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Equality Policy

Watcombe Primary School



EQUALITY POLICY

Governors' Committee Responsible: Personnel

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination

- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

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). However, 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.

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' are not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as potentially Trans children. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in a primary 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. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people. It may include Caste.

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 until later, promotion of sexual orientation equality is still relevant in a primary school environment. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'coming out' when they are older.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful):

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. Harassment because of gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion and belief in relation to the provision of education does not apply but such acts may constitute direct discrimination.

Victimisation - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.

Combined (dual) discrimination - Discrimination because of two protected characteristics such as age and sex/gender. Not yet effective.

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 (allows 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 a girl's/woman's pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman 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.

Public Sector Duties (applies to Schools):

A public authority 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).

Reasonable Adjustments and Access Plans (Schedule 10)

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.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Access Plans which will:
 - Increase disabled pupils' access to the school curriculum
 - Improve the physical environment o Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that you owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether you know that a particular pupil is disabled or whether you currently have disabled pupils. You should plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments you may need to make.

3. Community cohesion

As a school, we understand our duty to Promote Community Cohesion as part of the response to the duties contained in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Our school already considers this to be a fundamental part of our role.

We understand that Community Cohesion is the process that should happen in all communities to ensure that different groups and individual people get on well together. It should also allow for new residents and existing residents to adapt to one another.

The school aims to:

- Ensure our pupils to have a sense of belonging in a community where everyone is working towards the same values and principles in which diversity is celebrated.
- Provide a range of opportunities through which all members build positive relationships and extend these to the wider local, national and global community.
- Promote a climate where all members of the community are valued and respected, and show tolerance and understanding of each other.
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination, on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, religion, belief and social background.
- Ensure pupils are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand, celebrate and value diversity to prepare all pupils for a future world and adult life in a multi-racial, interdependent world.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the school complies with equality and cohesion legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher.
- Ensure all other School policies promote equality and cohesion.

The Headteacher will:

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to

- Enable staff to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.

All 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 and cohesion legislation.
- Be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

Specific Staff responsibilities:

- PSHE co-ordinator to ensure diversity issues are addressed in the implementation of the PSHE and citizenship framework throughout the school.
- RE co-ordinator to ensure that RE is in line with county guidance and stereotypical views of particular faith groups or beliefs are not perpetuated.
- SENCO to ensure that pupils with physical and learning disabilities needs are met.

Pupils will:

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors) will:

- Be aware of and comply with the school's equality and cohesion policy.

5. Eliminating discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct. Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training annually.

6. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or homosexual or transgender pupils or members of staff who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school activities)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

7. Equal opportunities in employment

In our School we ensure that we observe the principles of equal opportunities in how we employ, develop and treat our staff as detailed in the policy: Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

8. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school leadership groups have representatives from different year groups and are formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

9. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the

member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The governing body will update the equality information we publish, at least every year. This document will be reviewed by the governing body at least every 4 years. This document will be approved by the governing body.

11. Complaints

If anyone feels that they have suffered harassment or been treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic, they should report this without fail through the School's complaints procedure.

Complaints by staff will be dealt with under the school complaints procedure, as appropriate.

We take all external and internal complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour. Complaints about staff will be investigated using the appropriate Local Authority Procedures.

Monitoring complaints is also another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equality duties. We will report annually on complaints made and action taken as part of monitoring this policy.

12. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Risk assessment