



Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy

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Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy

Aims and values

The overall aim of Altius Alliance SCITT's Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy is to provide a framework to pursue its equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the SCITT community – staff, Associate Teachers and trainers.

Partners and contractors are also expected to abide by the policy.

Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Statement

We will not tolerate less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnicity), religion, sex (gender), and sexual orientation ('protected characteristics')

Through our ethos, training plan and community links, we will work towards

- a common vision
- a sense of belonging for all
- similar life opportunities for all
- strong and positive relationships between different communities.

Equality and Diversity is more than just meeting legal obligations, or targets. It is about making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. We will make sure that our employment and training practices are fair and promote equality. We will actively value the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally.

We will ensure that the principles of this policy are reflected in all our policies, practices, procedures and services and are part of everything we do.

Guiding Principles

These principles have been drawn from a specimen policy for equalities prepared by the DfE and we at Altius Alliance SCITT fully endorse and accept them.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

All learners and potential learners are of equal value and benefit equally from SCITT policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 2: Relevant differences are recognised

Treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging

Policies and programmes promote

- positive attitudes and interactions
- mutual respect and good relations
- an absence of harassment or prejudice-related bullying between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 4: Staff and Associate Teacher recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and Associate Teachers and potential employees and Associate Teachers in recruitment, professional development and promotion. Steps are taken to positively promote equality, especially where there is evidence of inequality.

Principle 5: Current inequalities and barriers are addressed and reduced

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of policies and programmes, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 6: Policy development involves widespread consultation and involvement

People affected by a policy or programme are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Such consultation is both direct and through representative organisations, and is based on principles of transparency and accountability. It involves those who, in the past, have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who continue to face barriers:

Principle 7: Society as a whole benefits

Policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life of people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Equalities Legislation

Legal duties

This document sets out Altius Alliance SCITT's policy in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties 2011

Equality Act 2010 General Duty

The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions and decisions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to set specific, measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their performance on equality, so that the public can hold them to account.

In order to meet the Public Sector Duties, Altius Alliance SCITT will:

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty across its functions by 31 October 2011, and annually after that, from the first date of publication
- The Single Equality scheme will be monitored and reviewed annually and presented to the Quality Assurance Board to demonstrate how the general equality duty will be met

Equality Strands covered by this Policy

The Equality Act 2010 identifies a list of nine characteristics that are subject to its general duty. The scope of this policy covers these “protected characteristics”. They are as follows: age, gender, special educational needs, disability and caring, sexual orientation, gender reassignment (transgender), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race or ethnicity, religion (belief or faith).

The Equality Act 2010 covers everything public sector organisations do, including policy making and services that are delivered to the public.

People who work in the public sector have to consider the impact of their work on disabled people, and take action to tackle disability inequality. This should mean that disabled people have better employment opportunities and do not come across discrimination when using a service, for example. It should also help promote positive attitudes towards disabled people in everyday life.

Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, places a responsibility on schools to promote community cohesion, locally, nationally and globally. We will do this through promoting a common vision, a commitment to equality and social justice, respecting people’s different backgrounds and promoting positive relationships in Altius Alliance SCITT and the local neighbourhood. We recognise that the biggest influence on educational outcomes is social class and that this can also strongly affect community cohesion. We support programmes to ‘narrow the gap’ and to draw people together from different social backgrounds.

Future legislation

We will also welcome the contribution of future equalities legislation to provide equal opportunities for everyone.

Procedures

All Altius Alliance SCITT Associate Teachers have the right to high quality training, support and experiences irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, age, disability, political or religious belief, or socio-economic class. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunities for staff, trainers, Associate Teachers and potential Associate Teachers in all aspects of our work. This policy will be evident in our admissions and interview policy and procedures, in our training, in our assessment of Associate Teachers and our provision of resources, services and facilities.

All ITT providers must ensure that entrants to teacher training are assessed for physical and mental fitness to teach and must also ensure that any person with a disability is not discriminated against as required by the Equality Act 2010.

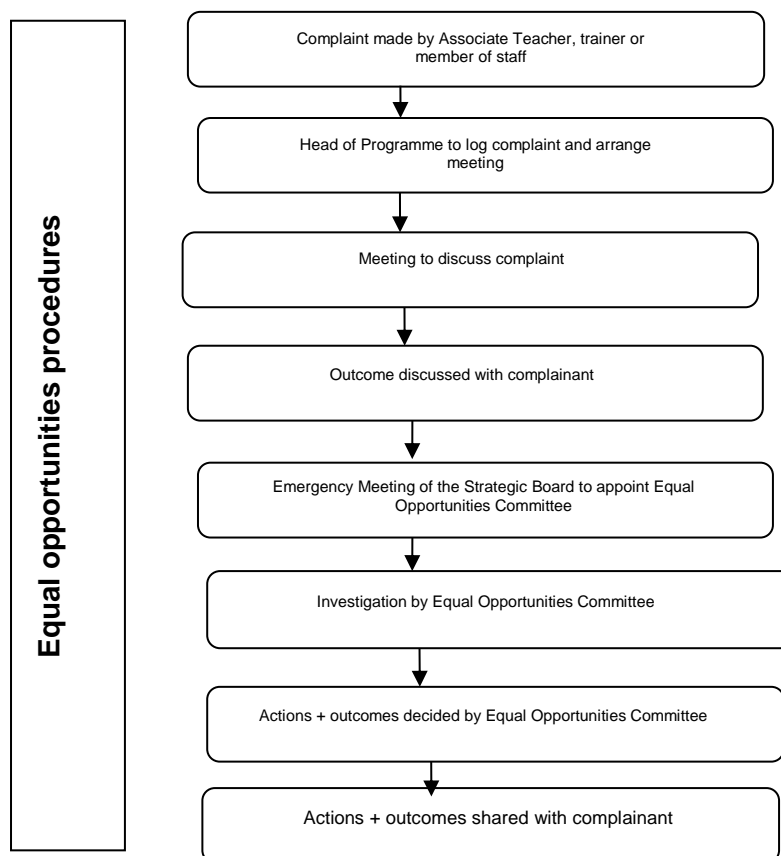
Reasonable adjustments to existing arrangements or provision must be made if they place disabled candidates or Associate Teachers at a substantial disadvantage in any aspect of recruitment, selection, admission or provision of training. In our self-evaluation and compliance updates we will examine carefully our admissions procedures, our services, our training programme and our professional development programmes.

The Equality Act 2010 consolidates the duties of the following Acts and statutory instruments:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976 (As Amended)
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2, and
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

Altius Alliance SCITT's Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy ensures that we are compliant with the above Acts and statutory instruments.

We take all breaches of our Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy extremely seriously. Any breach of the policy will be dealt with in the first instance by senior members of the Strategic Board. All racist incidents will be dealt with by an emergency meeting of the Strategic Board who may then involve senior members of the Local Authority.



Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact

This policy is supported by Altius Alliance SCITT's Equality Duty document.

The Duty will run for three years but is reviewed by the Policy Review Group and reported upon bi-annually to the Quality Assurance Board

The Altius Alliance SCITT Improvement Plan ensures that the schemes form an essential part of the institution's action on equality. It includes targets for inclusion and equality in the SCITT, promoting a cohesive community and equality in the workforce. It also ensures other Altius Alliance SCITT policies address equality issues.

This policy will be reviewed by the Policy Review Group and monitored by the Quality Assurance Board to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessments is used to inform future planning and decision-making.

The Head of Programme provides monitoring reports for review by the Quality Assurance Board. These include: workforce recruitment, Associate Teacher recruitment, retention and progression, special initiatives, progress against key indicators and targets and future plans.

Roles and Responsibilities

All who are associated with Altius Alliance SCITT have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

The Strategic Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the SCITT complies with all current equality legislation
- Ensuring this policy and its procedures are followed
- Ensuring that the SCITT has up-to-date equality schemes.
- The bi-annual review of policies and procedures
- The review of current legislation
- The design of new policies and procedures,

The Head of Programme is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is readily available and that the committees, staff, and Associate Teachers know about it
- Ensuring that its procedures are followed
- Producing regular information for the relevant committees about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary
- Ensuring that all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.
- Ensuring that any Associate Teacher identified with SEND/DSA are fully supported through all stages of the course.

All our Associate Teachers are responsible for:

- Proactively following this policy and any associated guidelines
- Providing role models for students, colleagues and others through their own actions
- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents, and recognising and tackling other forms of bias and stereotyping in accordance with either the SCITT policy or the placement school policy
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities offered to them.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

- Knowing and following our equality policy.

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the SCITT lies with the Head of Programme.

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents)
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of under recruited groups.

Breaches of the Policy

If an Associate Teacher, trainer or member of staff believes there to be a breach of the policy, the Head of Programme should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

If an Associate Teacher, trainer or member of staff is subject to a breach of this policy during any part of the training or as part of their work (other than on placement), the Associate Teacher, trainer or member of staff should report it immediately to the Head of Programme or a member of the Strategic Board. The Associate Teacher, trainer or member of staff will be fully supported by Altius Alliance SCITT

All reported incidents will be fully investigated by an emergency meeting of the Strategic Board (see below)

If an Associate Teacher, trainer or member of staff is **accused** of a breach of this policy the Head of Programme must be informed as soon as possible.

The Head of Programme will log the complaint and then arrange for a meeting to take place between the complainant, a member of Strategic Board and the Head of Programme. This meeting will take place within 15 working days of the complaint being logged with the Head of Programme. The complainant has the right to be accompanied by a friend at all times. The evidence will be examined. The Head of Programme and Strategic Board member will decide the outcome at this stage:

- If there is insufficient evidence the process should be terminated. The complaint and associated evidence will be put forward to the next Strategic Board meeting for discussion
- If there is sufficient evidence, the Head of Programme and a member of Strategic Board will refer the matter to an emergency meeting of the Strategic Board.

For an emergency meeting of the Strategic Board, quorate will be considered to be three members who will be independent of the case up until this point. The meeting will be convened within 10 working days of the referral.

In either case, the complainant has the right to be informed of the progress of the complaint and may request this at any time. The complainant may also request a written response from the Strategic Board.

The emergency meeting of the Strategic Board will become a sub group of the Strategic Board as the Equal Opportunities Committee. A representative of the Independent Appeals Panel will be asked to join the Equal Opportunities Committee.

The Equal Opportunities Committee will:

- Interview the complainant
- Interview the Head of Programme
- Interview any other relevant member of staff from Altius Alliance SCITT or its partnership schools
- Review any documented evidence

The Committee will then decide whether there is evidence of discrimination and the further actions necessary. The Committee will consider carefully the seriousness of the offence and the subsequent required actions.

Should an appeal be lodged against the decision made by the Equal Opportunities Committee, a panel will be formed to hear appeals. This panel will have a membership of three who will be independent of the case up to this point. The panel membership will comprise:

- A governor from a partner school (not associated with the case)
- A member of the Strategic Board

If the breach occurs whilst an Associate Teacher is on placement then the procedures followed and any outcomes must be reported to the SCITT.

The Associate Teacher may also be subject to disciplinary proceedings by the SCITT (following the procedures outlined above)

Where an Associate Teacher has been found to be in breach of the policy, the placement school has the right to request removal of the Associate Teacher from that placement. This may result in the Associate Teacher being unable to complete the requirements of the course.

References to other documents, advice and guidance.

Guidance and advice will be actively sought

- using guidance from DfE, QCA, OFSTED
- from agencies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Trade Unions.

Publishing policy

This Policy will be available through the Altius Alliance SCITT website and our documentation. A copy is available from the SCITT office.

Review date for the Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Policy Review Group and presented to the Quality Assurance Board as part of the 2022-23 meetings cycle.