

Athena Learning Trust

Trust-wide Equality Policy

Review

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Athena Learning Trust Equality Policy

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1. Application

This Athena Learning Trust Policy applies to the Athena Learning Trust as a whole and to all the schools and service units in the Trust. The Athena Learning Trust including all the schools and services within the Trust, their Trustees, governors and staff must abide by this Athena Learning Trust Equality Policy.

The Athena Learning Trust believes that the promotion of equality of opportunity is in the best interests of our staff, pupils and the wider community and that all forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body and Headteacher of each school in the Trust, and the Board of Trustees and CEO for the Trust Shared Service to ensure that their school/service and its staff adhere to this Athena Learning Trust Equality Policy. In implementing the Policy and associated procedures the school Governing Body, Headteacher and Trust staff must take account of any advice given to them by the Athena Learning Trust CEO and/or Board of Trustees.

This Policy is subject to the Trust's Scheme of Delegation for Governance Functions. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Scheme of Delegation and any specific alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence.

If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation or implementation of this Policy, the Athena Learning Trust CEO should be consulted.

2. Approval and review

This Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on: July 2026

This Policy is due for review by the Board of Trustees by: July 2027

3. Terminology

- The Trust means the Athena Learning Trust.
- School means a school within the Athena Learning Trust.
- Headteacher means the headteacher or principal of the school.
- CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of the Athena Learning Trust.
- Trust Shared Service means staff employed by the Trust to provide central or Trust-wide services, as distinct from staff employed to work in a specific school or schools.
- Governors and Trustees includes Trustees, School Governors, non-Governor members of Trust Committees and members of the Trust Panel.
- Governing Body means the committee of the Board of Trustees to which Trustees have delegated appropriate powers and functions relating to the governance of the school.

In this Policy references to the Athena Learning Trust will be read as including the Trust Shared Service and all schools in the Athena Learning Trust.

References in this Policy to a school in the Trust should also be read as the Trust Shared Service for services, functions and staff of the Trust that are not contained within a school budget and/or are not the responsibility of a Headteacher and/or Governing Body. With respect to the Trust Shared Service, references in this Policy to the responsibilities of the Headteacher and Governing Body should be read as the Athena Learning Trust CEO and the Board of Trustees respectively.

4. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body and Headteacher of each school, and the Board of Trustees and Athena Learning Trust CEO for the Trust Shared Service to ensure that their school/service and its staff adhere to this Athena Learning Trust Equality Policy.

5. Related policies and procedures

The following Trust policies and their associated procedures are directly related to and complement this Athena Learning Trust Equality Policy:

- Athena Learning Trust Annual Equality Statement.

Our commitment

Athena Learning Trust is committed to equal opportunity and values diversity. The Trust will challenge prejudice and seek to eliminate discrimination while actively building a culture of equity.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is in the best interests of our staff, pupils and the wider community and is also in the best interest of the Trust so that the Trust recruits and develops the best people for our jobs and benefits from the diversity it brings.

Athena Learning Trust recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination and we acknowledge the different experiences of individuals. Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual and can be direct or indirect. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

Athena Learning Trust is aware of and complies with the 2010 Equalities Act and its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty and recognises that these duties support good decision-making.

In accordance with the Equalities Act and Equality Duty, the Athena Learning Trust will strive to ensure that it considers the needs of all individuals and avoids discrimination in shaping our policies, delivering our services and in relation to our employees.

By understanding the effect of our policies and actions on different people and how inclusive services can give everyone opportunities we are able to ensure our services are efficient and effective.

Athena Learning Trust aims to create a culture that respects and values people's differences, promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and enables and encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

Legal Duties

The Equality Duty covers the following '**protected characteristics**':

- Age
- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief including lack of belief
- Sex including gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership with respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Equality Duty requires the Trust as a public body to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who hold a protected characteristic and people who do not hold it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who hold a protected characteristic and people who do not hold it.

In complying with the Duty it may be appropriate to treat some people differently from others, for example by providing a particular service in a way that meets the specific needs of people who share a protected characteristic.

Where an individual suffers from a disability the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 may apply. In line with the Act the Trust has a duty not to discriminate against those with a disability and to consider reasonable adjustments which, subject to the needs of the Trust, will help members of staff to overcome any disadvantage resulting from a disability. This may include reasonable adjustments to the procedures described in this Policy.

Actions to be carried out

In developing policies and practices, every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all aspects of their employment by, or on receipt of services from the Trust and its schools.

Measures that will be taken include:

- Implementation of appropriate policies that ensure equal opportunities for all young people in our care and for our staff.
- The inclusion of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and Religious Education (RE) and other elements within the curriculum that explore the diversity of our community.
- Employing specialist staff to work with children with special needs or disabilities, and implementing school accessibility plans.
- Monitoring the welfare of the young people in our care and our staff with intervention and support where required.

Specific objectives will be set and monitored to help the Trust and its schools to meet its duties and the aims of this Policy.

Incidents involving discrimination and prejudice will be tackled immediately in line with this Policy and other Trust and school policies and procedures; legal support may be sought if appropriate.

All members of staff of the Trust have a duty to co-operate with the Trust to ensure that this Policy is effective. The Trust also expects pupils and parents and other visitors to its schools to act in accordance with this Policy. The Trust and its schools will promote this Policy and asks anyone to report instances of suspected discriminatory behaviour so that they can be dealt with.

Responsibilities of the Trust

Regulations require the Trust to:

- Publish at least once per year information to demonstrate the compliance of the Trust and its schools with the Equality Duty relating to both its employees and those affected by its activities.

- Prepare and publish at least once every 4 years one or more objectives that it thinks it should achieve to meet the requirements of the Equalities Act.

The Athena Learning Trust CEO and Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Trust as a whole and the staff and services of the Trust Shared Service specifically comply with the Equalities Act and fulfil the duties of the Equality Duty.

The Trust's Equality Statement, published annually, sets out the objectives that the Trust and its schools intend to achieve with specific regard to the Equalities Act.

Responsibilities of schools in the Trust

Each school in the Trust is required to follow and work within this Equality Policy and to support the work of the wider Trust by collaboratively working towards the objectives set out in the Annual Equality Statement.

The Governing Body and Headteacher of each school in the Trust are responsible for ensuring that their school complies with this Policy and the Equalities Act and fulfils the requirements of the Equality Duty.

Each school in the Trust will prepare and publish an Accessibility Plan that will aim to meet the needs of disabled pupils by increasing the extent to which they can participate in the curriculum through improving their physical environment and the availability of accessible information.