EK OUTREACH SERVICES

Equality Policy

Date adopted:	March 2021
Last reviewed on:	September 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027

EK Outreach Services

EK Outreach Services is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the EK Outreach Services community and the wider community are treated equally, fairly, and with respect by all EK Outreach Services staff and by each other. This applies to EK Outreach Services 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 staff and students, a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others. EK Outreach Services' main priority is to provide the best education and care that we can and establish a cooperative working relationship between family and EK Outreach Services staff, so as to aid the development, progress, and needs of all the students in our care.

This policy sets out how EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services' other policies.

Through the creation of this equalities policy, we have been able to develop a better understanding of what the challenges to equality are within EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services 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 EKOS. 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 EK Outreach Services 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 in the particular case of disability, it is lawful to treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person.
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.
- 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.

EK Outreach Services profile

Students at EK Outreach Services may have Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs). EK Outreach Services students have a range of needs and some may be complex needs, both educational, emotional and social. Most students will have experienced a disrupted education before being referred to EK Outreach Services.

Inclusiveness is at the heart of our equality policy 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 EKOS which is appropriate and accessible to all. We aim to encourage and listen to local views and involve local people in the work of EK Outreach Services. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole community working together. All staff and members of EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services 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 Head of Outreach will:

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

- ensure EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services equality plan

The Head of EK Outreach Services, with the support of the leadership team, will:

- promote the single equalities plan both within EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services
- 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 will:

- ensure that they are up to date and aware of the contents of this plan and EK Outreach Services policy towards all types of discrimination
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- work to promote anti-bullying strategies as outlined in EK Outreach Services' **Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies**
- show a commitment to undertake development and training within this area
- engage with EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services community, so that these incidents can be reviewed and action taken where necessary.

Students will:

- engage with EK Outreach Services in eliminating any discrimination
- promote a positive work environment and a positive attitude towards equality when working with EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services' **Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies**
- set a good example regarding behaviour and social awareness to their peers.
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Parents, carers, and visitors

Parents, carers, and visitors to EK Outreach Services are made aware of the EKOS Equality Policy (which is available on our website) and are expected to:

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

Key groups at risk

While EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services and within the local community

Community cohesion

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

We work with the local police, PCSOs and other organisations where needed.

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. This is discussed in both our life skills and PSHE programmes.

Pupil 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 our mentoring, life skills and PSHE curriculums where possible.

Recruitment

EK Outreach Services 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. EK Outreach Services acknowledges that unfair discrimination can arise on occasion and so will ensure that the equal opportunities policy outlined 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 EK Outreach Services **Recruitment Policy.**

Staff

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, EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services 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

EK Outreach Services is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and consistently and this is held to account through our **Employment Handbook – sections on 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 EK Outreach Services and that they will trust us to deal with their grievances fully, promptly, and fairly. EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services **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 EK Outreach Services 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 EK Outreach Services. All students are encouraged to gain accreditations at all levels from Entry level to A level, according to their abilities. The PSHE curriculum focuses on valuing diversity, the whole curriculum supports inclusion and all staff work with students to ensure both their needs are met and others are respected.

Teaching and Learning

- We train staff on learning difficulties and SEND, behaviour difficulties, positive handling and first aid and communication.
- We use contextual data to improve the support we provide to individuals and groups
- 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, and 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 EKOS life
- We include teaching and learning styles which reflect the needs of our pupils
- Everyone is given the same opportunities throughout EKOS
- Pupils are encouraged to pursue courses and activities that they are interested in and not based on stereotyped images.

Monitoring and Review

This ~~e~~quality policy will be reviewed annually, unless there is specific reason for it to be reviewed earlier (for example an incident involving members of the EK Outreach Services 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. This is reviewed regularly in Annual Review Meetings with staff and through our TES Pulse Platform.