EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

Purpose

This document will act as Young Technicians Academy policy in both our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty mandated by the Equality Act 2010 but it will also serve as our commitment to ensuring all learners, apprentices, staff and stakeholders are treated equally and that diversity is valued across the organisation. In addition, this document will be reviewed annually to ensure the organisation is fully responsive with current legislation and embraces new developments within EDI. Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all and this will be monitored and reviewed.

Scope

The Young Technicians Academy are committed to raising awareness of equality and human rights, promoting diversity and combating all forms of inequality, disadvantage, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and mistreatment within our community. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination are unacceptable and challenged, moreover training and raising awareness of these standards will take a high profile throughout the group. Finally, the Academy's marketing policy, materials, promotional messages and information aim to project equality of access and opportunity to all the sectors of the community it serves.

The Policy Statement

1. Duties

1.1 Duties under the Equality Act 2010

The Academy is fully committed to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It continues to be ambitious when advancing and embedding equality and diversity for all learners, apprentices, staff, stakeholders, contractors and visitors and to challenging all forms of discrimination based on the promotion of fundamental British values. This policy reinforces the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) life of the Academy including a broad and balanced curriculum provided for learners, according to section 78 of the Education Act 2002; and with reference to the advisory document published by the Department for Education; "Promoting Fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools", 2014.

In order to fulfil its commitment to promoting EDI throughout the Academy, as well as meeting its requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the organisation will:

- Implement necessary actions and training to ensure that equality is advanced and embedded for all in line with a broad spectrum of corporate and curriculum policies, which guide the delivery of the whole curriculum and wider corporate business
- Engage and communicate, both internally and externally, with learners, apprentices, staff, visitors, employers and the wider community where appropriate, in relation to the above
- Ensure an organisation wide commitment to advancing and embedding EDI that it is understood by all
- Ensure that the Academy's EDI Policy is linked to the Academy values and strategic objectives
- Ensure that EDI is mainstreamed into all its activities

- Ensure that activities are fully accessible to disabled people in line with our public duty under the 2010 Equality Act
- Ensure the monitoring of impact of the EDI policy across the provision
- Ensure that all instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation including abuse, bullying, unacceptable and unwanted behaviour based on a person's protected characteristics are viewed seriously and treated as disciplinary offences, which may lead to the dismissal of a staff member, Directors, Contractor Staff and other stakeholders or the exclusion of a learner.

1. Responsibilities

For the Academy to fully meet its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty then it is vital that each member of the group takes responsibility for following and supporting this policy. The policy applies to all Academy stakeholders including: learners, apprentices, governors, staff, agents, employers, contractors, volunteers and visitors. Furthermore, we expect all members of our community to follow our commitment to promoting EDI across the group.

To realise our commitment to EDI it is important that those in different roles throughout the Academy understand their function in its success.

2.1 Directors

The directorship carries the ultimate responsibility, under the law, for ensuring that the Academy meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Directors will:

- Set and maintain the strategic direction for EDI
- Monitor performance and targets
- Directors have a key role around determining the educational character of the organisation – this is central to EDI.

2.2 Staff

Each member of Academy staff is responsible for supporting this policy and the law. Every role in the Academy has an EDI component and staff will:

- Apply and embed this policy in their work and roles
- Support and enable learners to follow this policy
- Take appropriate and immediate action in the event of incidents of harassment and discrimination, alerting or involving if necessary senior Academy staff

2.3 Learners

Learners are expected to support our commitment to EDI and follow this policy by:

- Treating everyone with respect, fairly and with understanding, making them feel welcome in the group
- Abiding by the law
- Using language carefully, without swearing or inappropriate language, and not say rude, hurtful or disrespectful things about other people
- Reporting any concerns they have for themselves or others
- Resolving differences and disagreements amicably (threatening or attacking anyone is a serious disciplinary offence).

2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Code of Practice

2.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Teaching & Learning

The Academy is committed to inclusive learning and embedding EDI in all aspects of the curriculum; in doing so we recognise that all learners are individuals with individual learning styles and support needs. It will therefore provide a diverse range of learning opportunities to facilitate access and achievement for the whole community. Adherence to this policy will ensure:

- Courses and training opportunities will be made accessible to as wide a range of learners as possible, by enhanced flexibility in both delivery and timing. Procedures for accreditation and assessment will be flexible and responsive to the needs of the whole range of learners who attend Academy locations. This will include supporting those learners for whom special arrangements and/or facilities may be required during examinations or assessments.
- Learners will understand their own rights and responsibilities; and the rights and responsibilities of others under the Equality Act 2010, which will prepare them for future employment and life inside and outside of the Academy.
- The content and resources of the Academy's study programmes will be regularly examined by practitioners to ensure they do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any learner group.
- Individual learning targets will be matched to the learners needs yet stretch and challenge learners to aim high in all that they do, in order to add value, increase success rates and maximise achievement. Learners will understand their targets and understand the steps required in order to achieve them.
- Tracking of progress of all groups of learners will be carried out by practitioners to eliminate possible gaps in achievement rates, retention and attendance. Regular monitoring and data analysis will be used to inform planning and development of the curriculum by senior Academy staff, subject leaders, tutors/teaching staff. Any gaps that are identified will be addressed by using a range of inclusive strategies matched to learners.
- Where possible, the content and resources of the Academy's programmes should be enhanced by including positive acknowledgement of the contributions made to society by all cultures.
- Courses/training content and methods of delivery will be examined to ensure that they address the needs of all learners. Ways of modifying curriculum delivery to facilitate access for individuals with additional support needs will continue to be sought and embedded.
- Additional support will be provided for all learners requiring it, subject to available resources. Reasonable adjustments will be carried out where appropriate.

2.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Staff

The Academy will ensure that all of its staff are treated equally and fairly and that decisions taken on staff recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management and the termination of employment are based on objective criteria.

The Academy seeks to employ a workforce which reflects its diverse community and will treat all staff with dignity and respect and provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

2.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Staff Development

All Academy staff will have equal access to training and development opportunities throughout the induction process and in staff development programmes. Staff will also be made aware of the EDI Policy. In addition, staff development will support and facilitate good practice in embedding EDI objectives gained from training courses. To facilitate opportunities for all, information and publicity concerning training opportunities will be widely available to all staff. All staff are required to undertake mandatory training in EDI.

2.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Academy staff will not discriminate unfairly and illegally, directly or indirectly, in making selection decisions. As such:

- All staff involved in the selection and interview process will have been trained or briefed in recruitment and selection procedures and the Equality Act 2010
- All applications will be assessed according to clear pre-stated criteria which will be both objective and job related
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of overcoming any problems of access or any other issues relating to their disability
- Any applicant who is classified as having a disability and meets the essential criteria for the post will be guaranteed an interview
- Candidates will only be asked health-related questions during the interview process when this is necessary to support the candidate through that process or if it refers to specific requirements of the post (e.g. heavy lifting).

2.5 Preventing Workplace Harassment

In line with the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, Young Technicians Academy is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, within the workplace. We will actively foster a safe and respectful environment for all employees by implementing robust policies, conducting regular training, and ensuring clear reporting mechanisms. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity, and we will continuously review and improve our practices to comply with our legal obligations and uphold our values of equality and respect. *See Appendix 2.*

3. Compliance with Legal Responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 gives the key legislative requirements relating to EDI. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnerships. All nine characteristics are covered in the employment duties of the Act. *See Appendix 1.*

The protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership is not included in the educational duties of the Act.

The Act outlaws unfair discrimination against an individual because of a protected characteristic and this includes the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination (including discrimination based on association or perception) – occurs when you treat a person less favourably than you treat another person because of a protected characteristic

- Indirect discrimination - occurs when a practice has the effect of putting people sharing a protected characteristic within the general group at a particular disadvantage
- Harassment – occurs when someone behaves in a way that creates an offensive, hostile, degrading, humiliating or intimidating environment for a person
- Victimisation - occurs if you treat someone badly because they have been involved in a claim or complaint about discrimination
- Discrimination arising from disability - occurs when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people) – occurs when an organisation fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person to avoid the disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person.

The Act has introduced a new public sector equality duty which requires the Young Technicians Academy to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations.

The first part of this duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation applies to all nine protected characteristics while the rest of the duty applies to eight of the protected characteristics and excludes marriage and civil partnerships.

The Academy actively wishes to encourage participation in education and training both internally and externally by staff/learners from all backgrounds and groups including those generally under-represented in Further Education.

In addition to the protected characteristics, examples of under-represented groups include the following:

- People who are unemployed or who have been out of the labour market because of domestic, childcare or other caring responsibilities
- Learners who are or have been 'Looked After' especially those in the care of the local authority
- People who speak English as an additional language
- People in low income groups
- People without formal qualifications
- People with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Ex-offenders
- Part-time and temporary workers
- Unskilled manual workers

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the policy will be the Directors. Departments will also be responsible for the local monitoring and implementation of the policy through procedures and practices, reporting through the planning process and to the Directors, as required.

Review Date	Changes Made	Staff Member	Next Review Due
January 2023	Policy Written	H. Fuller	January 2024
January 2024	No updates	H. Fuller	January 2025
January 2025	Added *Preventing Workplace Harassment* in line with changes made in October 2024.	L. Waller	January 2026
January 2026	No updates	L. Waller	January 2027

Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics

The Young Technicians Academy commits that it will not discriminate against anyone for any reason connected to the 'protected characteristics' under the act. In addition, the Academy has a wider commitment to ensure equality of opportunity for all, and therefore also includes commitments for all people regardless of their socio-economic status. A brief description of each characteristic is set out below:

What do we mean by protected characteristics?
The following definitions have been adapted from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com).

Age
The Act defines age by reference to a person's age group and when it refers to people who share the protected characteristic of age, it means they are in the same age group.
Disability
A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.
Gender
A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to either boys or girls.
Gender Reassignment
Refers to discrimination against a person because they are transsexual. References to transsexual people under the act covers staff who are proposing to undergo, or are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex, i.e. gender reassignment. There is no requirement that the process of gender reassignment includes medical supervision. It is recognising that there may be a difference between physical sex and gender identity. This policy relates not only to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment but also to the wider Trans community.
Looked After Children
In the context of our Single Equality Scheme and Ofsted inspections, this term covers children in the care of a local authority and also children who are fostered or adopted.
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to start a family. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2002 that this right extends to transsexual people who are now able to marry or enter civil partnerships in their acquired gender because of the Gender Recognition Act (2004). The Civil Partnership Act 2004 means that gay men and lesbian women in the UK are now able to register civil partnerships. Couples who register a civil partnership have the same rights as heterosexual married couples in areas like tax, social security, inheritance and workplace benefits. Changes to the 1973 Matrimonial Causes Act in the form of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, which came into force on 29 March 2014, now enables same sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies and for civil partners to convert their partnership into a marriage if they wish.
Pregnancy and Maternity

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic in its own right (prior to the Equality Act 2010 pregnancy and maternity came under sex discrimination).
Race
Race means a person's: colour, and/or nationality (including citizenship), and/or ethnic or national origin a racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethic or national origins A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'. Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.
Religion and Beliefs
The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief. A religion need not be mainstream or well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system.
Sexual Orientation
Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to. Some people are attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men). Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people). Some people are attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people). Everyone is protected from being treated less favourably because of sexual orientation, whether they are bisexual, gay, lesbian or heterosexual. Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.
Socio-economic Status
Although not a protected characteristic under the act, the College commits not to discriminate against anyone due to their socio-economic background.
Young Carers
A young carer is someone aged 18 or under who helps look after a relative who has a condition, such as a disability, illness, mental health condition, or a drug or alcohol problem (www.nhs.uk). Many young people are sole carers for a person in their family as well as undertaking a full-time Group's course.
Ex-Offenders
It is widely acknowledged that education plays a vital role in prevention of crime and re-offending. Inspire Education Group is keen to ensure that a criminal record is not a barrier to education.

Appendix 2

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific type of harassment defined as **unwanted conduct of a sexual nature** that has the same purpose or effect as other forms of harassment.

Examples of Harassment

Harassment can take many forms, including verbal, non-verbal, and physical conduct. Below are examples:

General Harassment

- Making derogatory or offensive comments about someone's age, race, religion, or any other protected characteristic.
- Mimicking or mocking someone's disability or accent.
- Sending emails, messages, or sharing content that is offensive or discriminatory.
- Deliberately excluding someone from work activities because of their protected characteristic.
- Making jokes or comments that belittle someone based on their gender or sexual orientation.

Sexual Harassment

- Making unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or comments of a sexual nature.
- Sending sexually explicit emails, messages, or images.
- Displaying sexually suggestive or inappropriate content in the workplace.
- Staring, leering, or making suggestive gestures.
- Touching, groping, or physical intimidation without consent.

Key Considerations

- Harassment does not need to be intentional to be unlawful. If the behaviour has the *effect* of creating a hostile or offensive environment, it can still be considered harassment.
- It is important to consider the perspective of the person experiencing the conduct, not just the intentions of the individual engaging in the behaviour.