



PARITY EDUCATION  
SERVICES LTD

# Parity Education Services Ltd.

Shaping Futures with Equal  
Opportunities

## Equality Policy



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**Lead Tutor:** Andrew Williams

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Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the PECS community and the wider community are treated equally, fairly, and with respect by all PECS staff and by each other. This applies to PECS as a place of education, a business, and an employer. Prejudice, discrimination, and victimisation are not tolerated, and we work hard to instil in our students a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others. Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd' main priority is to provide the best education and care that we can, and establish a cooperative working relationship between family and PECS staff, so as to aid the development, progress, and needs of all the students in our care.

This plan sets out how PECS will promote equality of opportunity regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (collectively, the protected characteristics) in both the delivery of its services and the employment of its staff. It is created in line with the Equality Act 2010 and is in line with Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd's other policies.

Through the creation of this equalities plan, we have been able to develop a better understanding of what the challenges to equality are within PECS and how we can best deal with these. This policy will be reviewed annually, or any time there is an update or change to legislation in respect of the protected characteristics, to ensure that it is being effectively implemented and remains focused and up to date on issues surrounding equality both within PECS and nationally.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which applies to public sector bodies and private sector organisations carrying out public sector duties, such as PECS. The PSED extends to the following protected characteristics: race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

As a result of the PSED, all employees of PECS are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making, and this requirement applies to all members of staff.

In respect of having due regard to eliminate discrimination, this means eliminating conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 such as:

- direct and indirect discrimination related to a protected characteristic;
- bullying, harassment, and victimisation.

This requirement sometimes means treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

Having due regard to advance equality of opportunity means:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to any their protected characteristic/s;
- meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in activities where their participation is low.

Finally, having due regard to foster good relations means:

- tackling prejudice;
- promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

### **Parity Education and Careers Services Profile**

Students at PECS may have Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs). Some students may have autism and challenging behaviour and some may have other complex needs, both educational, emotional and social. Most students will have experienced a disrupted education before being referred to Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd.

Inclusiveness is at the heart of our equality plans and we are keen to ensure that we are an inclusive organisation that supports and promotes Equality for All within our, and the wider, community. We therefore welcome the Equalities duties. We believe in treating everyone fairly and we are committed to creating an environment at PECS which is appropriate and accessible to all. We aim to encourage and listen to local views and involve local people in the work of Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole community working together. All staff and members of Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd community have a responsibility to treat everyone fairly and to provide reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Creating an environment that promotes equality and denounces discrimination is a whole-organisation responsibility and requires all members of the community to be actively involved in breaking down barriers to learning and barriers to social and emotional development that prejudice can create. Individuals in Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd are expected to take responsibility for supporting and promoting equality above and beyond the responsibilities listed below. The leadership team has the day-to-day responsibility for coordinating the implementation of this scheme.

The CEO/Head of Education

The CEO/Head of Education will:

Create and approve this policy with the help of the leadership team and ensure that is adopted correctly throughout the organisation

- ensure PECS complies with all equality legislation
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the equalities plan annually and make any amendments to improve on the plan when and where necessary
- ensure that parents are informed of any incident related to this scheme which could directly affect their child
- report to parents, carers, and the wider community on the progress of PECS' equality plan

## The Leadership Team

The Lead Tutor, with the support of the leadership team, will:

- promote the single equalities plan both within PECS and externally to the rest of the community
- ensure that all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities regarding the promotion and delivery of equality in PECS
- report back to the staff, students and parents on how the plan is working and any suggest amendments that should be made
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- take appropriate action where discrimination or victimisation occurs.

## Staff

Staff will:

- ensure that they are up to date and aware of the contents of this plan and PECS' policy towards all types of discrimination
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- work to promote anti-bullying strategies as outlined in PECS behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- show a commitment to undertake development and training within this area
- engage with PECS in eliminating any discrimination and act as a good example to students
- promote a positive working environment
- report back to their managers immediately on any incidents relating to discrimination or victimisation, either by staff, students, or any other member of the PECS community, so that these incidents can be reviewed and action taken where necessary.

## Students

Students will:

- engage with PECS in eliminating any discrimination
- promote a positive work environment and a positive attitude towards equality when working with PECS staff
- report to staff any incidents of in appropriate language or behaviour, discrimination or victimisation that they know to have occurred
- work to promote the anti-bullying strategies outlined in PECS' behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- set a good example regarding behaviour and social awareness to their peers.

## Parents, carers, and visitors

Parents, carers, and visitors to PECS are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with PECS' equality plan and support the scheme by promoting a positive attitude towards equality at home
- attend any relevant meetings/awareness-raising sessions that they are invited to relating to

## **PECS' equality plan**

- work with PECS to resolve any incident relating to discrimination or victimisation that their child is involved in
- respect and follow our equality when visiting PECS.

### **Key groups at risk**

While PECS recognises that any person or group of people can become victim to discrimination, victimisation or unfair treatment, people may be more at risk of becoming victims of inequality due to:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- **Sexual orientation**

### **Promoting equality and social awareness in PECS and within the local community**

PECS expects all of its students and staff to act respectfully towards members of the wider community that PECS is part of. Some of our students will attend work experience placements within the community as part of their curriculum offer.

### **Inclusion**

Promoting and practising inclusion in lessons, during all activities, and into the wider community is a key part of developing a positive attitude towards equality and people from different backgrounds.

### **Pupil voice**

Through our support of student voice, we encourage our students to have confidence in voicing their opinions and taking responsibility for the world around them. It is important that we teach our students how to engage in mature social interactions and get along with a variety of different types of people. This is developed through student voice wherever possible.

### **Recruitment**

PECS is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. PECS acknowledges that unfair discrimination can arise on occasion and so will ensure that the equal opportunities policy outlined in this plan is the foundation for all its activities.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

More information about our recruitment procedures can be found in the PECS recruitment policy.

### **Equal opportunities for staff**

As part of our commitment to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment, PECS will ensure that:

- all staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law;
- staffing of PECS reflects the diversity of our community wherever possible;

- as an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce;
- we respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice;
- we ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

### **Staff discipline and suspension**

PECS is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and consistently and this is held to account through our staff discipline, conduct, and grievance policy.

The education and wellbeing of our students is our main priority. Any member of staff who creates a barrier to learning for our students will be disciplined. Similarly, any member of staff who engages in discriminatory behaviour towards students, student's family members, or other members of staff will be disciplined. We hope that staff will feel confident to voice complaints and grievances in the confidential environment of PECS and that they will trust us to deal with their grievances fully, promptly, and fairly. PECS puts great faith in all its employees, and hopes never to have to discipline anyone as a result of misconduct.

### **Behaviour, exclusions and attendance**

The PECS behaviour policy takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustments for students with special educational needs and disabilities. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence for evidence of over-representation of different groups, and will take action to address any concerns that arise in this area.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum at PECS is tailored to meet the needs of each student. Where appropriate, students may be encouraged back to learning through a very narrow curriculum, which will be expanded once the student is able to trust that learning is safe at PECS. All students are encouraged to gain accreditations at all levels from Entry level to A level, according to their abilities. The PSHE curriculum in particular focuses on valuing diversity, but the whole curriculum supports inclusion and all staff, especially mentors work with students to ensure both their needs are met and others are respected.

### **Teaching and Learning**

- We train staff on learning difficulties, autism, Asperger's syndrome, behaviour difficulties, positive handling and communication.
- We use contextual data to improve the support we provide to individuals and groups
- We monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender, disability and other groups relevant to our setting and act upon findings
- We take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning future learning and set challenging targets based on individual achievement
- We promote equality of access and prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
- We use materials that reflect the diversity within society, without stereotyping or adapt them to meet particular needs
- We challenge all discriminatory language and attitudes
- We celebrate aspects of different cultures
- We involve parents and carers in supporting their child's education

- We encourage discussion of equality issues in all aspects of PECS' life
- We include teaching and learning styles which reflect the needs of our pupils
- Females and males are given the same opportunities throughout PECS
- Pupils are encouraged to pursue courses and activities that they are interested in and not based on stereotyped images of men and women.

### **Monitoring and review**

This single equality plan will be reviewed annually, unless there is specific reason for it to be reviewed earlier (for example an incident involving members of the PECS community or new legislation). We will review how effective it is in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relationships between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community. We will also review evidence that it is being put into practice by staff and students, and whether there is any need for extra training or development sessions across the whole organisation to ensure it is promoted and implemented as much as possible.

### **Information will be gathered through:**

- identification of students, parents, carers, staff and other users of PECS representing the different protected characteristics. This helps us develop and monitor the scheme. Comprehensive and sensitive efforts are made to collect accurate information and meet security of information requirements, in addition to our duty to secure accurate information relating to ethnicity and first language;
- student attainment and progress data relating to different groups;
- students' views, actively sought and incorporated in a way that values their contribution;
- information about how different groups access the curriculum and how they make choices between subject options;
- sports and activities choices;
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;
- data on the recruitment, development, and retention of employees;
- outcomes of activities promoting community engagement and community cohesion;
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents and others who have been identified as difficult to engage.

The leadership team will provide monitoring reports for review by the director. These will include:

- progress against targets relating to equality and future plans
- PECS population
- recruitment and retention
- key initiatives.

### **Outcomes**

One of the most important indicators of how successful we are as an organisation in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination are the outcomes for various individuals and groups. Where robust analysis of outcomes reveals poorer outcomes for any particular groups, an equality impact assessment will be carried out and an action plan put in place to aid these outcomes. Action plans will outline:

- objectives and specific actions to be taken
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria)
- clear timescales



- who has lead responsibility
- resource implications
- specified dates for review.

### **Equality impact assessments**

Impact assessments are carried out as part of the review of all EKOS policies. We assess whether EKOS policies or plans are having a negative or adverse, or positive impact on groups and individuals within the EKOS community.

These impact assessments are carried out through an analysis of all incident records including, but not limited to the following: ABCs, bullying incidents, positive handling records. Staff and pupil questionnaires are sent out regularly which refer to equality issues. Action plans are drawn up for areas that require development.

### **Reporting on our progress**

A report on our progress towards implementing this policy will be shared with staff and students as well as and with parents and local authorities through our website.