THE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL GROUP LTD

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

(ED&I)

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1. Purpose and Commitment

The Alternative School Group Ltd (TAS) is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion across its schools, services and employment practices. TAS will promote equality of opportunity, remove or reduce barriers to participation, foster good relations, and provide an environment in which pupils, staff, applicants, families, visitors, contractors and other members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect.

TAS will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Equality and inclusion are integral to safeguarding, pupil wellbeing, curriculum provision, behaviour, recruitment, employment and leadership decision-making.

2. Scope

This policy applies across TAS and to pupils and prospective pupils, employees and applicants, agency and temporary staff, volunteers, governors/proprietors, parents and carers, visitors, contractors and subcontractors. It applies to admissions, education and curriculum, assessment, behaviour and sanctions, exclusions, attendance, trips, enrichment and careers, access to facilities and services, recruitment, training, promotion, pay and conditions, and all other relevant school and employment activities.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

TAS will have regard, as applicable to each setting, to current legislation, statutory guidance and regulatory standards, including:

- Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation and reasonable adjustments;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) and current Department for Education Independent School Standards guidance;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where applicable;
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002 requirements relevant to relationships education and relationships and sex education;
- current statutory guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSHE) and Health Education, in force from 1 September 2026;
- current safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- the current ISI inspection framework for association independent schools and the current Ofsted inspection framework/toolkits where Ofsted is the inspectorate.

Where a TAS setting is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, it will meet the additional duties that apply to that setting. This policy does not assume that every independent school in the group is subject to that duty.

4. Protected Characteristics

The protected characteristics set out in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The way in which particular Equality Act provisions apply can differ according to context, including education and employment. TAS will apply the law appropriately rather than assuming that every provision applies identically in every context.

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TAS also seeks to remove barriers associated with disadvantage, SEND, involvement with children's social care, caring responsibilities and other circumstances that may affect learning, wellbeing or participation, whether or not those circumstances are protected characteristics.

5. Equity, Equality and Inclusion in Practice

Equality does not always mean treating everyone in exactly the same way. TAS will respond to individual need, make lawful and reasonable adjustments, and use proportionate support so that pupils and staff can access opportunities and participate as fully as possible.

- Pupils will be treated fairly and with respect, with high expectations for their learning, conduct and wellbeing.
- Decisions will be based on relevant, lawful and objective considerations.
- Policies and practices will be reviewed for unnecessary barriers or unjustified disadvantage.
- Leaders will consider the experience and outcomes of groups who may be under-represented, disadvantaged or face barriers to participation.
- No person will be unlawfully victimised because they have raised, supported or participated in a complaint or concern about discrimination.

6. Admissions and Educational Provision

TAS will operate admissions and educational arrangements lawfully and fairly. Once admitted, pupils will have equitable access to teaching, assessment, pastoral support, enrichment, trips, careers education and other school opportunities, subject to legitimate educational, safeguarding and individual-needs considerations.

Where grouping, differentiation or separate provision is used, leaders will ensure that it has a legitimate educational or safeguarding purpose, is kept under review and does not amount to unlawful discrimination.

7. Disability, SEND, Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

TAS recognises its duties towards disabled pupils and staff. Leaders will proactively consider whether a disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage and whether reasonable adjustments are required. Adjustments will be considered individually and in consultation with the pupil, family, employee and relevant professionals as appropriate.

- Curriculum planning and teaching will take account of pupils' aptitudes, prior attainment and identified needs.
- Staff will receive appropriate information, training and support to implement agreed adjustments and provision.
- Relevant TAS settings will maintain and implement an Accessibility Plan covering access to the curriculum, the physical environment and information, as required by law.
- The effectiveness of adjustments and support will be reviewed and changed where necessary.

8. Curriculum, PSHE/RSHE and Preparation for Life

Curriculum documentation, plans and schemes of work will promote respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics. Teaching will be age-appropriate, sensitive to pupils' needs and consistent with statutory requirements.

TAS will provide Relationships Education and/or Relationships and Sex Education as required for the age and status of the setting and will have regard to the statutory RSHE guidance in force from 1 September 2026. Pupils will be helped to understand equality, healthy and respectful relationships, differences between people, and the importance of dignity and respect.

TAS will actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils will develop social and cultural knowledge and understanding and be prepared for life in British society.

Where political issues are brought to pupils' attention, TAS will take reasonable steps to ensure pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views and that partisan political views are not promoted in teaching.

9. Bullying, Harassment, Prejudice and Discriminatory Incidents

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TAS will challenge and respond to bullying, harassment, discriminatory behaviour, prejudicial language and victimisation. This includes, where relevant, racist, sexist, ableist, religion- or belief-based, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying or language, and other conduct directed at a person because of a protected characteristic or perceived difference.

- Concerns will be taken seriously and responded to promptly and proportionately.
- Incidents will be recorded in accordance with the school's behaviour, anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures.
- Safeguarding procedures will be followed where conduct raises a safeguarding concern.
- Leaders will monitor patterns and themes and take action where prejudice, discrimination or harassment appears to be developing within a group or setting.
- Appropriate support will be offered to affected pupils and staff, alongside educative and disciplinary responses where appropriate.

10. Employment and Recruitment

TAS is committed to fair and lawful recruitment, employment, training, appraisal, career development, promotion, redundancy and dismissal practices. Decisions will be based on relevant criteria and organisational need, subject to lawful positive action or occupational requirements where applicable.

TAS will make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees where required. Staff are expected to uphold this policy and may be subject to disciplinary action for serious or repeated discriminatory or harassing conduct.

11. Responsibilities

- The proprietor is responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements to meet applicable legal and regulatory requirements and for maintaining oversight of equality and inclusion.
- Headteachers and senior leaders are responsible for implementing this policy, promoting an inclusive culture, identifying barriers, ensuring staff understand their responsibilities and taking action where concerns or patterns arise.
- Leaders with inclusion, SEND, safeguarding, curriculum, behaviour, attendance and pastoral responsibilities will work together so that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately and support is coordinated.
- All staff must model respectful conduct, challenge discriminatory behaviour, implement reasonable adjustments and agreed support, and report concerns through appropriate school procedures.
- Pupils are expected, according to age and understanding, to treat others with respect and follow the school's behaviour expectations.
- Contractors and subcontractors working on behalf of TAS are expected to comply with this policy while undertaking work for the group.

12. Reporting Concerns and Complaints

Pupils, parents/carers and staff are encouraged to raise equality, discrimination, harassment or inclusion concerns promptly. Concerns may be raised through the relevant school's pastoral, safeguarding, behaviour, grievance or complaints arrangements as appropriate. A concern involving safeguarding will be managed under the safeguarding policy. TAS will take reasonable steps to protect people from unlawful victimisation for raising or supporting a concern in good faith.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement

TAS will review the effectiveness of this policy at least annually and sooner following significant legal, regulatory or organisational change. Monitoring will be proportionate, lawful and relevant to the nature of each setting.

Leaders may consider, where appropriate, evidence relating to pupil experience and outcomes, attendance, behaviour and sanctions, exclusions, bullying and discriminatory incidents, complaints, participation in curriculum and enrichment, careers access, SEND provision and reasonable adjustments, accessibility, recruitment and workforce information, and feedback from pupils, families and staff.

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The purpose of monitoring is to identify barriers, patterns or disparities that warrant further investigation and to evaluate whether actions taken have improved access, participation, safety, belonging and outcomes. Data will be handled in accordance with data protection requirements.

14. Training and awareness

This policy will be made available to relevant staff and communicated to pupils and families in an age-and-context-appropriate way. Equality and inclusion will form part of induction and ongoing staff development. Additional training will be provided where roles or identified needs require it.

15. Related policies and documents

- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy;
- Relationships, Responsibility and Community Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- SEND Policy and procedures;
- Accessibility Plan;
- Admissions Policy;
- Curriculum Policy and PSHE/RSHE Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct, Recruitment and Grievance/Disciplinary procedures;
- Attendance and Careers policies, as applicable.

Appendix 1 - Inspection and Compliance Cross-Reference

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This appendix is an internal assurance aid. Inspectors assess practice and evidence as well as written policy; inclusion in this document does not by itself demonstrate compliance.

Framework	Key expectation addressed	Policy section(s)
Equality Act 2010	Protected characteristics; non-discrimination; harassment/victimisation; reasonable adjustments	3-7, 9-13
Independent School Standards / DfE guidance	Respect for protected characteristics; curriculum; pupil welfare; leadership; balanced presentation of political issues	3, 6-9, 11-13
ISI Inspection Framework (Sept 2026)	No discrimination; proactive reasonable adjustments; needs identification; respectful curriculum; FBV; social/cultural development	5-9, 11-14
Ofsted Inspection Arrangements (Sept 2026)	Inclusion; identifying barriers; disadvantaged pupils; SEND; social care; other barriers; equality and respectful culture	5-9, 11-14
RSHE Statutory Guidance (from 1 Sept 2026)	Relationships/RSE provision; equality; protected characteristics; age-appropriate teaching	8
Accessibility Duties	Curriculum access; physical environment; accessible information; reasonable adjustments	7

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