

Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Board Approved Date	January 2026
Version	1.5
Author Initials	TH (Updated by RC)
Review Date	January 2027

(This policy supersedes all previous Equality and Diversity policies)

CONTRACTUAL POLICY

Amendments

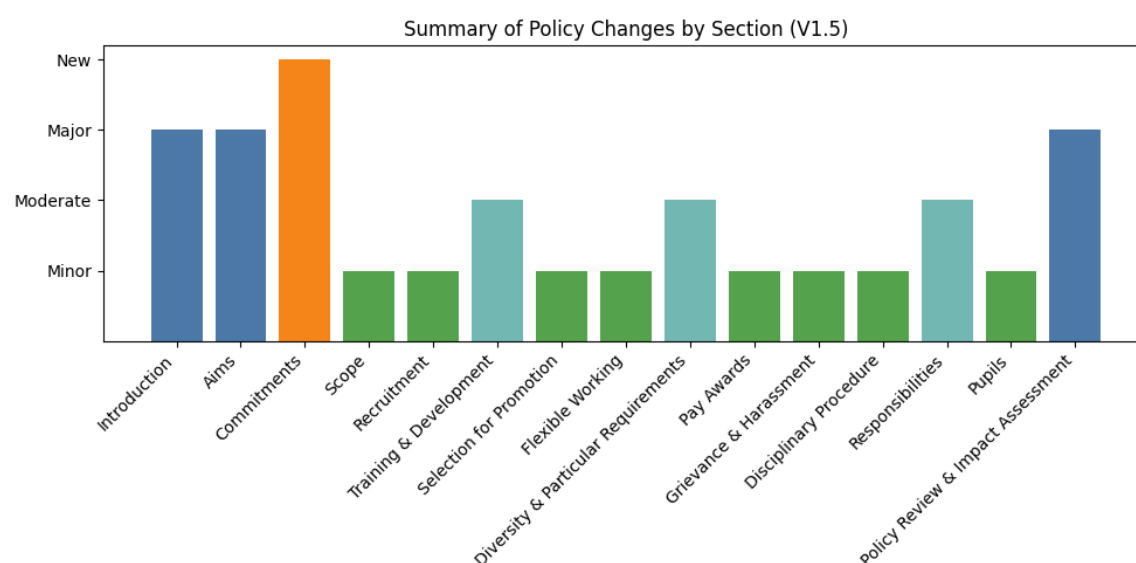
Policy Date	New Version Number	Summary of change	Comments
08/10/2020	V1.1	Inclusion of equalities in relation to pupils	
October 2021	V1.2	No Change	
October 2022	V1.3	No Change	
January 2024	V1.4		
January 2026	V1.5	Policy reframed to include equity and intersectionality; new commitments on data transparency, positive action, psychological safety, and mandatory ongoing EDI training; stronger alignment to PSED; refreshed Responsibilities and Review sections; original sections retained and enhanced. SEE BELOW	Draft awaiting Board approval

Union Consultation

Date	Action (meeting, email etc)	Comments	Attendance
10/07/17	Meeting with Union Reps		UNISON, GMB, NASUWT, ATL, NUT

Summary of Changes for Trustees

The chart below summarises the extent of changes in each section. See the table for details.



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Section	Type of change	Key updates / where to look
Introduction	Major revision	Reframed to emphasise equity and intersectionality; explicit EDI commitments.
Aims	Major revision	Psychological safety added; EIAs embedded; outcomes focus.
Commitments	New section	New: data transparency, positive action, stakeholder involvement, mandatory training.
Scope	Minor wording/clarity	Clarified coverage incl. contractors and TUPE context.
Recruitment	Minor wording/clarity	Explicit job-related criteria; inclusive advertising; positive action reference.
Training & Development	Moderate enhancement	Mandatory ongoing EDI modules; inclusive leadership.
Selection for Promotion	Minor wording/clarity	Objective criteria reinforced; fairness in redundancy/promotion.
Flexible Working	Minor wording/clarity	Parity of opportunity and pro-rata entitlements reaffirmed.
Diversity & Particular Requirements	Moderate enhancement	Neurodiversity and reasonable adjustments emphasised.
Pay Awards	Minor wording/clarity	Equal pay for equal value reiterated; transparent criteria.
Grievance & Harassment	Minor wording/clarity	Clear routes incl. open-door; psychological safety and support signposting.
Disciplinary Procedure	Minor wording/clarity	Non-compliance treated as misconduct; accountability strengthened.
Responsibilities	Moderate enhancement	Board accountability; inclusive leadership; employee expectations clarified.
Pupils	Minor wording/clarity	Curriculum access, monitoring, and anti-bullying processes retained and strengthened.
Policy Review & Impact Assessment	Major revision	Annual review plus EIAs for all major decisions; publish progress.

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1. Introduction

Education South West Trust is committed to fostering an environment where equity, diversity, and inclusion are integral to our mission. We recognise that individuals may experience disadvantage or discrimination based on multiple, intersecting aspects of identity, including but not limited to race, gender, sexuality, disability, age, culture, religion and belief, nationality, neurodiversity, and caring responsibilities. We strive not only for equality—ensuring fair treatment—but also for equity, by providing tailored support and reasonable adjustments so that all members of our community can thrive. Our approach is intersectional and holistic, acknowledging the complexity of lived experiences. We will adhere to statutory legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and seek to go beyond compliance by embedding best practice and continuous improvement in all our activities.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Trust employees, regardless of position or status, and to contractors and subcontractors. It has been implemented following consultation with staff and recognised trade unions and has been formally adopted by the Trust.

This policy is contractual and forms part of any employee's contract of employment but does not affect terms and conditions of employment of those staff who TUPE transferred in January 2017.

3. Aims

Create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion where every individual feels valued, respected, and able to achieve their full potential.

Promote psychological safety so staff, pupils, and stakeholders can speak up without fear of negative consequences.

Recognise and celebrate diversity across our workforce, pupils, and community, and address underrepresentation and disadvantage through proportionate positive action.

Ensure all policies, practices, and decisions are subject to regular equality impact assessments (EIAs) to prevent inadvertent disadvantage.

4. Commitments

Embed equity, diversity, and inclusion principles in HR strategies, policies, and procedures, with regular monitoring and review.

Provide mandatory and ongoing EDI training for all staff, including unconscious bias, anti-racism, and inclusive leadership.

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Collect, analyse, and publish anonymised diversity data (where appropriate) on workforce and pupil demographics, reporting annually on progress against equality objectives.

Involve diverse stakeholders—including staff networks, student voice, and community groups—in the development, review, and implementation of EDI policies and practices.

Take proportionate positive action to address underrepresentation or disadvantage, as permitted by law.

Ensure accessible and transparent feedback mechanisms for all stakeholders to raise concerns or suggestions regarding EDI.

Provide support mechanisms, such as counselling and employee assistance programmes, for those experiencing discrimination or exclusion.

5. Recruitment

The Trust's recruitment and selection procedure is based solely on necessary and justifiable job requirements and an individual's suitability.

Job descriptions and person specifications are prepared for every post. Where posts are advertised externally, we select appropriate outlets to reach a wide and diverse pool of applicants.

Selection methods, including interviews, are conducted in accordance with documented and standardised procedures designed to ensure that discrimination forms no part of the process. Each appointment is made on the grounds of selecting the most suitable candidate for the post.

Where underrepresentation is identified, we may take proportionate positive action, as permitted by law, to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

6. Training and Development

Through our performance management procedure, all staff have the opportunity to undertake job-specific training and agree an individual Performance Plan to support development and career progression within the Trust.

EDI training is mandatory and ongoing for all staff, including modules on unconscious bias, anti-racism, inclusive leadership, and bystander intervention.

The appraisal process is carried out in accordance with clear and laid down criteria to ensure application is free from discrimination at every stage.

7. Selection Processes for Promotion

When selecting between groups of staff—for example, for promotion or in redundancy situations—we ensure a fair and consistent procedure. Selection criteria are objective, free of discrimination, and based on assessments of competence. Promotion opportunities are available to all employees on an equal basis.

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8. Flexible Working

We recognise the benefits of flexibility in working arrangements. Employees working under such arrangements are treated fairly and consistently compared to full-time, permanent employees and have the same opportunities for development. Pay and benefits are provided on a pro rata basis where applicable.

9. Diversity and Particular Requirements

Applications from disabled people and those with particular requirements are considered based on relevant skills, experience, and knowledge. We will make reasonable adjustments to jobs and workplaces to meet individual needs, including adjustments for neurodiversity (e.g., autism, ADHD).

10. Pay Awards

Our arrangements for determining salaries are based on equality of pay and reward for all employees.

We operate pay review mechanisms—some incorporating union involvement and/or staff consultative forums—designed to ensure pay awards are based on objective criteria, free from discrimination, and adhere to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

11. Grievance and Harassment

While most issues can be resolved informally, the Grievance Procedure exists to address genuine concerns equitably.

Any employee who believes they have been discriminated against should raise the matter under the Grievance Procedure or the Open Door Policy (discuss any matter confidentially with their Manager/Headteacher or another manager/Executive Principal).

Clear and well-publicised grievance procedures ensure opportunities to address any area where discrimination is perceived to have arisen. We promote psychological safety and provide signposting to support services, including counselling and the Employee Assistance Programme.

12. Disciplinary Procedure

The Trust takes a serious view of discrimination. Breaches of this Policy are misconduct and may constitute disciplinary offences dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedures. All staff share responsibility to adhere to this Policy and promote dignity and equality of opportunity and outcome at work.

13. Responsibilities

Whilst we all have a collective responsibility to ensure this Policy is successfully adopted, specific responsibilities are:

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The Trust Board

The Board fully endorses this Policy and holds ultimate responsibility for advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, reviewing and achieving its aims. The Board leads by example and ensures accountability at all levels.

Managers/Principals/Headteachers

All leaders are responsible for implementing and enforcing this Policy, ensuring teams are aware of responsibilities, promoting inclusive leadership, and dealing appropriately with any breach. Leaders ensure all employees are trained and understand their responsibilities under this Policy.

Employees

All employees have an individual responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity and adherence to this Policy by respecting the right to work free from prejudice and discrimination, exhibiting correct behaviours, and challenging colleagues who fall short of expectations.

14. Pupils

We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet pupils' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, enabling them to take as full a part as possible in all activities of the school.

We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

We will actively encourage positive attitudes and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.

We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curricula promote awareness of rights, develop skills of participation and responsible action, support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value diversity—challenging prejudice and stereotyping.

We will monitor the progress and achievement of pupils by relevant protected characteristics to ensure inclusivity and identify trends.

We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions of job applicants before offering a job, unless intrinsic to the role. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for disabled staff.

We will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided, where reasonable adjustments are required.

By planning ahead, we will ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and we will monitor uptake to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

We will seek views of advisory staff and outside agencies and form partnerships with other schools where needed. In planning the curriculum and resources, we will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.

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Bullying and Prejudice-Related Incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively. Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure awareness of the process for reporting and following up incidents of bullying and prejudice/hate incidents (<https://www.devon.gov.uk/equality/reportincidents/schools/report-staff>).

We expect that all staff will be role models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

Throughout the year, we will plan ongoing events to raise awareness of equality and diversity (e.g., disability inclusion, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, gender equality, developing community cohesion, and understanding the effects of discrimination).

We will ensure pupil/parent/staff consultation is regularly sought in the development and review of this policy and regularly review our accessibility plans.

We welcome a diverse range of candidates and encourage those currently underrepresented to join. We will ensure all staff are aware of legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination, and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice.

We will set out training and awareness sessions in the school improvement plan. We will consult with stakeholders to establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning. Equality objectives will be reviewed and reported on annually.

We will maintain and update an equality page on the school website to show how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and advance equality of opportunity.

When drawing up policies, we will carry out an equality impact assessment (EIA) to ensure policies do not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of pupils with protected characteristics and recommend changes/mitigations where necessary.

15. Policy Review and Impact Assessment

This policy will be reviewed annually. The Board will monitor its effectiveness in line with the equality objectives set and the Trust will publish progress against these objectives. All new or revised policies, practices, and major decisions will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure they eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations for all protect