



"Working together to Succeed"

Oakridge School Equality Policy

Summer 2024

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The aims of this policy are to:

1. value each person's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school community, and showing respect for all groups.
2. promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through our curriculum (taught and wider), recognising that doing this may mean treating some pupils differently.
3. ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
4. remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups of pupils (may be only one in a group).
5. ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.
6. challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

Implementation -to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty:

Recognising that all learners are of equal value, we will:

- provide a learning environment where all pupils feel a sense of belonging
- ensure inclusive teaching
- ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for those where reasonable adjustments are required.

- by planning ahead, 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.
- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society • use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping
- seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;

Recognising and respecting difference, we:

- regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curriculum will help promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action
- regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will help pupils understand and value the diversity that surrounds them and challenge prejudice and stereotyping
- 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, gender equality, developing community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination
- take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- use contextual information to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
- encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning.

To foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging, we:

- tackle discrimination by the promotion of positive behaviours, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment with mutual respect at its heart.
- celebrate the diversity of our school community and see it as a great opportunity to teach and learn from one another.
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity

- will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality and diversity when in planning the curriculum
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour or prejudice of any kind and towards any group (with particular reference to protected characteristics)
- promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in displays.

To reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist, we:

- regularly seek the views of pupils, parents, advisory staff and visitors to the school to ensure the school environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users. We will regularly review our accessibility plan
 - monitor the progress and achievement of all pupils This information will help the school to ensure that individual pupils are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive and trends are identified which inform the setting of our equality objectives carefully
 - monitor bullying and prejudice-related incidents and deal with them effectively. Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying
 - ensure that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping
 - ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what reasonable adjustments mean in practice. We follow the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement which states that teachers are required to follow three inclusive principles:
- Setting suitable challenges
 - Responding to pupils' needs
 - Overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils

Observing good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development, we:

- are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We aim to ensure that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- as an employer, need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.
- consider equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion when appointing staff and when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure that decisions are free of discrimination.
- collect and analyse information about the protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the role. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our disabled staff
- ensure the safety and well-being of our staff e.g. access to Occupational Health Support;
- provide regular training for staff to enable them to deal effectively with prejudice related incidents - tackling discrimination and anti-bullying, reporting and recording all forms of prejudice related incidents for example racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism.
- act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

Admissions and Exclusions

Admissions from Reception to Year 6 are managed by the local authority according to the published criteria which are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Suspensions and exclusions at our school are rare and are managed according to local authority guidelines. We will always follow our Behaviour Policy in regard to such a decision being made.

Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences. Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to class teacher/deputy headteacher/headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher who reports to the governing body on a termly basis.

Definition of a discriminatory incident

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person'

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than when otherwise would have been because of something they have done ('a prohibited act') in connection with the Act. e.g. making an allegation of discrimination.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- bringing discriminatory material into school;
- verbal abuse and threats;
- incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school. All incidents should be dealt with in line with the relevant policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of every member of our school community:

Children

All staff

Volunteers

Parents/Carers

Governors Visitors

Students on placement

Our governors will:

- ensure that the school complies with equality-related legislation
- ensure that 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
- nominate a link governor for equalities to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the headteacher and to report back to the Governing Body;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity.

The headteacher will:

- implement the policy and its related procedures
- make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provides training as appropriate to enable them to
- effectively deliver this policy
- take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work
- ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice related incidents
- report to governors on a termly basis

Our staff will:

- implement 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 do not discriminate on any grounds
- attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to implement this policy and keep up-to-date with equality legislation
- model equal opportunities through their words and actions
- attend appropriate training sessions
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community.

Our pupils will:

- follow our school charter
- identify and challenge discriminatory behaviour or behaviour that disregards this policy
- discuss improvements to this policy during the school year through News and Views and with governors
- share their ideas as a part of the review of the effectiveness of this policy

Our parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will:

- be aware of and comply with the school's equality policy
- refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour on school premises

Our Equality Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

We base our practices on sound evidence by identifying and addressing areas for improvement using evidence collected through school self-evaluation, including discussions with representatives of all stakeholders.

Stakeholder Consultation

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. This is to:

- ensure pupils, parents, staff and governors are consulted regularly
- ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones;
- establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning.

Consultation with stakeholders includes:

- parent/carer questionnaires, parents'/carers' evenings, comment slips
- staff surveys, staff meetings / INSET, informal discussions
- News and Views, pupil questionnaires, pupil committees, suggestion box, pupil view governor meetings
- SEND (Special Educational Needs/Disabilities) Support Plan and EHCP, Pupil Premium reviews
- discussions with visiting professionals
- governing body meetings

Publishing the Plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to prepare and publish objectives, we will:

- Publish our information and objectives on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

Review of Progress and Impact

As part of our rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact – and in line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Action Plan annually and the entire Equality Policy and Action Plan on a four- year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils’ learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

We have a legal duty undertake equality impact assessments on all our policies and practices in order to assess their impact on members of the school community such as pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors, volunteers, visitors and those from the wider school community.

We have a particular duty to assess whether our policies and practices have, or could have, an adverse impact on the attainment levels of pupils from different equality groups.