



**Southern
Education
Trust**

Equality Policy

Next review: April 2027

Southern Education Trust is committed to promoting equality and diversity among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The Trust, in providing education services, is also opposed to unlawful discrimination of pupils, parents or the public.

The Trust commits to:

- provide equality, fairness and respect for everyone in our employment.
- not unlawfully discriminate owing to protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.
- encourage equality and diversity in the workplace.
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, pupils, parents, and the public.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal. **If you think you may have been discriminated against, please follow the procedure in the grievance policy.**

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.