



PARITY
EDUCATION

Shaping Futures
With Equal Opportunities

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Aligned with the Equality Act 2010 and inclusive alternative provision practice

Alternative Provision • EOTAS • SEND • Tuition • Mentoring

Organisation	Parity Education and Careers Services Ltd
Policy owner	Operations Director
Version	2.0 - August 2026
Last reviewed	August 2026
Next review due	August 2027, or sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, commissioner requirements or organisational practice changes
Applies to	Employees, tutors, learning support practitioners, mentors, contractors, directors, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Parity Education
Related Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection; Safer Recruitment; Behaviour Support; Anti-Bullying; Complaints; Data Protection; Attendance; Tutor & Contractor Handbook

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1. Policy statement

Parity Education is committed to creating an inclusive organisation in which children, young people, families, staff, tutors, contractors and professionals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. We oppose unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and will take appropriate action where these occur.

Our learners may have experienced disrupted education, exclusion, emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA), SEND, SEMH needs, trauma, social care involvement or other barriers to education. Equality within our provision therefore requires an individualised approach: we identify barriers, make reasonable adjustments and adapt provision so that learners can access education safely and meaningfully.

We aim to promote inclusion, acceptance and respect, while maintaining high expectations for every learner. Decisions about provision, staffing, curriculum, behaviour support, attendance and progression must be based on individual need and evidence rather than assumptions or stereotypes.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Parity Education promotes equality of opportunity and prevents unlawful discrimination in both the delivery of education services and its role as an employer and contracting organisation. It applies to:

- 1:1 tuition and alternative provision
- EOTAS provision
- SEND and SEMH support
- Home-based and community-based tuition
- Online tuition
- Mentoring and learning support
- Introductory visits, reviews, assessments and transition planning
- Recruitment, onboarding, supervision and workforce management
- Communication with parents, carers, schools, local authorities and other professionals

The policy applies wherever Parity Education activity takes place, including homes, schools, libraries, community venues, online environments and other agreed locations.

3. Legislative and equality framework

This policy has been written with reference to the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legal and regulatory requirements. Parity Education will comply with the duties that apply to it as a service provider, employer and contractor, and will support commissioning schools and local authorities to meet their own equality responsibilities when delivering commissioned provision.

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002, where relevant to commissioned education
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Relevant Department for Education guidance for alternative provision and safeguarding

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation and includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. Where Parity Education is carrying out functions on behalf of a public body, we will work in a way that supports the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty: eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

4. Equality principles

- Everyone should be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Difference and diversity should be recognised and valued.
- Barriers to education should be identified early and addressed wherever reasonably possible.
- Reasonable adjustments should be considered proactively and reviewed when needs change.

- SEND, disability, trauma, culture, identity or communication differences must not be used to justify lower expectations or reduced respect.
- Discriminatory language, harassment, bullying and victimisation must be challenged.
- Learners and families should be listened to and involved in decisions in ways that are accessible to them.
- Equality decisions should be evidence-based, proportionate and focused on individual need.

5. Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination in relation to nine protected characteristics:

Protected characteristic	Meaning in this policy
Age	A person's age or age group.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	Protection for a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process of reassigning sex.
Marriage and civil partnership	Protection relating to marriage or civil partnership, particularly in employment.
Pregnancy and maternity	Protection during pregnancy and maternity.
Race	Including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or belief	Including religion, religious or philosophical belief, and lack of religion or belief.
Sex	Being a woman or a man.
Sexual orientation	A person's sexual orientation.

Parity Education also recognises that learners can experience disadvantage because of factors that are not protected characteristics, including care experience, poverty, disrupted education, language needs, social isolation and family circumstances. These factors will be considered when planning inclusive provision, while applying the Equality Act correctly.

6. Types of discrimination and prohibited conduct

Staff and tutors should understand the main forms of prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010.

Term	What it means
Direct discrimination	Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	Applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.
Discrimination arising from disability	Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising from disability, where the treatment cannot be justified.
Failure to make reasonable adjustments	Failing to take reasonable steps to avoid a substantial disadvantage experienced by a disabled person.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Victimisation	Treating someone badly because they have raised, supported or been involved in a complaint or concern about discrimination.

7. Equality in alternative provision

Parity Education provides highly individualised education. Learners may receive provision in homes, libraries, community venues, schools or online, often following periods of non-attendance, exclusion or unsuccessful placements. Equality considerations must therefore be built into referral review, learner matching, risk assessment, delivery and review.

Before provision begins, and throughout delivery, Parity Education will consider:

- The learner's SEND, communication profile, strengths and barriers to engagement
- Physical accessibility and sensory suitability of the proposed venue
- Whether the timetable, session length or travel arrangements create an avoidable barrier
- Cultural, religious and identity needs that are relevant to safe and respectful provision
- Assistive technology, adapted resources or alternative ways of recording work
- Whether 1:1 or 2:1 staffing is required for safe and equitable access
- Known experiences of bullying, discrimination, exploitation or exclusion
- How attendance, engagement and behaviour information is interpreted so that disability-related or SEND-related barriers are not treated simply as non-compliance
- Transition arrangements and whether reasonable adjustments are needed when provision changes

Where a commissioning arrangement appears to create an equality barrier for a learner, Parity Education will raise this with the commissioner and seek an appropriate, proportionate solution.

8. SEND, disability and reasonable adjustments

Parity Education will make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners, staff and service users where required. Adjustments will be considered individually and may relate to the environment, timetable, teaching approach, communication, equipment, resources, staffing or working arrangements.

Examples may include:

- Visual timetables, simplified language or alternative communication methods
- Reduced sensory demand or access to planned regulation breaks
- Flexible pacing, shorter tasks or staged transitions
- Accessible or adapted learning materials
- Alternative ways for a learner to demonstrate knowledge and progress
- A consistent tutor or carefully planned change of tutor
- Adjusted venue, seating or online arrangements
- Additional adult support where assessed as necessary
- Reasonable flexibility in attendance or engagement strategies where disability or SEND affects access

Reasonable adjustments do not mean removing appropriate boundaries, safeguarding requirements or learning expectations. They are intended to reduce substantial disadvantage and enable equitable access.

Staff must avoid diagnostic overshadowing. Distress, withdrawal, dysregulation, absence or communication differences should be understood in context, and staff must remain alert to safeguarding concerns, unmet need and changes in presentation.

9. Roles and responsibilities

Directors and senior leaders

- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in organisational decision-making and service delivery.
- Ensure this policy is implemented, reviewed and supported by appropriate procedures.
- Review serious or repeated equality concerns and identify organisational learning.
- Ensure recruitment, employment and contracting practices are fair and lawful.
- Ensure reasonable-adjustment requests are considered appropriately.

Head of Provision / Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Ensure equality considerations are reflected in learner matching, risk assessment and provision planning.
- Support staff where discrimination, bullying or identity-related safeguarding concerns arise.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns connected to discriminatory behaviour are escalated appropriately.
- Liaise with commissioners, schools, social care or other professionals where equality concerns affect a learner's safety or access to education.

Operations Director

- Maintain organisational oversight of this policy and related compliance arrangements.
- Ensure concerns, complaints and patterns are reviewed and acted upon.
- Support fair recruitment, onboarding, accessibility and reasonable-adjustment processes.
- Coordinate policy review and quality-assurance activity.

All staff, tutors, learning support practitioners, mentors and contractors

- Read and follow this policy.
- Treat learners, families, colleagues and professionals with dignity and respect.
- Challenge discriminatory language, stereotypes and behaviour appropriately.
- Make and follow agreed reasonable adjustments.
- Report discrimination, harassment, victimisation or equality concerns promptly.
- Use inclusive, respectful and professional language and resources.
- Avoid assumptions about ability, behaviour, family background, culture or identity.
- Complete required induction and equality-related training or updates.

Learners

Learners will be supported, in ways appropriate to their age, understanding and communication needs, to treat others with respect, understand boundaries and report concerns. A learner's SEND, communication needs or emotional presentation will be taken into account when supporting them to understand the impact of behaviour.

10. Learner voice, parents and carers

Learners should be supported to express their views in ways that are accessible to them. Their views should inform provision planning, reviews and reasonable adjustments wherever appropriate. A learner must not be disadvantaged because they communicate differently or find formal meetings difficult.

Parents and carers are important partners in understanding needs and barriers. Parity Education will communicate respectfully and make reasonable efforts to ensure information is accessible. Where views differ, decisions will remain focused on the learner's needs, safety, rights and commissioned provision.

11. Curriculum, teaching and learning

Parity Education's curriculum and teaching approaches are adapted to the individual learner. Equality and inclusion should be reflected in the way learning is planned, resources are selected and discussions are facilitated.

- Learning materials should reflect diversity where appropriate and avoid demeaning or stereotypical representations.
- Teaching approaches should be adapted to individual learning, sensory and communication needs.
- Learners should not be directed towards or away from subjects, qualifications or activities because of stereotypes.
- Discriminatory language and attitudes should be challenged in an age-appropriate and proportionate way.
- Sensitive discussions about identity, relationships, religion, culture or protected characteristics must be handled professionally and respectfully.
- Progress targets should be ambitious, realistic and based on the individual learner rather than assumptions about a group or diagnosis.
- Parents and carers should be involved in supporting learning where appropriate and consistent with the learner's needs and commissioned arrangements.

12. Recruitment, employment and contracting

Parity Education is committed to fair recruitment, selection, contracting and employment practices. Decisions will be based on the requirements of the role, suitability, experience, safer-recruitment requirements and merit.

- Job adverts and selection criteria should avoid unjustified barriers.
- Applicants and workers will not be unlawfully discriminated against because of a protected characteristic.
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled applicants and workers.
- Interview and selection decisions should be based on relevant, documented criteria.
- Where a candidate is personally known to a decision-maker, any potential conflict of interest should be declared and managed.
- Safeguarding requirements, including DBS and barred-list checks where applicable, apply consistently and are not discriminatory.
- Access to induction, supervision, training and development should be fair and based on role and need.
- Concerns about discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the workplace will be taken seriously and addressed through the appropriate process.

13. Behaviour, attendance and exclusions

Parity Education will take account of equality duties when responding to behaviour, attendance and engagement. Behaviour may be a communication of distress, unmet need, disability, trauma or communication difficulty, and staff should consider this context when deciding how to respond.

- Reasonable adjustments should be reflected in behaviour-support strategies.
- Attendance and non-engagement patterns should be reviewed for underlying barriers, including SEND, disability, anxiety, transport or venue issues.
- Sanctions or restrictions must not be applied in a discriminatory way.
- Where provision is paused, reduced or ended, the decision and rationale should be recorded and communicated appropriately.
- Any decision that could significantly reduce a learner's access to education should be considered carefully with the commissioner and relevant professionals.

14. Bullying, harassment and discriminatory incidents

Bullying or harmful behaviour linked to race, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or another aspect of identity will not be dismissed as banter, a joke or ordinary conflict. Staff must respond promptly and proportionately.

Where an incident occurs:

1. Ensure immediate safety and wellbeing.
2. Challenge the behaviour where safe and appropriate.
3. Record what happened factually, including the language used where relevant.
4. Report the concern to the appropriate manager and, where safeguarding is involved, to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
5. Inform parents/carers and commissioners where appropriate and in line with safeguarding considerations.
6. Consider support for the person affected and appropriate work with the person responsible.
7. Review whether reasonable adjustments, risk assessments, staffing or provision arrangements need to change.
8. Escalate hate incidents, threats, violence or other potentially criminal conduct where appropriate.

Where discriminatory behaviour may also constitute a safeguarding concern, hate incident, criminal offence or risk of significant harm, safeguarding procedures take priority and the DSL must be informed without delay.

15. Raising concerns and complaints

Learners, parents, carers, staff, tutors, contractors and commissioners may raise an equality concern through the most appropriate route. This may be a direct discussion with a manager, the Complaints Policy, safeguarding procedures, whistleblowing arrangements or an employment/contracting process.

No person should be treated unfavourably because they have raised a genuine concern, supported another person's complaint or provided information about possible discrimination. Concerns will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need the information to respond appropriately.

16. Monitoring, equality impact and quality assurance

Parity Education will take a proportionate approach to equality monitoring that reflects its size, delivery model and the nature of individualised alternative provision. We will not create unnecessary administrative processes or collect sensitive information without a clear purpose.

Equality will be monitored through relevant existing information, which may include:

- Complaints, incidents and safeguarding concerns involving discrimination or harassment
- Patterns in attendance, engagement, access or outcomes where meaningful and proportionate
- Reasonable-adjustment requests and whether agreed adjustments are effective
- Recruitment and workforce concerns
- Feedback from learners, families, staff and commissioners
- Case reviews, supervision and quality-assurance activity
- Changes to policies, systems or delivery models that could create barriers for particular groups

Where a pattern suggests that a group or individual may be disadvantaged, senior leaders will review the issue and determine proportionate action. This may include changing practice, providing additional training, making an adjustment or completing a focused equality impact review.

17. Information, data and confidentiality

Information about protected characteristics may be personal or special category data. Parity Education will collect, use, store and share personal information only where there is a lawful basis and a clear purpose, in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and Parity Education's privacy and data-protection arrangements.

Equality monitoring should be proportionate. Information should not be collected simply because it may be useful in future. Where data is used to identify patterns or improve services, access will be restricted appropriately and reporting should avoid identifying individuals unnecessarily.

18. Training and awareness

All staff, tutors and contractors are expected to understand the standards in this policy. Equality and inclusion will be addressed through induction, policy updates, supervision, case discussion and additional training where a role or identified issue requires it.

Training and guidance may include:

- Equality Act responsibilities and protected characteristics
- Reasonable adjustments and disability inclusion
- SEND-aware and neurodiversity-affirming practice
- Inclusive communication and avoiding stereotypes
- Responding to discriminatory language, bullying and harassment
- Links between equality, safeguarding and professional boundaries

19. Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice
- Attendance and Non-Engagement Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Tutor & Contractor Handbook, including Code of Conduct

20. Policy approval and review

This policy replaces the previous Equality Policy and reflects Parity Education's current alternative provision, EOTAS, SEND, tuition and mentoring delivery model. It will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, commissioner requirements, organisational practice or identified equality risks change.

Approval record

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Patrick Iberi	Head of Provision / Designated Safeguarding Lead	P Iberi	August 2026
Nicola Catherall	Operations Director / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	N Catherall	August 2026

Review history

Version 2.0 - August 2026: Full rewrite for the current AP/EOTAS/SEND delivery model, with updated branding, roles, reasonable adjustments and monitoring. Author: Operations / DSL.