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Statement of intent

All pupils at [Acorn Digital Learning](#) are entitled to an education that is free from discrimination and harassment, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The learning environment in which our pupils engage should be supportive, safe and welcoming to all pupils, regardless of their sexuality and gender. Equally, all staff are entitled to a safe and welcoming workplace in which they are not discriminated against or treated unfairly. ADL will celebrate all staff and pupils regardless of their sexuality and gender.

This policy has been created with an aim to consistently reduce stigmatisation and improve the experiences of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or other protected identities (LGBTQ+).

ADL is committed to valuing, respecting, celebrating and understanding individuals' differing sexualities and gender identities, as well as providing continuous support.

This policy aims to:

- Create and foster a learning environment that is free from harassment and discrimination, regardless of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression.
- Promote healthy communication between staff, pupils and parents to support the successful education, development and wellbeing of all pupils, and the inclusion and wellbeing of all staff.
- Adhere to relevant statutory legislation concerning bullying, harassment and discrimination.

All staff, clients and pupils will work together to eradicate any instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying, including any that relates to a person's sexuality or gender identity, in our school.

ADL is dedicated to providing appropriate tailored measures of support for any LGBTQ+ individual who should require it.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2018) 'Gender separation in mixed schools'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Transitioning at Work Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Staff Attendance and Absence Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- School Uniform Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. Definitions

Please note: everyone's connection to, and labelling of, their identity is an individual, personal matter, so it is important to recognise that different people will have different definitions of their identity that may vary from the definitions provided below. The terms and definitions below are also not an exhaustive list of how LGBTQ+ people may refer to their identities.

The term "**lesbian**" is used to describe a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex or gender as themselves, and is usually used to describe a woman who is attracted to women.

The term "**gay**" is used to describe a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex or gender as themselves, and can be used to describe a man who is attracted to men or a woman who is attracted to women.

The term "**homosexual**" is used to describe a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex or gender as themselves. This term is usually only used in formal contexts. Please note that using the term "homosexual" can be considered offensive due to its social and historical connotations.

The term "**bisexual**" is used to describe a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of more than one sex or gender.

The term **“trans”** is used to describe several identities within the gender identity spectrum other than cisgender men and cisgender women. “Trans” is often used as an umbrella term referring to transgender people, including trans men and trans women, non-binary people, and other non-cisgender identities.

The term **“transgender”** is used to describe a person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth, usually:

- A trans man who was assigned female at birth (AFAB).
- A trans woman who was assigned male at birth (AMAB).
- A non-binary person who was AFAB or AMAB.

The term **“queer”** is used as an umbrella term to describe several sexual and gender identities that are not heterosexual or cisgender. Please note that, as the term “queer” can also be used derogatorily, additional sensitivity may be required when using this term.

The plus (+) in LGBTQ+ is used to represent a number of other identities under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Some of the identities represented by the plus include:

- **“Asexual”**, a term used to describe a person who does not experience sexual attraction or has low interest in sexual activity.
- **“Pansexual”**, a term used to describe a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people regardless of sex or gender.
- **“Intersex”**, a term used to describe a person born with variations in sex characteristics such as chromosomes, hormones, or genitalia that do not fit the definitions of ‘male’ or ‘female’.

The term **“heterosexual”** is used to describe a person who is romantically, sexually and/or emotionally attracted to people of a different sex or gender to themselves, and is usually used to describe a man who is attracted to women or a woman who is attracted to men. This term is usually only used in formal contexts – the more informal term for heterosexual is **“straight”**.

The term **“cisgender”**, often shortened to **“cis”**, is used to describe a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth, usually:

- A cis man who was AMAB.
- A cis woman who was AFAB.

The term **“transition”** refers to the process during which a person transitions from the sex they were assigned at birth to the gender with which they identify. This process may involve any of the following actions:

- Living as their gender openly
- Using a name different from their birth name
- Using pronouns different from those associated with the sex they were assigned at birth, e.g. someone who was AMAB using she/her or they/them pronouns
- Wearing clothing consistent with their gender
- Undergoing medical treatment or procedures, e.g. hormone therapy

Please note that transition does not have to involve medical procedures, nor any of the above actions, to be valid or complete, and is defined by the needs and wishes of the individual transitioning.

The phrase “**coming out**” is the process through which an individual, after recognising that they are a member of the LGBTQ+ community, chooses to disclose their identity to others. This can range from coming out to a limited number of people, such as their close friends and family, to expressing their identity openly across their whole life.

LGBTQ+ individuals may also be “**outed**”. This term refers to the process in which an individual’s identity as an LGBTQ+ person is disclosed without their consent. Although this can happen accidentally, e.g. through a conversational error or miscommunication, people are often outed on purpose for malicious reasons. Examples of outing can include:

- Revealing explicitly that a person is LGBTQ+ to people who do not know this – for example, telling a pupil’s parents, teachers, or friends that the pupil is LGBTQ+, or for a member of staff, telling pupils or other staff.
- Revealing implicitly or suggesting that a person is LGBTQ+ to people who do not know this – for example, using a trans person’s correct pronouns in front of other people before they have come out, or referring to a lesbian, gay, or bisexual person’s partner before they have come out.
- Revealing explicitly or implicitly that a person is LGBTQ+ on a public platform, e.g. social media.

3. Roles and responsibilities

All members of the ADL community will be responsible for:

- Respecting all individuals’ right to express their identity.
- Respecting all individuals’ right to privacy and not disclosing a person’s LGBTQ+ identity to any pupils, staff, parents or third parties without their permission.

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing the success of support available to LGBTQ+ individuals on a **biannual** basis.
- Evaluating and reviewing this policy, and ensuring it is non-discriminatory on an **annual** basis.
- Ensuring that other school policies, e.g. the School Uniform Policy, are non-discriminatory.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Discussing the support in place for LGBTQ+ pupils and staff, and how successful it has been, with the governing board.
- Where appropriate, gaining feedback from LGBTQ+ pupils and their parents on the support in place and feeding this information back to the governing board. Meetings will only be organised with the consent of the pupil.

- Gaining feedback from LGBTQ+ staff on the support in place and feeding this information back to the governing board.
- Making any necessary and appropriate changes to the support available to ensure the happiness and development of the individual.
- Conducting regular training sessions to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and well-informed about LGBTQ+ issues.
- Reviewing and amending this policy, considering new legislation, new and updated government guidance, and previously reported incidents to improve procedures.
- Keeping a record of any reported incidents and working to put measures in place that prevent these reoccurring.
- Ensuring that amendments are made to the management information system (MIS) to reflect the names individuals use.
- Ensuring that staff and pupils know and use the correct names and pronouns for all individuals.
- Adopting secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure, and is processed fairly and lawfully.
- Developing a response for when an LGBTQ+ individual comes out, is outed, or experiences bullying.

All staff will be responsible for:

- Being alert to possible harassment of LGBTQ+ pupils and staff, both inside and outside of the school, and dealing with incidents of harassment and discrimination as the highest priority.
- Ensuring they meet the unique needs of LGBTQ+ pupils and colleagues and assessing any measures put in place on a case-by-case basis.
- Conducting themselves in a way to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals feel safe, celebrated and comfortable at school, e.g. ensuring they use the correct pronouns.
- Teaching pupils about diversity and difference and explaining the importance of respecting and understanding of others.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Ensuring staff understand how to react to instances of prejudice-related bullying.
- Reviewing the relevant school policies and procedures to ensure they cater for the individual needs of LGBTQ+ people, e.g. policies regarding the use of changing rooms and toilets.
- Conducting meetings with LGBTQ+ pupils if and when the pupils feel necessary, to ensure they feel safe and happy at school.
- Being a supportive and informative professional for LGBTQ+ pupils' families, to help them understand and support the pupils in question.

The mental health lead will be responsible for:

- Conducting meetings with LGBTQ+ individuals as needed to ensure they feel safe and happy at school.

- Providing LGBTQ+ individuals with information and guidance on where they can seek specialist advice and support.
- Ensuring all staff understand the mental health difficulties that LGBTQ+ individuals may face.
- Liaising with staff and the headteacher to establish support mechanisms to help LGBTQ+ individuals during day-to-day school life.
- Incorporating and monitoring support for LGBTQ+ individuals in conjunction with the headteacher.
- Being available to offer support to any LGBTQ+ individuals who require it.
- Holding one-to-one meetings with LGBTQ+ individuals who request it.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Treating their peers and school staff with respect.
- Reporting any prejudicial incidents to a responsible adult.
- Adopting an understanding and open-minded attitude to difference.

4. Appropriate measures

Absence

In line with the school's Attendance and Absence Policy and Staff Attendance and Absence Policy, the school will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for support and/or treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals by external sources, e.g. medical treatment for trans individuals.

Absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively to protect the individual's privacy.

Prejudice-related bullying

Any incidents that occur will be reported to the headteacher and recorded in line with the Anti-bullying Policy for pupils or the Grievance Policy for staff.

Those managing prejudice-related incidents will also have due regard for the school's Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Teaching related to gender identity, sexuality and the LGBTQ+ community will be incorporated into designated school assemblies to help promote an accepting, understanding attitude and prevent prejudice-related incidents. Teaching related to LGBTQ+ matters will also be included elsewhere in the curriculum where possible, to ensure a whole-school approach.

Terminology and language

Pupils will be educated on the appropriate language to use when referring to LGBTQ+ people and matters. Staff will be trained on the appropriate language to use when referring to LGBTQ+ people and matters. In both cases, instances of inappropriate language use will not be tolerated.

Pupils and staff will be encouraged to be sensitive if enquiring about an individual's sexuality, gender identity, or any related matters, e.g. pronouns, and urged to only do so where appropriate.

Staff training

All members of staff will undergo training on a [termly](#) basis through whole-staff meetings with a qualified professional, which will:

- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support LGBTQ+ individuals.
- Provide support for teachers incorporating LGBTQ+ matters into the curriculum.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and celebrates, a variety of LGBTQ+ awareness days, e.g. Transgender Day of Remembrance.
- Provide support for teachers and other staff responsible for managing any discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Provide up-to-date information on terms, concepts and current understandings of gender identity, gender expression, gender diversity and sexual orientation, including in children.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, staff and pupils about any issues related to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

Changing names and gender on documents

The school cannot change the name or gender of an individual on any official documents, e.g. payslips or exam papers, until legal confirmation of the change has been provided to the school. Upon receipt of legal confirmation, e.g. a new passport, the school will change the name of a trans individual on official school documents.

On unofficial documents, e.g. registers, the school will use the names individuals wish to use.

Where appropriate, the headteacher and school counsellor will discuss with the trans individual if and how they would like to notify others about their name and gender.

At no point will any member of staff disclose information regarding an LGBTQ+ person's gender identity, gender expression or sexuality, unless instructed to do so by the individual, or in the interest of their safety.

Changing schools

The school will employ effective communication as required when an LGBTQ+ pupil is changing schools, e.g. to ensure the new school is informed of the pupil's correct gender if this is different from their legal documentation.

The LGBTQ+ pupil will be referred to the new school's support team to ensure their wishes are accommodated for, and they can raise any concerns.

5. Transition care plans

Where appropriate, and with the consent of the individual involved, the school will put a transition care plan in place to support trans individuals during their transition.

Trans members of staff will refer to the Transitioning at Work Policy for more information.

Transition care plans for pupils will be created by the headteacher and head of pastoral, in conjunction with the pupil and, where appropriate and with the pupil's consent, their parents. If preferred, the pupil may request that their parents are not involved.

The school will seek support from external, professional advisors when devising transition care plans, if necessary.

6. Prejudicial bullying

“Transphobia” refers to the irrational fear, hatred or abuse of individuals based on their actual or perceived gender identity, i.e. trans individuals and non-trans individuals perceived to be non-cisgender. Any individual who is described as being transphobic may deliberately and directly harass or disrespect someone who is trans, e.g. by purposely using the incorrect pronouns.

Transphobia can be carried out by intentionally misgendering someone. The term **“misgender”** describes the act of addressing or referring to a person in a way that does not correctly reflect their gender, e.g. by using the incorrect name, pronouns, gender label, or gendered term.

“Homophobia” refers to the irrational fear, hatred or abuse of individuals based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, i.e. gay individuals and non-gay individuals perceived to be non-heterosexual. Any individual who is described as being homophobic may deliberately and directly harass or disrespect someone who is gay, e.g. by using slurs.

“Biphobia” refers to the irrational fear, hatred or abuse of individuals based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, i.e. bisexual individuals and non-bisexual individuals perceived to be bisexual. Any individual who is described as being biphobic may directly and deliberately harass someone who is bisexual, e.g. by suggesting bisexuality is “a phase”.

ADL will not tolerate prejudice-related bullying of any description. Transphobic, homophobic and biphobic incidents are often emotionally harmful and must be dealt with as seriously as other bullying incidents. All transphobic, homophobic, and biphobic incidents should be tackled in a way that centres on supporting the victim and managing any future incidents of anti-LGBTQ+ behaviour.

Bullying someone based on their perceived or actual identity, gender, sexuality or behaviour is discriminatory and will be handled in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy for pupils, or the school's Grievance Policy and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for staff.

ADL recognises that those who are victims of bullying related to LGBTQ+ prejudice may not identify as LGBTQ+.

Any occurrence of prejudice-related bullying will be reported to a member of staff, who will raise a concern with the headteacher. This will be done in line with the school's Grievance Policy if the incident involved a member of staff.

The headteacher will decide whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in the LA of the incident and the school's response.

Pupils and staff will be informed that prejudicial language will not be tolerated inside or outside of the school.

ADL will ensure that there are private spaces available within the school for individuals to discuss concerns, if they feel that they are, or someone else is, being bullied because of their gender, gender expression, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Should an incident occur, the perpetrator will be informed that this behaviour will not be tolerated, and will be encouraged to reflect on the way their behaviour affects others. Pupils will be reprimanded in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. Staff will be reprimanded in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

If a pupil persists with prejudicial bullying in a classroom, the classroom teacher will remove the pupil and discuss the behaviour in further detail with the headteacher, who will decide which sanctions are necessary. This may include inviting pupils' parents to discuss the matter.

All incidents will be formally recorded in a written log, which will be kept in the [DSL Wellbeing manager](#) – records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy.

7. Communicating with stakeholders

ADL will regularly communicate any changes to policies and procedures to the school's stakeholders, e.g. parents and staff, to ensure that they are fully aware of the systems in place to support LGBTQ+ individuals and prevent prejudicial bullying. The school will ensure that parents are aware of, and know how to identify, the signs of bullying, and understand their responsibility to stop their child bullying others, should this occur.

Parents will be informed of the procedure to follow if they wish to raise a concern with the school, as well as the procedures for issuing complaints, in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The school will endeavour to ensure that all parents feel actively involved in school life through regular school-to-home communication and participation in decision-making.

The school will ensure parents are aware of how they can seek additional support and information if their child is LGBTQ+.

Members of staff will be consulted on school policies to ensure policies are non-discriminatory and cater for all people's needs, and informed of any changes to school policies that have an implication on LGBTQ+ matters.

Where appropriate, staff will be consulted on the planning of the curriculum, events and trips to ensure they are LGBTQ+ inclusive.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2025.

When reviewing this policy, the headteacher will consider any incidents and the effectiveness of the procedures currently in place, as well as any recent government or societal changes.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff, pupils, parents, and relevant stakeholders.