



**Aletheia**  
Academies Trust

# Single Equality Scheme

**October 2024**

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# Our Trust Vision

Aletheia schools welcome those of all faiths and none and are proud of the inclusive nature and diversity of each cohort. Aletheia schools are motivated by Christian values to serve our communities by improving the life chances of local children. Our schools seek to embody the experience of community, where gifts are shared, where the emphasis is on what can be contributed and where each is given according to need. At the heart of the Aletheia vision are the belief in educational excellence and the belief that Aletheia is called to serve pupils, staff, parents/carers, and the local community by providing places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally, and spiritually.

Aletheia Academies Trust will deliver its vision by:

- ▶ Developing a Trust for all ages/phases of education, with member schools working in partnership and learning from each other.
- ▶ Promoting an ethos based on a belief in the value and potential of every student to achieve excellence academically and in their wider studies and become fully the best person they can be.
- ▶ Pursuing educational excellence, so that outcomes for all learners are as good as they can be.
- ▶ Creating strong leadership at all levels that impacts effectively on academy performance.
- ▶ Providing a sustainable model to support a self-improving school system.

All schools joining the Trust will have already established their support for and belief in these core principles.



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# Single Equality Statement

We aspire to be a Multi Academy Trust that through its leadership, recruitment, teaching, and learning, is free from discrimination and confident in its diversity.

Aletheia Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that every individual who belongs to our learning community is valued, supported, and respected. We welcome and celebrate the unique talent and experience of each individual student and employee.

## Introduction

Equality and diversity and a commitment to inclusiveness are embedded in our vision.

This Single Equality Scheme brings together our commitments to equality and diversity, including our plans as more schools join the Trust. The Scheme will build on individual academy's previous equality work. We will relentlessly continue with our efforts to break down barriers and challenge unfairness and ensure opportunities which help people and communities reach their full potential.



# Aims

The purpose of this Single Equality Scheme is to set out ways in which the Trust will continue to meet its legal requirements under the following legislation.

## Equality Act 2010

The public sector equality duty consists of a general equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, and specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation. The Duty covers nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership

The general equality duty requires all public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- ▶ Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- ▶ Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it
- ▶ Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it

The specific duties require public bodies to:

- ▶ Publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty
- ▶ Set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives



## Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Right Act came into force in October 2000 and obliges public authorities to treat people in accordance with their rights under the European Convention of Human Rights.

The aim of this Single Equality Scheme is twofold:

- ▶ To develop further measures and actions that pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality for all, notably those who share protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation.
- ▶ To promote equality so that our approach goes beyond legislative compliance and remains embedded in our culture.



# Single Quality Scheme Vision

We are building a Trust community that through its leadership, recruitment, teaching, and learning is free from discrimination and secure and confident in its diversity. The Trust is committed to ensuring that every individual student and employee is valued, supported, and respected. We welcome and celebrate the unique talent and experience of each individual student and employee.

A healthy community requires a safe environment, free from prejudice and discrimination, where the values and ethos of equality and diversity inform all Trust activity. The Trust, therefore, has a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination. Our values apply equally to staff and governors, as well as students, volunteers, and those with whom we do business, including the procurement and delivery of contracted services.

Our Single Equality Scheme and associated policies outline how we seek to ensure that the Trust is free from unlawful discrimination and strives constantly to move beyond legal compliance towards excellence and best practice in promoting and celebrating equality and diversity.

Through creative and responsive teaching and learning, and a broad spectrum of extra curricula activities our students will understand better the world within which they live, and the impact of their own actions on community cohesion and wellbeing.





# Commitment of the Trust

The Scheme aims to demonstrate our commitment to far more than equality complaints monitoring and management and to set comprehensive and contextualised objectives which are integral to continuous improvement of our service to every individual.

The effectiveness of the SES will be evaluation by the Standards Committee to the full Board of Trustees.

The Scheme aligns with the Trust overall commitment to quality improvement as we place our commitment to learner success at the heart of everything we do. This Scheme relates to all members of the Trust, including employees, students, contractors, and visitors as appropriate.

We will address unequal experiences for all who share protected characteristics:

- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Age (this only applies to adults)
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Religion or belief
- ▶ Sexual orientation
- ▶ Gender reassignment
- ▶ Pregnancy/Maternity
- ▶ Marriage and civil partnership (this only applies to adults)

We will also be mindful of our actions in relation to socio-economic factors because socio-economic disadvantage is a key and significant factor for all.



The Trust will consult with, and involve those affected by inequality, in supporting decisions schools make to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. The affected people could include parents/carers, pupils, staff, and members of the local community. This will be done through regular analysis of parent/carer, pupil, and staff voice. Schools will also carry out reviews if there is a breach of the Single Quality Scheme and report findings to the Trust.

## Trust Context

School	Number of Staff	Pupil Admission Number (PAN)
Saint George's C of E School	170	30 (Primary Phase) 210 (Secondary Phase)
Knole Academy	170	240
Shorne C of E Primary School	29	30
St. Botolph's C of E Primary School	53	60
Horton Kirby C of E Primary School	28	30
Stone St. Mary's C of E Primary School	70	90
Sutton-at-Hone C of E Primary School	56	60
Rosherville C of E Academy	25	20
Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	67	30
Cliffe Woods Primary School	61	60
Halling Primary School	55	60
Sedley's C of E Primary School	15	15
Ditton C of E Junior School	27	60

AAT is a medium sized Trust based in Kent and Medway with our primary aim being to improve life chances for local children. We aim to establish strong communities where all pupils are encouraged to demonstrate respect and tolerance, through an inclusive nature regardless of faith, race and culture. The communities our schools serve are varied with some schools based in areas of high deprivation and others in rural village affluent communities. We consider our Trust to be fully inclusive, consisting of both Anglican and non-faith schools.



# Delivery of the Trust Single Equality Scheme (SES)

The Trust will use its values as the template against which to evaluate all conduct matters, whether that be students, employers, governors, staff, visitors, and contractors.

The Trust schools will use its strategies to listen to students - notably the learner voice, student councils, teaching and learning observations, surveys, the complaints system, and all forums that enable the student body to be heard and responded to.

Similarly, the Trust will use the staff surveys, all-staff briefings, and other means to listen to our staff body.

All of the above seeks to create a culture where the views of all can be heard and opportunities for discrimination, harassment or bullying will be minimised.

The Trust actively plans to address inequalities and its main documents and processes reflect our passion to drive improvements:

- ▶ Trust Strategic plan
- ▶ Trust SES & Action plan
- ▶ Equality Diversity & Inclusion & other relevant Trust policies



# Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust will routinely analyse data to ensure that there are no unwarranted discrepancies between the performances of different groups of students. Any statistically significant achievement gaps will seek to be closed or minimized as a priority.

## Teaching, Learning and Support

The leadership team in each Trust school is responsible for overseeing that teaching and learning routinely promotes diversity in their schools. They also ensure that there are no artificial barriers to accessing support for students.

Trust schools will ensure equality and diversity are embedded into the curriculum through providing high quality learning resources and CPD.



# Single Equality Scheme Priorities

To create a Single Equality Scheme that has the most meaning and impact on most of its community, the Trust will put particular focus on issues identified that are specifically relevant to the Trust and Trust community:

- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Socio-economic

The Trust will also keep a close watching brief with respect to any inequalities with regards Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity; Marriage & Civil Partnerships and disability and will ensure that no individual person will be disadvantaged.

## Gender

The Trust welcomes people of all genders and we seek to create a culture which is strong in relation to mutual respect, removes barriers to achievement and challenges cultural stereotypes, particularly with respect to occupation. The Trust works to prevent and tackle any form of gender-based harassment.

### Our intended impact on gender:

- ▶ Student recruitment which actively encourages students to access careers of their choice regardless of traditional gender under representation.
- ▶ A well-developed curriculum that positively reflects different gender contributions in the workplace and promotes them equally and effectively.
- ▶ A staffing base in which students can see role models of their own gender, irrespective of the curriculum area and the traditional stereotypes.



- ▶ Facilities that enhance and support the experience of men and women equally in using the Trust's services or as Trust employees.
- ▶ A reward and remuneration structure which prevents pay gaps between the genders.
- ▶ A robust approach to gender-based discrimination and harassment that tackles unwanted attention and unfair behaviours directly and decisively at all levels and promotes a culture of respect.
- ▶ A fully developed approach to equality in employment and career progression based on secure evidence relating to pay, opportunities, role and position across all genders and with due regard to physiological differences.
- ▶ An approach to transgender issues that promotes understanding and welcome for those involved in any kind of change to their gender.

## Race

The Trust is proud of the number of groups represented at the school and we have a wonderful diverse mix of culture and nationality. However, we are aware that some of our students and staff may have experienced racial discrimination. The Trust is committed to being a place where all people feel valued and respected and able to develop equally. We will take positive action to eliminate racism and its effects and racial harassment will not be tolerated in any area of Trust life.

### **Our intended Impact on race:**

In further developing and strengthening our work around race equality so that we can maximise the positive impact we have on students and staff from different racial groups, we aim to achieve the following:

- ▶ Retain the high success of all students on all provision and ensure no significant gaps emerge.



- ▶ Increase the mixed profile of staff to achieve a workforce that is representative of the local community at every level of the organisation.
- ▶ Promotion of race awareness and of zero tolerance to racism.

## **Socio-economic factors**

Whilst there is no legislative duty in relation to socio-economic factors, the Trust recognises the impact of economic disadvantage on individuals and will therefore work to reduce barriers faced by such individuals. Several of our Trust schools are based in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Kent and our vision seeks to positively change the aspirations and expectations of many of the communities surrounding our schools. We will to this end recruit those, as a direct result of their economic disadvantage, who might have lower aspirations and expectations of success. The Trust will seek to inspire them to recognise and achieve their full potential with an ethos of high expectations, high levels of support, outstanding teaching & learning and access to first class facilities.

The Trust is mindful that the performance of white males from lower socio economic backgrounds is a national concern and therefore the Trust will seek to provide the right opportunities for members of this group to succeed and progress to higher education, further education or apprenticeships.

### **Our intended impact on socio-economic factors:**

- ▶ To support the progression of all students into higher education where appropriate.
- ▶ To have a curriculum offer and support services which encourage recruitment from all communities.
- ▶ To enable students who live in areas of deprivation to do as well as their peers who do not.
- ▶ To consider socio-economic factors when impact assessing major plans, policies, procedures, and practice.



## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The Trust welcomes people of any sexual orientation, gender expression or identity. We have a zero-tolerance stance towards homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or gender-based discrimination and actively challenge it when it arises. We aim to provide a safe environment where students and staff are comfortable about disclosing their sexuality, gender expression or identity, if they wish.

### Our intended impact on sexual orientation:

- ▶ A welcoming place for all where students and staff feel respected and confident and free to be open about their sexuality if they choose.
- ▶ A zero-tolerance stance on homophobia and biphobia with a workforce trained and confident to challenge homophobia and biphobia when it arises.

## Religion or Belief

Operating within the family of the Diocese of Rochester, Aletheia schools are motivated by Christian values to serve our local communities. Our schools seek to embody the Christian experience of community, where gifts are shared, where the emphasis is on what can be contributed and where each is given according to need. Aletheia schools welcome those of all faiths and none and are proud of the inclusive nature and diversity of each cohort.

### Our intended impact on religion or belief:

- ▶ A climate of tolerance and understanding where religious discrimination is effectively challenged if it ever arises.
- ▶ A respectful and value-based curriculum that promotes social and moral awareness.
- ▶ Access to a contemplation/quiet room.





## **Pregnancy and Maternity**

Aletheia Schools celebrate our staff who are to be parents, staff who are pregnant, who are on maternity or paternity leave and who have recently given birth. The Trust will therefore act firmly to eliminate any discriminatory behaviour against those with this protected characteristic.

### **Our intended impact on pregnancy and maternity:**

- ▶ A climate of understanding where pregnancy is not a barrier to learning or work.

## **Marriage and Civil Partnerships**

The Trust celebrates the diversity of its staff and adult students and welcomes people of any marital status.

### **Our intended impact on marriage and civil partnerships:**

- ▶ A climate of mutual respect for all students and staff regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.



# Overarching objectives of the Single Equality Scheme

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken to ensure that we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.

Aletheia Academies Trust's overarching Equality Objectives are:

To ensure equality of opportunity across all staff and student groups by:

- ▶ To improve attendance by 1% for all groups within the Trust in the first year, and incrementally after that, to exceed national averages by removing barriers that exist, ensuring that we remain ambitious for all groups.
- ▶ To establish a clear and relevant curriculum to raise attainment for all groups of learners, ensuring that adaptations are made to remove barriers to this.
- ▶ To ensure there is equality of opportunity and development across all staff groups, including at the recruitment stage.
- ▶ To improve accessibility throughout all of our academies for pupils, staff and visitors with additional needs and disabilities, recognising that not all additional needs and disabilities are visible.

## Single Equality Action Plan

Our Action Plan brings together all planned actions for meeting and implementing our statutory duties. It is reviewed and updated as and when required.



# Legal Definitions

## Unlawful Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is defined in the Act as:

- ▶ Direct discrimination - treating a person less favourably on prohibited grounds (gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, socio-economic status) than another would be treated in comparable circumstances, where the treatment cannot be objectively justified (e.g., by a genuine occupational requirement).
- ▶ Indirect discrimination - when a rule, condition, or requirement, which applies.
  - ▶ equally to everyone, has a disproportionately adverse effect on people from a particular group (i.e., due to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender, marital status, gender identity), and there is no objective justification for the rule (Example: by requiring job applicants to have a set number of years' experience may indirectly discriminate against women who have taken a career break).
- ▶ Discrimination arising from disability - this occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and this unfavourable treatment cannot be justified. Treatment can be justified if it can be shown that it is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced, and reasonable way.
- ▶ Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people).
- ▶ Discrimination by association or perception - the 2010 Act extends the scope of the legislation to protect people who 'associate' with others with the protected characteristics, for instance people who are related or who care for someone who is disabled. Protection includes perception (e.g.



discrimination based on the belief that someone is gay, disabled or has a particular belief).

## **Harassment**

Harassment is defined by the Act as:

Any unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This definition is limited to anti-discrimination legislation and therefore only applies to harassment on grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, or age.

## **Victimisation**

Victimisation is defined by the Act as:

Treating people less favourably because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

## **Burden of Proof**

The Act states that once an individual can show that there is an issue of potential discrimination, the burden of proof shifts to the employer to defend the case and show that the reason for difference in treatment is justifiable and not discriminatory.

## **Vicarious Liability**

The Act states that employers are responsible for the discriminatory actions of their employees where such actions have been carried out during their duties. The only defence for employers is to show that they have done everything reasonable and practicable to prevent an employee committing an unlawful act.



## **Personal Liability**

The act states that where an employer can show that appropriate steps have been taken to avoid discrimination, it is likely that the discriminator will be personally liable in the law.

## **Disability**

This section should be read in conjunction with the school Special Educational Needs Policy.

## **Definition of Disability**

The 2010 Act abandons the previous list of capacities and defines a disabled person as someone who has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The Act allows disabled pupils to be treated more favourably than non-disabled pupils and, in some cases, requires this to be done, by making reasonable adjustments to put pupils on a level footing with those without a disability.

# **Equality Objectives & Action Plan 2024-2026**

## **Sawubona - 'I see you'**

Objective 1	Remove existing barriers to learning by improving attendance by 1% for all groups within the Trust in the first
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	year, and incrementally after that until all schools exceed national averages: ensuring that we remain ambitious for all cohorts.
Why we have chosen this ?	We understand that we want all members of our community to be present for learning. Some have greater barriers to overcome than others, especially but not exclusively those with permanent or temporary disabilities.
How will we achieve this?	We will look carefully at the barriers to attendance that exist for all members of our community. We will consider how to overcome these through intervention and targeted support.

Objective 2	To establish clear curriculum principles and content in order to raise attainment for all groups of learners ensuring that adaptations are made to remove barriers to success.
Why we have chosen this	All our learners deserve an appropriate, engaging and relevant curriculum to help them achieve their best and succeed in life.
How will we achieve this?	Thorough audits of our curriculum ensure that it is relevant and meets the needs of all learners. We ensure through the use of evidence-based research that we are always removing any barriers to success and enjoyment and belonging.

Objective 3	To ensure that there is equality of opportunity and development across all staff groups including at the recruitment stage
Why we have chosen this	We want the very best opportunities for all our staff groups throughout their time with the Trust, from



	recruitment to retirement. We have an objective to ensure equality of opportunity and development across all staff groups. We will firstly examine where barriers or restrictions to provision may exist, and we will take targeted action to address any inequalities identified
How will we achieve this?	By constantly reviewing & adapting our recruitment processes to ensure we reflect to the communities that we serve by investing in high quality training, seeking external advice and ensuring that all stakeholders have access to this.

Objective 4	To improve accessibility throughout all our academies for pupils, staff and visitors with additional needs and disabilities, recognising that not all additional needs and disabilities are visible.
Why we have chosen this	We want all pupils, staff and visitors to be able to access all opportunities that allow them to have fulfilled and equal opportunity to the Trust's offer of excellent education, employment and contribution to the life of the Trust
How will we achieve this?	By ensuring that there is equal access to expertise and resources for all regardless of location or budget.



## Action Plan:

Item No.	Action	Person Responsible	Date Achieved
1	Ensure all staff are aware of <a href="#">Sawubona</a> and our EDI objectives	JBP/JR	
2	Set up a Strategic EDI group - Who meet at least twice per year	JBP/JR	
3	Provide All staff with Inclusive Language Guidance	JBP/JR	
4	Review HR Recruitment Statistics Annually in terms of protected characteristics.	JBP (P&C)	
5	Curriculum Audit - At least every 2 years to ensure diversity	SIT	
6	Review Pupil Data annually in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability and how this relates to pupil population, attendance, exclusions & attainment	SIT	
7	Review Workforce Data annually in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability as it relates to workforce demographics and pay gaps	JBP (P&C)	
8	Roll out a continuous training program that incorporates: Trustees, Governors, Leaders, Staff & Students,	JBP & JR	