



A Holistic Approach To The Education of Young People

Inclusion, Equal Opportunity, and Protected Characteristics Policy

1. Statement of Intent

ElevatEd AP Ltd is profoundly committed to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. We firmly believe that diversity enriches our community and strengthens our collective educational experience.

This policy reaffirms our unwavering commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations among all members of our provision community. We recognise that pupils in Alternative Provisions often have diverse backgrounds, complex needs, and may belong to one or more protected characteristics, making our commitment to inclusion even more critical. We are dedicated to proactively identifying and addressing barriers to participation and success, ensuring that all pupils and staff are treated fairly and with dignity, and that discriminatory behaviours are challenged and rectified.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff (employees, volunteers, contractors, agency staff), parents/carers, visitors, and stakeholders of ElevatEd. It governs all aspects of our provision, including admissions, curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour management, pastoral care, extra-curricular activities, recruitment, employment practices, and engagement with the wider community.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, and the evolving needs of our community.

Signed: *Mark Aitken*
Mark Aitken

Date: 01.09.25

Review 01.09.26

2. Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy is developed in strict accordance with, and commitment to, the following legislation and guidance:

- **The Equality Act 2010:** This is the cornerstone of our policy, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):** As an educational provider, we have a specific duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- **Human Rights Act 1998:** Protecting fundamental rights and freedoms.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0-25 Years (2015):** Guiding our provision for pupils with SEND.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE):** Recognising that discrimination, bullying, and a lack of inclusion can be safeguarding concerns.
- **Children Act 1989 & 2004:** Upholding the welfare of children.
- **Education Act 1996:** Promoting the education of all children.

3. Key Definitions

- **Equality:** Treating people fairly, recognising that everyone has different needs and circumstances, and ensuring that outcomes are fair, not necessarily that everyone is treated the same.
- **Diversity:** Recognising and valuing the differences between people, including their varied experiences, characteristics, and perspectives.
- **Inclusion:** Ensuring that all individuals feel welcomed, supported, and are able to participate fully and without barriers.
- **Discrimination:** Less favourable treatment due to a protected characteristic.
 - **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably directly because of a protected characteristic.
 - **Indirect Discrimination:** A provision, criterion, or practice that applies to everyone but disadvantages people with a particular protected characteristic, and cannot be objectively justified.
 - **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

- **Victimisation:** Treating someone less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination under the Equality Act.
- **Discrimination arising from Disability:** Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected to their disability, where that treatment cannot be justified.

4. Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination based on nine 'protected characteristics':

- **Age:** Prohibits discrimination against people of a certain age group (primarily relevant to staff employment, but also ensuring age-appropriate provision for pupils).
- **Disability:** A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, and long-term illnesses.
- **Gender Reassignment:** A person is protected if they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process to reassign their sex.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Prohibits discrimination against those who are married or in a civil partnership (relevant to staff employment).
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Protects women during pregnancy and after childbirth.
- **Race:** Includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or Belief:** Includes any religion, philosophical belief (e.g., humanism), or lack of religion/belief.
- **Sex:** Refers to a person being male or female.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Refers to a person's sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, opposite sex, or both sexes.

5. Our Commitment

At ElevatEd we commit to:

- **Eliminating Discrimination:** Actively working to prevent and challenge all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- **Advancing Equality of Opportunity:** Taking proactive steps to remove barriers and create opportunities for all pupils and staff, particularly those with protected characteristics, to participate and achieve. This includes positive action where appropriate and legally permissible.

- **Fostering Good Relations:** Promoting understanding, respect, and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds, including those with different protected characteristics. We will challenge prejudice and stereotypes.
- **Meeting Individual Needs:** Recognising that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not inclusive. We will provide tailored support and reasonable adjustments to meet the diverse needs of our pupils and staff, especially those with disabilities or other vulnerabilities.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Cultivating a welcoming, safe, and supportive atmosphere where everyone feels they belong and are valued for who they are.

6. Positive Action

Where proportionate, lawful, and necessary, ElevatEd may take **positive action** to overcome or minimise disadvantages experienced by people who share a protected characteristic, or to address under-representation in certain activities or roles. This is distinct from positive discrimination, which is generally unlawful. Examples might include targeted support programmes or mentoring schemes.

7. Promoting Equality and Inclusion: Practical Measures

Our commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity is embedded across all aspects of our provision:

7.1 Admissions and Exclusions:

- Admissions procedures are fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory, based solely on educational need and suitability for our provision, not protected characteristics.
- Exclusion procedures are applied fairly and consistently, ensuring that pupils with protected characteristics are not disproportionately excluded. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled pupils.

7.2 Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning:

- Our curriculum is broad, balanced, and inclusive, reflecting the diversity of our local community and the wider world.
- Teaching methods are adapted to meet diverse learning styles and needs, ensuring accessibility for all pupils, including those with SEND or other disabilities.
- Resources are selected to challenge stereotypes, promote positive images of all protected characteristics, and provide diverse role models.
- Opportunities are provided to explore issues of equality, diversity, and human rights in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner.

7.3 Assessment and Achievement:

- Assessment methods are fair and allow all pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and skills effectively, with appropriate reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- We monitor the attainment and progress of pupils from different protected characteristic groups to identify and address any disparities.

7.4 Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying:

- Our Behaviour Policy clearly states that discriminatory bullying, harassment, and language (e.g., racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist) are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All incidents of discriminatory behaviour will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with firmly, in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy and Disciplinary Policy.
- Support will be provided to victims of bullying and discrimination.
- Pupils are educated on respectful interactions and challenging prejudice.

7.5 Staff Recruitment, Employment, and Professional Development:

- Our recruitment and selection processes are fair, transparent, and based on merit, skills, and experience, ensuring equal opportunity for all applicants regardless of protected characteristics.
- We provide a supportive and inclusive working environment free from harassment and discrimination.
- Staff receive regular training on equality, diversity, inclusion, and challenging unconscious bias.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled staff members.

7.6 Facilities and Environment:

- We strive to ensure our premises and facilities are accessible to all pupils, staff, and visitors, making reasonable adjustments as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- Our physical and emotional environment promotes a sense of belonging and safety for everyone.

7.7 Parental and Community Engagement:

- We actively encourage and value the participation of all parents/carers, ensuring inclusive communication and engagement strategies that respect diverse backgrounds and needs.
- We will work collaboratively with relevant external agencies and community groups in Manchester to support our inclusive practices and meet the needs of diverse individuals.

8. Dealing with Discrimination, Harassment, and Victimisation

ElevatEd will take all reports of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation seriously and deal with them promptly and effectively.

8.1 Reporting Procedures:

- **Pupils:** Should report any incident of discrimination or harassment to any trusted adult within the provision (e.g., Head of Provision, Designated Safeguarding Lead).
- **Staff:** Should report concerns about pupils to the Head of Provision/DSL. Concerns about colleagues or workplace discrimination should be reported to the Head of Provision.

- **Parents/Carers/Visitors:** Should report concerns to the Head of Provision.

8.2 Investigation and Resolution:

- All reported incidents will be investigated thoroughly, sensitively, and impartially.
- The investigation will aim to ascertain the facts, identify those involved, and determine appropriate action.
- Support will be offered to the complainant and any others affected.
- Where appropriate, restorative justice approaches may be used to repair harm and promote understanding.

8.3 Consequences:

- Any individual (pupil, staff, or visitor) found to have engaged in discriminatory behaviour or harassment will face appropriate consequences in line with the provision's Behaviour Policy (for pupils) or Disciplinary Policy (for staff).
- Serious or persistent discrimination may lead to exclusion (for pupils) or dismissal (for staff).

9. Monitoring and Review

- **Monitoring Outcomes:** We will regularly monitor and analyse data relating to pupil outcomes (e.g., attendance, attainment, progress, exclusions) and staff information (e.g., recruitment, promotions, grievances, disciplinary action) to identify any disparities related to protected characteristics.
- **Impact Assessments:** We will undertake equality impact assessments for new policies, procedures, and significant changes to ensure they do not inadvertently disadvantage any group.
- **Reporting:** We will report on our progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (if required, as part of a wider trust or local authority reporting structure).
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Head of Provision. The review will consider:
 - Effectiveness of current practices.
 - Feedback from stakeholders.
 - Changes in legislation or best practice.
 - Identified areas for improvement from data analysis.

10. Links to Other Policies

This policy works in conjunction with, and should be read alongside, the following key policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

- Admissions Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- Accessibility Plan