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Equality Information Policy

***Safeguarding Statement***

*West Heath Primary will continuously strive to ensure that everyone in our school is treated with respect and dignity. Each person in our school will be given fair and equal opportunity to develop their full potential with positive regard to gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality or disability. West Heath Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.*

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| --- | --- |
| Owner | Michelle Hooper |
| Date of review | November 2020 |
| Date of next review | November 2022 |

**West Heath Primary School Equalities Policy**

**Aims**

West Heath Primary School is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the school and enhance the way we work.

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law in important ways, to help tackle discrimination and inequality. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

The **public sector Equality Duty** came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

**What has changed?**

The new Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties – for race, disability and gender. The new Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

• age

• disability

• gender reassignment

• pregnancy and maternity

• race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

• religion or belief – this includes lack of belief

• sex

• sexual orientation.

It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The new Equality Duty is designed to reduce bureaucracy while ensuring public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

The Equality Duty applies across Great Britain to public bodies and to other organisations when they are carrying out public functions. Who does the Equality Duty

The Equality Duty is a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It ensures that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

**Implementing the Equality Duty**

Public bodies need to consciously think about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what is essential in order for the Equality Duty to be fulfilled. Public bodies should ensure:

**Knowledge** – those who exercise the public body’s functions need to be aware of the requirements of the Equality Duty. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves a conscious approach and state of mind.

**Timeliness** – the Equality Duty must be complied with before and at the time that a

particular policy is under consideration or decision is taken – that is, in the development of policy options, and in making a final decision. A public body cannot satisfy the Equality Duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.

**Real consideration** – consideration of the three aims of the Equality Duty must form an integral part of the decision-making process.

The Equality Duty is not a matter of box-ticking; it must be exercised in substance, with rigor and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.

**Sufficient information** – the decision maker must consider what information he or she has and what further information may be needed in order to give proper consideration to the Equality Duty.

**No delegation** – public bodies are responsible for ensuring that any third parties which exercise functions on their behalf are capable of complying with the Equality Duty, are required to comply with it, and that they do so in practice. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.

**Review** – public bodies must have regard to the aims of the Equality Duty not only when a policy is developed and decided upon, but also when it is implemented and reviewed. The Equality Duty is a continuing duty.

**Demonstrating compliance with the Equality Duty**

There is no explicit requirement to refer to the Equality Duty in recording the process of consideration, but it is good practice to do so.

Keeping a record of how decisions were reached will help public bodies demonstrate that they considered the aims of the Equality Duty.

**Disabilities**

The Equality Duty also explicitly recognises that disabled people’s needs may be different from those of non-disabled people. Public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people’s impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better so that they are not at a disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person.

**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):

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.

Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people’s needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).

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.

**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 a preventive and a 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.

**PART 1**

The primary aim of West Heath Primary School is to enable all pupils to take part as fully as possible in every part of school life . We do this by developing each child’s self-confidence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

West Heath Primary School will take steps to promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics within the school community (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation).

This means**:**

* We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet pupil’s needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, 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.
* We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards pupils and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
* We will regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help pupils understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, we will challenge prejudice and 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.
* We will collect and analyse information about 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 work they do. 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 views of advisory staff, 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 with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
* We will ensure pupil/parent/staff consultation is regularly sought in the development and review of this policy.
* We will regularly seek the views of pupils, parents, advisory staff and visitors to the school, to ensure that the school environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users. We will regularly review our accessibility plans.
* We will 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.
* The school will consult with stakeholders, i.e. pupils, parents/carers, staff and relevant community groups, to establish equality objectives and draw up a plan based on information collected on protected groups and accessibility planning.

**PART 2**

**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 do 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** – If a person is 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 of a child (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** – Discrimination against a person’s colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travelers and Gypsies as well as White British people.

**Religion and 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.

**Sexual orientation** - 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.

**‘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.
* 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 are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.

**Responsibilities**

**Governing Body**

* Board members –set strategic direction, review performance and ensure good governance of the organisation.
* Ensure that the school complies with equality-related legislation.
* Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the head teacher.
* Ensure all other school policies promote equality.
* Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

**Head teacher**

* 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 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 - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties. Schools should no longer require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire.
* Neither should a school seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.
* Ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

**Staff with specific job roles**

* **Senior managers** –oversee the design, delivery, quality and effectiveness of the organisation’s functions.
* **Equality and diversity staff** –raise awareness and build capacity about the Equality Duty within the organisation and how they support staff to deliver on their responsibilities.
* **Human resources staff** –build equality considerations into employment policies and procedures.

**All staff**

* 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.
* To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.
* Pupils
* Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.
* Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)
* To be aware of, and comply with, the school‘s equality policy.
* To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) on school premises.

**Monitoring**

The Governing body will monitor compliance with this policy.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is responsible for assessing compliance with and enforcing the Equality Duty. It has powers to issue compliance notices to public bodies that have failed to comply and can apply to the courts for an order requiring compliance. The Equality Duty can also be enforced by judicial review. This can be done by the Commission or any individual or group of people with an interest.

# Appendix

**For more information download guidance from the DfE:**

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a00> 64570/the-equality-act-2010

# Equality Human Rights website:

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

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.

# 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

Diversity

Recognizing that we are all different , diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

**Inclusive**

Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background.

**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**

* The school community – the students we serve, their families and the
* 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 recognized condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity.