



Equality Statement of Practice

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1. INTRODUCTION

St Stephen & All Martyrs' CofE School is a diverse school, where people from many different backgrounds and cultures work together. This school and its partners have a longstanding commitment to celebrating this diversity, promoting good relations between our diverse communities, and ensuring that its services are appropriate and accessible for everyone.

We want the school to be a place where every child and member of staff is able to achieve their potential, regardless of their background, their circumstances, or where they live.

The school welcomes the Equality Act 2010, which restates the important role that we all play in tackling inequality and building strong and confident communities. This policy statement describes how the school responds to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

2. THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT: THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') sets out the law around equality matters in Great Britain. The Act provides protection against discrimination for the following range of diversity groups (or 'protected characteristics'):

- Age (Applicable to staff)
- Disability
- Sex/gender
- Gender reassignment
- Race (including ethnic or national origins; colour; nationality)
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

In addition to the protected characteristics set out by the Act, the school believes it is also important to consider caring status and socio-economic conditions as part of its work around equality.

Under the terms of the Equality Act the school has a general duty to show that it has 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

3. THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 has three aims under the general duty for Schools:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

PRINCIPLES TO FULFILL OUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, WE ARE GUIDED BY A NUMBER OF PRINCIPLES

A. All pupils, families and staff are of equal value

We see all current and potential pupils, parents and staff as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and gender identity
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age

B. We recognise and respect difference

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of

diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we note that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs
- Religion and belief – we note that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we note that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff and parents
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff and parents may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff and parents should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

C. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

D. We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

E. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

F. We consult and involve, ensuring views are heard

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at pupil forum; for parents, this will be through

parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

G. We aim to foster greater community cohesion

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

H. We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered and the engagement we have been involved in.

The objectives can be found below and take into account both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Application of the principles within the equality duty: The principles outlined above will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behavior, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents
- Our contact with the wider school community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to, prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Roles and responsibilities The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that related policies, procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

The headteacher is responsible for implementation of the equality duty, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

As set out in section 1, the school welcomes the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, and the emphasis which this places on local authorities as drivers of equality in their local areas.

As an employer, we strive to create a culture where diversity is respected and celebrated. We aim to:

- Ensure that all of our policies and processes are fair and help to advance opportunity between staff from all groups.
- Reaffirm that effective leadership and operational delivery on equalities matters is a core competency for the leadership team, and ensure that they are aware of and have the training and information they need to fulfil their obligations under equality legislation.
- Ensure that all staff have the appropriate training to support and respect the differing needs of our diverse communities. This is particularly important for those staff members who are working with vulnerable children, and those at risk of social exclusion.
- Have a workforce which is broadly representative of the local population in the long-term.
- Seek to ensure that our workforce is representative across all levels, including the highest tiers.
- Create an environment in which employees from across the range of protected characteristics feel satisfied with and supported in their work.

The school's equality duties include eliminating discrimination through the application of a robust policy framework that underpins our roles as employer and service provider:

Eliminating discrimination in the workplace

Our policies are clear about eliminating discrimination in the workplace by ensuring that fair and equal opportunity is afforded to staff from all groups and that individuals have recourse to an objective Panel hearing, if necessary, to test any issue of fairness in relation to conduct, treatment or behaviour at work. Further, all matters relating to employment terms and conditions are determined in consultation with the recognised Trades' Unions through a system of collective bargaining, which ensures that matters of collective equity are addressed from inception.

Those policies which are most pertinent to equalities matters are listed below:

- Anti-harassment policy statement
- Managing Capability procedure
- Code of conduct policy
- Dismissal and disciplinary procedure
- Domestic violence policy
- Ex-offenders policy
- Flexible working request policy

- Grievance procedure
- Leave of absence policy
- Managing sickness absence framework
- Maternity and paternity policies
- Recruitment and selection code of practice
- Religious observance guidance
- Redundancy policy
- Retirement procedure
- Whistleblowing policy

Eliminating discrimination as a service provider

As a school, our services are based on a firm and objective understanding of children's needs and the recognition that, while we would expect all children to receive an equitable standard of service, different children will have differing needs and requirements.

Advancing equality of opportunity

As an employer, the school has an opportunity to advance equality of opportunity in employment, both as an individual employer; and as a member of the employer community in Bolton.

Within the workplace, we believe that having an organisational culture where diversity is respected and supported is essential. We aim to provide a comprehensive package of training around equalities matters for all our managers, built into our package of essential skills and knowledge for those in leadership roles.

Fostering good relations

The school has an important role in the community, and fostering good relations is a central part of our work to build community and social cohesion in the local area. Engaging effectively with our communities is central to our success, since this helps us to understand the issues which are of importance to our communities.