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation.

Under the Equality Act, no one protected characteristic as listed above has a higher priority than any other.

2.0 Duties under the Equality Act 2010

The Tarka Learning Partnership and its schools have an individual responsibility to set out the equality matters that they need to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with different protected characteristics.

The Public Sector Equality Duty supports good education and improves pupil outcomes. It helps a school to identify priorities such as underperformance, poor progression, and bullying. It does this by requiring it to collate evidence, look at the issues and consider taking action to improve the experience of different

groups of pupils. It then helps it to focus on what can be done to tackle these issues and to improve outcomes by developing measurable equality objectives.

The Equality Act 2010 outlines the three aims of the general duty to have due regard for Equality, across all organisations:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Specifically, due regard is to be given within organisational life in order to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages

2. Take steps to meet different needs

3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

Schools are required to carry out two specific duties:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objective.

For a school, having 'due regard' means:

- When making a decision or taking an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.

- It should consider equality implications before and at the time that it develops policy and takes decisions; not as an afterthought, and it needs to keep them under review.

- It should consciously consider each aspect of the duty (having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination is not the same thing as having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity).

- It should assess the risk and extent of any adverse impact that might result from a policy or decision and the ways in which the risk may be eliminated before the adoption of a proposed policy.

- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of a school's functions. The analysis necessary to comply with the duty should be carried out rigorously and with an open mind – it is not a question of just ticking boxes.

- Schools need to do this themselves and cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else. The steps they have taken to meet the duty must be recorded.

3.0 Purpose of policy and guiding principles

The purpose of this policy is to define the Tarka Learning Partnership's commitment to equality and diversity and represents its commitment to a common set of values and objectives, and to a consistent approach to communicating, implementing and monitoring this policy.

The Trust aims to ensure that pupils, parents, trustees, School Community Board representatives, employees, casual workers, trainees, volunteers, contractors, partners, clients and those who may potentially be part of the Trust community, are treated fairly, and with dignity and respect. Decisions will be made fairly and based on objective criteria. Each one of these people will also show respect for, and appreciation of, each other as individuals.

The Tarka Learning Partnership recognises that it is unlawful to discriminate based on the Protected Characteristics of a person detailed in the introduction to this policy. Unlawful behaviour can be in four ways:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

4.0 Equality Statement

The Tarka Learning Partnership will ensure that Equal Opportunities and the principles of fairness underpin all aspects of policy, procedure, education provision, consultation and decision making.

The Trust is committed to equality in its delivery of education, whether or not the service is directly provided by the Trust or contracted out to a third party provider. The staff who deliver education will recognise diversity and demonstrate a proactive approach in their day to day work. They will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, recognising special needs and understanding differences. Staff and student behaviour will reach the highest possible standards and the learning environment provided by the schools in the Trust will be safe and accessible for those studying and working.

The Tarka Learning Partnership will adhere to statutory Government legislation and give consideration to other relevant guidance, which aims to make sure that everyone is treated with equity.

The Trust will not tolerate any form of unlawful behaviour as listed above in 3.0, against members of the Tarka Learning Partnership community.

5.0 Equality objectives

The Tarka Learning Partnership positively commits to promote equal opportunities, celebrating race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

Objectives for 2021 to 2024:

1. Disabled staff

a) To gather data on the staff workforce relating to their disabilities.

b) From this baseline information, promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities to increase the percentage of disabled employees employed by the Trust and to fulfil its commitment to being a Disability Confident Committed employer.

2. Prejudice related incidents

a) To establish effective mechanisms to gather data on prejudice related incidents across the Trust.

b) To ensure the mechanisms for reporting are known by all and effectively used.

c) Over a period of two years, reduce the number of prejudice related incidents through education and processes.

3. Academic achievement

Schools will create their own objective based upon the academic performance in the school and discrepancies between those with a protected characteristic and whole school performance.

<u>To improve outcomes for SEND students</u>
To ensure the gap between, and the achievement of, this specific cohort and other students (especially non SEND) is reduced within school outcomes and against national outcomes.

This objective has been set for the Park School because there is a clear outcome gap that needs to be addressed and attention focused on for 2024-2026

a) to achieve this objective the school will plan to provide the best possible learning environment for all student, but especially for student from this cohort and with SEND.
b) The school's inclusion team, and whole staff, will continue to work with the full cohort, beginning with transition, to ensure that all needs are met and that students feel fully supported to be successful in their learning and achievement because any barriers have been removed.
c) The school will also ensure that this cohort has access to careers and destinations support to destinations which is fully appropriate, regardless of need.

6.0 Equal Opportunities

6.1 Employment

The Trust is committed to ensuring that employees have equal access to jobs, training and professional development opportunities.

All employment policies refer to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

The Trust recognises that the Act extends beyond the protected characteristics of an individual employee and has broader responsibilities to employees and situations that may be covered by the act. For example where an employee with parental or caring responsibilities for a disabled dependent may have rights under the Equality Act which the Trust or school would need to consider.

Employees who are in breach of this policy will be dealt with under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

6.2 Pupil provisions

The Tarka Learning Partnership and its schools will ensure that learners are provided with appropriate support to respond to their individual needs. This includes protection under the Equality Act extending

the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide aids and services to disabled pupils.

All policies relating to the provision of education, the curriculum, behaviour for learning, attendance, exclusion, medical treatment and Child Protection and safeguarding policies should consider the provisions and duties of the Equality Act.

Within the Tarka Learning Partnership it is the role of the schools to equip pupils with an awareness of an increasingly diverse society and of presenting the world as it is and how the Trust would like it to be. All pupils are entitled to every opportunity to achieve their own potential without being limited by assumed social, intellectual or physical capabilities based on stereotypes of race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, religion and belief and sexual orientation. All pupils should leave a Tarka Learning Partnership school as well prepared as possible eventually to participate in and contribute to adult society, to form worthwhile relationships with those around them and to care adequately for themselves and others.

The Tarka Learning Partnership acknowledges the complexity of British society and recognises that it would be failing the pupils if it did not prepare them for their integral part in society, especially global responsibilities. These constitute important aspects of our curriculum.

The curriculum of each school within the Trust will be developed to promote race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

6.3 Contractors and service providers

The Trust will ensure that all service providers that are contracted to provide services to students, staff or visitors will comply with Equalities legislation.

Where services are deemed not to meet the Tarka Learning Partnership standards, in relation to equal opportunities and fairness, contracts may be terminated.

7.0 Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for:

- Making sure the central Tarka Learning Partnership team and all the schools follow all of its policies and meets its legal responsibilities in respect of equality and diversity.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on equality and diversity
- Putting the Trust's policies 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 victimization
- Deliver a curriculum which positively promotes race, disability, gender, genderreassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, religion and belief and sexual orientation.
- Ensuring that their school fulfils its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity, and avoiding unfair discrimination.
- Actively responding to any incidents of discrimination, related to protected characteristics perpetrated by pupils, other staff or visitors
- Keeping up to date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training
- Complaints from parents, pupils and the community will be dealt with in line with the Trust's complaints procedure, and as such appropriate staff will deal with the relevant stage of the complaint.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their language and actions
- Observing and behaving in a way that follows all of the school's policies

8.0 Practice

8.1 Admissions

Each school within the Tarka Learning Partnership follows the Trust's Admission Policy, which does not permit, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, religion and belief and sexual orientation to be used as criteria for admissions.

8.2 Registration

Students' names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Pupils should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

8.3 Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person within the Tarka Learning Partnership are to be treated seriously. It should always be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable.

8.4 Pupils

If there are subsequent incidents to 8.3 above, then the appropriate senior staff member should be informed and consideration should be given to involving the parents. Racist symbols, badges and insignias on clothing and bags are forbidden in schools. Graffiti should be removed immediately. Pupils must be encouraged to make real choices that are based on interest, aptitude and ability rather than reacting to pressure to conform to stereotypes.

8.5 Parents

Parents should be made aware of the Tarka Learning Partnership's commitment to equal opportunities.

8.6 Staff, workers, trainees and volunteers

The Tarka Learning Partnership values diversity amongst staff, workers, trainees, volunteers and contractors.

In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed, based upon strict professional and objective criteria.

All staff, workers, trainees and volunteers should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

In orderto understand the background and experience of ethnic minority pupils and to raise expectations of their potential, staff need to be aware of the historic and contemporary processes, which have caused and may be continued to sustain racism or discrimination against other protected characteristics.

8.7 The curriculum

All pupils must have access to the curriculum. Staff must be constantly aware that their own expectations affect the achievement, behaviour and status of each student. The curriculum must be balanced, objective and sensitive and must not highlight sexual and cultural diversity.

8.8 Monitoring

The implementation of this policy will be monitored and regularly evaluated by the Central Trust team and the Leadership Team within each school.

9.0 Complaints

The Trust will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful (or potentially unlaw) discrimination.

Any complaints will be investigated following the Tarka Learning Partnership's Dignity at Work Policy or complaints policy, whichever is appropriate.