



Policy Document

Policy: Equality Policy

Date of Issue: March 2022

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Changes since last version:

This policy has been completely rewritten and is a new document

EQUALITY POLICY

The aim of this policy is to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. It reflects the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and non-statutory guidance set out by the government in December 2011 and March 2012.

Part One sets out the school's aims to promote equality of opportunity and comply with the Act; Part Two sets out the legal duties which are referred to in Part One.

Part One

The primary aim of the school is to enable all pupils to take part as fully as possible in every part of school life by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential. The aim of the school is to also enable all staff and volunteers, as well as those within the wider community, to take part as fully as possible in school life. The school will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender, gender identity or reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation) within the school community.

This means:

- We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet pupils' needs. We will use a variety of approaches including planning reasonable adjustments for disabled and able pupils as appropriate, enabling our pupils to take as full a part as possible in all the activities of the school. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for pupils, staff and visitors to the school. We are also committed to ensuring staff with a disability have equality of opportunity.
- Pupils will have access to resources which represent issues surrounding protected characteristics.
- We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards pupils and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- Pupil roles are not defined or limited by gender.
- We will regularly consider the ways in which equality can be promoted in the curriculum in order to support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, to challenge prejudice and negative stereotyping.
- We will monitor the progress and achievement of pupils by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information will help the school to ensure that individual pupils are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified which inform the setting of our equality objectives in the school improvement plan.
- We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our disabled staff.
- Staff will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for them, where reasonable adjustments are required. By planning ahead, staff will ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and the school will monitor the uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

- We will seek the advice of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources the school will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
- Bullying and prejudice related incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively. Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice related bullying.
- We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal fairly and consistently with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, the school will plan on-going events to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, anti-homophobia/gay pride, gender equality, developing community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- We will ensure governors and staff consultation is regularly sought in the development and review of this policy. The views of pupils will be sought through pupil voice.
- We will ensure that the school environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users and we will regularly review our accessibility plans.
- The school welcomes a diverse range of candidates to all roles and adheres to the Equalities Act 2010.
- We follow the Ofsted Guidance 'Exploring the school's actions to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying' April 2013.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different protective characteristics and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice through sharing this policy as part of the induction process and in-house training sessions.

Part Two

Our Legal Duties:

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

This legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education. Employers (schools) are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

- Age - A person of a particular age (e.g. 32 year old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 year olds). Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions. HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

- Gender reassignment - A person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with this 'Gender Identity'. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' is not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as children with gender dysphoria. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any school environment.
- Marriage and civil partnership – Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- Pregnancy and maternity - Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
- Race - A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- Religion and belief - Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- Sex - A man or a woman.
- Sexual orientation - A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian when very young, promotion of sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'questioning' or 'coming out' when they are in secondary school or college. Schools with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against lesbian, gay or bisexual pupils. It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the pupil is associated.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful) are:

- Direct discrimination - Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination - A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Harassment - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context.
- Victimisation - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.
- Discrimination arising from disability - Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) and failure to make reasonable adjustments.
- Gender re-assignment discrimination - Not allowing reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave).
- Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination - Unfavourable treatment because of pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman or girl because she is breastfeeding.

- Discrimination by association or perception - For example, discriminating against someone because they “look gay”, or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Schools must not discriminate against disabled pupils, and must make reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.

Public Sector Duties (applies to schools):

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people’s needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding). In practice, ‘due regard’ means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in schools must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking an action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.

Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans

Schools are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example steps and lifts.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Accessibility Plans which will:

Increase disabled pupils access to the school curriculum

Improve the physical environment

Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that schools owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular pupil is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled pupils. The school will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments that it may need to make, working with the relevant admissions authority as appropriate. For more information download guidance from the DfE:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

Equality Human Rights website:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com> which includes the guidance for education providers (schools)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion.

Aspects of educational legislation have also promoted equal opportunities, for example the Education Act includes a duty for local authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

Role of the Governing Body

The governing body will:

- ensure the school complies with equality-related legislation
- ensure the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher
- ensure all other school policies promote equality
- give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- implement the policy and its related procedures
- make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy
- take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination
- ensure all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff
- ensure all staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents

Role of Staff

School staff will:

- enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy
- deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds
- attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation
- be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions
- support equality and diversity through the curriculum

Role of Pupils

Pupils at the school will:

- be aware of, and comply with, the school's ethos which promotes equality and diversity
- refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) when both in school and of the school site.

Grievances

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow our complaints and concerns procedure or grievance policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Appendix 1

Definitions:

Equality - This is more clearly defined as equality of opportunity and outcome, rather than equality of treatment. This means treating people fairly and according to their needs as some people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve an equal outcome.

Inclusive - Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.

Diversity - Recognising that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Cohesion - People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Community from the school's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings:

The school community – the students we serve, their families and the school's staff.

The community within which the school is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area.

The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it.

The global community – formed by European and international links.

Gender dysphoria - Gender dysphoria is a recognised condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.

Biological sex is assigned at birth, depending on the appearance of the infant.

Gender identity is the gender that a person "identifies" with, or feels themselves to be