



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Approved by: Board of Directors

Policy Owner: Storyy Education

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1. Policy Statement

Storyy Education is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, respectful and ambitious environment in which every child, young person and adult is recognised, valued and able to participate, progress and thrive. Equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to safeguarding, education, wellbeing, employment practice and organisational culture; they are not treated as separate or stand-alone responsibilities.

We actively challenge discrimination, harassment, victimisation, prejudice, stereotyping and exclusion. We seek to remove barriers, advance equality of opportunity and foster positive relationships between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

Our approach reflects the needs of children and young people accessing alternative provision. Many students arrive following disrupted education, trauma, adverse childhood experiences, emotionally based school avoidance, unmet SEND, exclusion or other barriers. Inclusive practice therefore means maintaining high expectations while adapting support, communication, environment and curriculum so that students can access meaningful education without being disadvantaged by need, identity, background or previous experience.

This policy applies the principles of the Equality Act 2010 across Storyy Education and should be read alongside our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, RESET and BRIGHT Curriculum Policy, Positive Behaviour, Relationships and Emotional Regulation Policy, SEND Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, PSHE and RSHE Policy, Attendance, Engagement & Welfare Policy and related procedures.

2. Aims and Principles

2.1 Aims

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity by identifying and reducing barriers to access, participation, attendance, progress and achievement;
- foster good relations, mutual respect, belonging and understanding across the Storyy Education community;
- ensure curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and pastoral practice are inclusive, child-centred and trauma-informed;
- ensure reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented for disabled students, staff and visitors where required;
- maintain ambitious expectations for every student while providing personalised support;
- ensure discriminatory incidents and safeguarding concerns are recognised, recorded, responded to and reviewed appropriately;
- use student voice, family partnership, data and quality assurance to strengthen inclusive practice.

2.2 Core Principles

Every child has the right to feel safe, respected, listened to and able to access high-quality education.

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Equality does not always mean treating everyone identically. Equality may require different support or reasonable adjustments so that barriers are removed.

Behaviour is understood as communication and is considered in context, including SEND, trauma, communication needs, safeguarding and environmental factors.

Protected characteristics must never be used to lower expectations or make assumptions about a person's needs, beliefs, abilities or future.

Safeguarding and equality are interconnected. Discriminatory bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, misogyny, hate incidents and targeted abuse may also be safeguarding concerns.

Children and young people should be supported to develop confidence, belonging, positive relationships, self-advocacy and respect for others.

3. Scope

This policy applies across all Storyy Education provision, including RESET Primary, RESET Secondary, BRIGHT Outreach, centre-based provision, home tuition, community learning, online learning, educational visits and work-related or vocational activity.

It applies to directors, senior leaders, managers, teachers, mentors, therapists, employees, agency staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, children and young people, parents and carers, visitors, commissioners and partner organisations when working with or on behalf of Storyy Education.

4. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy has been reviewed with regard to current legislation and national guidance relevant to equality, safeguarding, SEND and alternative provision in England, including:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 Years;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, which comes into force on 1 September 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current edition);
- Department for Education statutory guidance on Alternative Provision, updated February 2025;
- Department for Education Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards, published August 2025;
- relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures and commissioning requirements.

Where a statutory duty applies specifically to a school, college, local authority or other specified body, Storyy Education will support the commissioning body to meet its responsibilities and will apply the relevant principles as good practice within its own provision. Storyy Education will not describe itself as holding a statutory duty that does not legally apply to its provider status.

5. Equality Act 2010 and Protected Characteristics

Storyy Education recognises the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

The legal application of particular protected characteristics varies according to the context, including education, services and employment. Storyy Education nevertheless promotes dignity, fairness and respectful treatment across its whole community.

5.1 Forms of Unlawful Conduct

Depending on the circumstances and legal context, prohibited conduct may include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, failure to make reasonable adjustments, harassment and victimisation.

Staff should not attempt to make technical legal determinations themselves. Where a concern may involve unlawful discrimination, advice should be sought from senior management, HR or appropriate professional advisers while any immediate safeguarding action is taken without delay.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Directors and Managing Director

- promote an organisational culture in which equality, safeguarding and inclusion are embedded in decision-making;
- ensure policies and systems are reviewed for barriers or disproportionate impact;
- provide appropriate resources, training and oversight;
- review themes in incidents, complaints, recruitment, attendance, access and outcomes.

6.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs

- consider whether discriminatory incidents also indicate abuse, exploitation, child-on-child harm or other safeguarding risk;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are recorded and responded to through safeguarding procedures;
- support staff to recognise vulnerability, intersectionality and contextual safeguarding factors;
- liaise with families, schools, local authorities and partner agencies where appropriate.

6.3 Provision Managers and Leaders

- model inclusive leadership and ensure consistent implementation of this policy;
- identify and remove barriers within the environment, routines and provision;
- ensure reasonable adjustments and support strategies are understood by relevant staff;
- respond promptly to discriminatory behaviour and ensure appropriate recording, support and follow-up.

6.4 All Staff

- model respectful, inclusive language and behaviour;
- maintain high expectations while adapting practice to individual need;
- challenge prejudice, stereotypes and discriminatory language safely and proportionately;
- recognise their own assumptions and reflect on potential bias;
- report safeguarding, discrimination, harassment or exclusion concerns promptly;
- protect confidentiality and share information only where there is a lawful and professional need.

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6.5 Students

Students are supported to treat others with respect, recognise the rights and needs of others, communicate safely, seek help when needed and contribute positively to an inclusive community. Expectations are taught and reinforced through RESET, BRIGHT, PSHE/RSHE, mentoring and restorative practice rather than relying solely on sanctions.

7. Inclusive Culture and Belonging

Storyy Education seeks to create environments where students experience emotional and physical safety, predictable relationships, belonging and meaningful participation. Staff recognise that exclusion can arise through routines, language, inaccessible communication, environmental demands, peer dynamics, assumptions or inflexible systems as well as through overt discriminatory behaviour.

Inclusive practice includes accessible communication, sensory and environmental consideration, culturally responsive practice, respectful representation, age-respectful resources, appropriate dietary or faith considerations, and opportunities for students to express their views and identities safely.

No student should be required to disclose personal information about a protected characteristic in order to be treated respectfully or to access appropriate support.

8. Curriculum, RESET and BRIGHT

Equality and inclusion are embedded within the RESET and BRIGHT curriculum rather than taught only as a discrete topic. The curriculum is ambitious, inclusive and personalised, recognising that students learn best when they feel safe, valued, understood and inspired.

8.1 RESET

RESET supports reintegration and re-engagement by rebuilding emotional safety, confidence, relationships, routines, readiness to learn and belief in success. Inclusive practice is reflected through personalised curriculum planning, consideration of EHCP outcomes, SEND, safeguarding information, student voice, barriers to engagement, reasonable adjustments and intended destinations.

8.2 BRIGHT

BRIGHT applies the same principles within outreach and highly personalised delivery. Staff ensure that learning in homes, communities and other settings remains respectful, accessible, ambitious and connected to the student's wider educational and personal outcomes.

8.3 Curriculum Representation and Personal Development

Curriculum content should enable students to encounter diverse people, experiences and perspectives without tokenism or stereotyping. Through PSHE/RSHE, mentoring, restorative conversations and wider curriculum experiences, students develop understanding of respect, healthy relationships, consent, prejudice, discrimination, rights, responsibilities, online conduct, British values, community participation and preparation for adulthood.

9. SEND, Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Storyy Education recognises that many students accessing alternative provision have SEND, disabilities, communication differences, sensory needs or SEMH needs. High expectations must be maintained while barriers are identified and appropriate support is put in place.

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Reasonable adjustments will be considered where a disabled person would otherwise experience a substantial disadvantage. Adjustments may include changes to communication, teaching approaches, timetables, physical environments, sensory demands, equipment, access arrangements, routines, staffing approaches or methods of participation.

Reasonable adjustments are individual and should not be based solely on diagnosis. Decisions should consider the person's needs, the disadvantage experienced, effectiveness, practicality, safety and other relevant circumstances. Where a student has an EHCP, Storyy Education will work with the commissioning school or local authority to support delivery of relevant provision and outcomes within the commissioned placement.

10. Positive Behaviour, Relationships and Emotional Regulation

This policy aligns with Storyy Education's relational and trauma-informed approach to behaviour. Behaviour is understood as communication and staff seek to understand what a student may be communicating through dysregulation, withdrawal, refusal, conflict or other behaviour.

Equality does not remove boundaries or expectations. Students remain entitled to clear, predictable and safe expectations, but responses should be proportionate, restorative and informed by age, development, SEND, communication needs, trauma, safeguarding information and reasonable adjustments.

Staff must avoid discriminatory assumptions when interpreting behaviour. The same behaviour may have different underlying causes and the same response will not always be equitable or effective. Restorative work should help students understand impact, repair relationships and develop safer strategies without humiliating, labelling or excluding them.

11. Safeguarding, Discrimination and Child-on-Child Harm

Discrimination and prejudice can increase vulnerability and may form part of bullying, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, misogyny, harmful sexual behaviour, exploitation, online abuse, hate incidents or radicalisation. Staff must consider the safeguarding context rather than treating discriminatory incidents solely as behaviour matters.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported immediately to the DSL/DDSL and recorded in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff should listen, record facts, preserve the child's voice and avoid conducting their own investigation.

Children who are perceived as different, including because of SEND, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender-related issues, may experience targeted abuse or isolation. Staff should remain professionally curious, recognise patterns and ensure support is provided to those affected.

12. Gender Questioning Children

Storyy Education will approach support for a child who is questioning their gender carefully, sensitively and on an individual basis, with safeguarding and the child's best interests at the centre of decision-making.

From 1 September 2026, KCSIE 2026 includes statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges on children who are questioning their gender. Storyy Education will work consistently with the safeguarding principles within that guidance and with the child's commissioning school or local authority as appropriate.

Where a child requests support relating to social transition, staff must not make unilateral decisions. The DSL and senior leaders should consider the child's wider circumstances, safeguarding information, SEND or neurodiversity, the impact on the child and others, and relevant professional advice. Parents or carers should ordinarily be involved, unless there is a specific safeguarding reason why doing so would place the child at greater risk.

Bullying, harassment or abuse directed at a gender-questioning child will not be tolerated. At the same time, staff must manage differing views and beliefs lawfully and respectfully, recognising that equality protections can apply to religion or belief as well as other protected characteristics.

13. Attendance, Engagement and Access to Education

Attendance is both an educational and safeguarding matter. Storyy Education recognises that absence, lateness or disengagement may be associated with unmet SEND, anxiety, trauma, discrimination, bullying, family circumstances, transport, health or other barriers.

Attendance concerns should therefore be considered alongside engagement, wellbeing, safeguarding and individual need. Staff should seek to understand and remove barriers rather than automatically treating absence as wilful non-compliance.

Attendance improvement is aligned with RESET principles of confidence, emotional wellbeing, belonging, positive relationships and engagement. Any pattern suggesting discriminatory bullying, exclusion or safeguarding risk must be escalated through the appropriate procedures.

14. Preventing and Responding to Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

14.1 Prevention

- clear expectations for respectful conduct and communication;
- inclusive curriculum and positive representation;
- active teaching about prejudice, discrimination, consent, respectful relationships and online behaviour;
- staff modelling and timely challenge of discriminatory language;
- accessible reporting routes and trusted adults;
- early identification of patterns through safeguarding, behaviour and attendance information.

14.2 Response

All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to according to their nature and level of risk. A response may include immediate safety planning, safeguarding action, support for the person affected, restorative work where safe and appropriate, parent/carers or commissioner liaison, targeted education, risk assessment, disciplinary or employment procedures, or referral to external agencies.

Restorative approaches must never be used to minimise serious harm, pressure a person affected to meet the person responsible, or replace safeguarding or disciplinary action where those routes are required.

14.3 Hate Incidents and Criminal Conduct

Where conduct may amount to a criminal offence, hate crime or immediate threat, the DSL or senior leader will consider police involvement and other safeguarding referrals. In an emergency or where there is immediate danger, 999 should be called.

15. Recruitment, Employment and Workforce Inclusion

Storyy Education is committed to fair and inclusive employment practice. Recruitment, selection, induction, development, performance management and progression should be based on objective, role-relevant criteria and free from unlawful discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled applicants and employees. Employees are expected to contribute to an inclusive workplace and may raise employment concerns through management, HR, the Grievance Policy or Whistleblowing Policy as appropriate.

Discrimination, harassment or victimisation by staff may result in action under the Staff Code of Conduct, Low-Level Concerns, Managing Allegations, Safeguarding, Grievance or Disciplinary procedures depending on the circumstances.

16. Student Voice, Participation and Partnership

Student voice is central to inclusive practice. Students should be given developmentally appropriate opportunities to express what helps them feel safe, included and able to learn; identify barriers; contribute to targets and plans; and influence provision.

Storyy Education works collaboratively with parents and carers, commissioning schools, local authorities, social care, health professionals and other agencies. Information from families and professionals is considered alongside the child's own voice and the organisation's safeguarding responsibilities.

17. Recording, Reporting and Information Sharing

Equality-related incidents must be recorded accurately, factually and proportionately using the appropriate platforms. Where an incident is also a safeguarding concern, it must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the DSL/DDSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Records should capture what happened, the words used where relevant, who was involved, context, immediate actions, safeguarding consideration, support offered, decisions, referrals and follow-up. Staff should distinguish fact from professional opinion and avoid unnecessary labels.

Information will be shared lawfully and on a need-to-know basis in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, safeguarding guidance and the Storyy Education Data Protection Policy.

18. Training and Professional Development

Equality and inclusion are embedded within induction, safeguarding, behaviour, SEND and curriculum development. Training and professional discussion may include protected characteristics, reasonable adjustments, inclusive language, unconscious assumptions, anti-racism, disability and neurodiversity, discriminatory bullying, misogyny and sexual harassment, gender-questioning children, trauma-informed practice, cultural awareness and responding to disclosures.

Training will be updated where legislation, statutory guidance, safeguarding learning, complaints, incidents or quality assurance identify a need.

19. Monitoring, Equality Impact and Quality Assurance

Storyy Education will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through safeguarding oversight, incident and complaint themes, attendance and engagement information, curriculum review, student voice, staff feedback, recruitment information and other proportionate quality assurance activity.

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Leaders will consider whether policies, systems or decisions create avoidable barriers or disproportionate disadvantage and will make changes where appropriate. Data will be interpreted carefully, respecting privacy and recognising that small cohorts within alternative provision may make individual students identifiable.

Quality assurance is intended to support learning and improvement. Themes will inform training, curriculum development, risk management, reasonable adjustments and organisational planning.

20. Links with Other Policies, Legislation and Guidance

20.1 Related Storyy Education Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- RESET and BRIGHT Curriculum Policy
- Positive Behaviour, Relationships and Emotional Regulation Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance, Engagement & Welfare Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- PSHE and RSHE Policy
- Online Safety, Digital Technology and Acceptable Use Policy
- Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Physical Intervention and Positive Handling Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy

20.2 Key External Guidance

- Equality Act 2010 and relevant statutory codes/guidance;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 Years;
- DfE Alternative Provision statutory guidance;
- DfE Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards.

21. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, organisational arrangements, safeguarding learning or quality assurance indicate that amendment is required. The Managing Director and Directors are responsible for ensuring the policy remains current and is implemented consistently across Storyy Education.

Appendix A: Protected Characteristics



Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010

We respect, value and celebrate all of the
protected characteristics.

We are committed to equality of opportunity
for everyone.



1. Age

We value people of all ages and recognise the strengths, experiences and contributions that every stage of life brings.



2. Disability

We are committed to creating inclusive environments, removing barriers and making reasonable adjustments for all.



3. Sex

We treat everyone fairly and with respect, recognising and valuing all individuals.



4. Gender Reassignment

We support and respect individuals whose gender is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.



5. Marriage and Civil Partnership

We respect the right of all people to marry or enter into a civil partnership.



6. Pregnancy and Maternity

We support and value individuals before, during and after pregnancy and maternity.



7. Race

We recognise, respect and celebrate diversity of race, colour, nationality, ethnicity and national origin.



8. Religion or Belief

We respect all religions, beliefs and worldviews, and the right of individuals to hold or manifest these.



9. Sexual Orientation

We respect and value people regardless of who they are attracted to.



We are stronger when we include.
Everyone. Every day.



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Equality Concern What Do I Do?

Notice it. Report it. **Change it.**

If you witness or are told about behaviour that may involve discrimination, prejudice, harassment or unfair treatment, follow these steps.

1



NOTICE THE CONCERN

- Pay attention to what you see, hear or are told.
- Trust your instincts.



2



RECORD THE FACTS

- Write down the facts as soon as possible – what happened, when, where and who was involved.
 - Share the facts on CPOMS as soon as possible.
- Only record facts – not opinions.



3



REPORT IT

- Report your concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or your line manager without delay.



4



WE WILL TAKE ACTION

- We will assess the concern, take appropriate action and keep you informed where appropriate.



5



WE ALL HELP CREATE INCLUSION

- Every action helps create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for everyone.



Your voice matters.
Speak up.
Together, we create inclusion.

