

FOOTSTEPS TRUST EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Footsteps Trust Academy is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where every student, employee, volunteer, parent, carer and visitor is valued and treated with dignity.

The Academy believes that diversity enriches our community and that everyone should have equal opportunities to participate, achieve and flourish.

We are committed to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity.
- Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Fostering positive relationships between all members of the Academy community.
- Challenging prejudice, stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour.
- Safeguarding all members of the Academy community.

As an Alternative Provision, we recognise that many students may experience additional vulnerabilities and barriers to education. Equality and inclusion are therefore central to our provision, safeguarding practice and curriculum.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- SEND Code of Practice.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Independent School Standards Regulations.

The Academy will meet its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty as applicable to educational settings.

3. Public Sector Equality Duty

In carrying out its functions, Footsteps Trust Academy will have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate Discrimination

Including:

- Direct discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Victimisation.

Advance Equality of Opportunity

By:

- Removing barriers.
- Providing support where needed.
- Reducing disadvantage.
- Promoting participation.

Foster Good Relations

By:

- Promoting understanding.
- Celebrating diversity.
- Challenging prejudice.
- Encouraging respectful relationships.

4. Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Academy will take active steps to ensure that individuals are not disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic.

5. Equality, Inclusion and Safeguarding

The Academy recognises that equality and safeguarding are closely linked.

In line with KCSIE 2026, staff will be alert to concerns involving:

- Discriminatory incidents.
- Hate-related behaviour.
- Child-on-child abuse.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual violence.
- Bullying related to protected characteristics.
- Online abuse.
- Extremism and radicalisation.

All concerns will be addressed promptly through safeguarding and behaviour procedures where appropriate.

Students must feel safe, respected and able to report concerns without fear of discrimination or retaliation.

6. Commitment to Inclusion

Footsteps Trust Academy will:

- Promote equality of access to education.
- Remove barriers to learning.
- Support individual needs.
- Celebrate diversity.
- Promote belonging and participation.
- Ensure all students have opportunities to succeed.

This includes students who:

- Have SEND.
- Have disabilities.
- Are looked after.
- Are previously looked after.
- Are young carers.
- Have SEMH needs.
- Are from minority ethnic communities.
- Have English as an additional language.
- Are vulnerable for any other reason.

7. Recruitment and Employment

Recruitment, promotion and employment decisions will be based solely on:

- Skills.
- Qualifications.
- Experience.
- Suitability for the role.

The Academy will:

- Avoid discriminatory recruitment practices.
- Provide equal access to training.
- Support career progression.
- Make reasonable adjustments where required.
- Promote fairness and transparency.

All recruitment processes will comply with safer recruitment requirements.

8. Students

No student will be treated less favourably because of:

- Disability.
- Gender.
- Ethnicity.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender identity.
- Family circumstances.
- Health condition.
- Additional needs.

The Academy will make reasonable adjustments where necessary to enable students to access education and wider Academy life.

9. SEND and Disability

The Academy is committed to inclusive provision for students with SEND and disabilities.

We will:

- Provide reasonable adjustments.
- Promote accessibility.
- Support participation.
- Monitor outcomes.

Date of Issue: September 2026

Date of Review: September 2027

- Encourage independence.
- Work collaboratively with families and professionals.

This policy should be read alongside the SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan.

10. Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

The Academy will not tolerate:

- Racism.
- Sexism.
- Homophobia.
- Biphobia.
- Transphobia.
- Disability discrimination.
- Religious discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Hate incidents.
- Victimisation.

Incidents will be:

- Taken seriously.
- Recorded appropriately.
- Investigated promptly.
- Addressed using restorative, educational and disciplinary responses where appropriate.

Links to safeguarding will always be considered.

11. Curriculum

The curriculum will promote:

- Equality.
- Diversity.
- Inclusion.
- British Values.
- Respect for protected characteristics.
- Social responsibility.

Students will develop understanding of:

- Diversity within modern Britain.
- Equality and Human Rights.
- Healthy relationships.

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- Challenging prejudice and stereotypes.
- Respectful discussion and debate.

Teaching materials will seek to reflect diverse experiences and perspectives.

12. Equality Objectives

Objective 1: Curriculum and Achievement

Reduce any gaps in achievement, engagement and attendance for:

- Students with SEND.
- Looked After Children.
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Vulnerable groups.

Objective 2: Inclusion and Participation

Increase participation in:

- Enrichment activities.
- Student leadership opportunities.
- Educational visits.
- Careers activities.

For all groups of students.

Objective 3: Personal Development

Promote understanding of:

- Equality.
- Diversity.
- Protected characteristics.
- Respectful relationships.

Through curriculum and enrichment opportunities.

Objective 4: Accessibility

Continue to improve accessibility of:

- Learning environments.
- Information.
- Educational opportunities.

For students, staff and visitors.

Objective 5: Workforce Development

Ensure all staff receive regular training on:

- Equality.
- Inclusion.
- Safeguarding.
- Protected characteristics.
- Anti-discriminatory practice.

These objectives should be reviewed annually and formally evaluated every four years.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Trustees/Proprietor

Will:

- Monitor implementation.
- Review equality objectives.
- Promote an inclusive culture.

Principal

Will:

- Lead implementation.
- Ensure compliance.
- Monitor equality outcomes.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Will:

- Monitor discriminatory safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure links between safeguarding and equality are understood.

Staff

Will:

- Promote inclusion.
- Challenge discrimination.
- Model respectful behaviour.
- Report concerns appropriately.

Students

Will:

- Treat others respectfully.
- Challenge prejudice appropriately.
- Report concerns.

14. Monitoring and Review

The Academy will monitor:

- Attendance.
- Behaviour.
- Exclusions and suspensions.
- Safeguarding incidents.
- Discriminatory incidents.
- Participation rates.
- Achievement outcomes.

Monitoring will help identify inequalities and inform future action.