

## EQUALITY POLICY

### Rationale

The governing body recognises their responsibilities as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that people are treated fairly and equally. The governing body will seek to ensure that discrimination does not take place against anyone on the grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality. When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted inspection framework 2012, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards of achievement.

### Policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their gender, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity. The 2010 Single Equality Act replaces and supersedes all existing equality legislation including the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. The Equality Act replaces the Race Equality Duty, the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty. The overriding principle of all equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment for all peoples.

### Guidelines

#### I Implementing the Policy

The Equality Act 2010 requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** or “**general duty**”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- foster good relations between different groups

**Two “specific duties”**

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by 6 April 2012
- publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable by 6 April 2012.

## 2 The ethos of the school

This policy reflects the ethos of the school and is explicit in all school policies. Our approach is based on the following key principles:

**All learners are 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 or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

**We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

**We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

**We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

**We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development

**We have the highest expectations of all our young people.** We expect that all students can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

**We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

## 3 Definitions

**Race** includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

**Disability** – the Equality Act changes the definition of disability. The definition is almost the same as that under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), with two main exceptions:

- There is now no longer a requirement that a mental impairment must be a clinically well-recognised illness.
- There is no longer an exhaustive list of what constitutes day-to-day activities.

The consequence of the relaxation of the definition of disability is that more students are now legally disabled. It follows that more SEN children will now also be classed as disabled to a greater extent than before. As before, as soon as a child is legally disabled and the school either know or could reasonably have been expected to know that they are disabled, discrimination provisions kick in to protect the student.

**Sex** students and employees of one sex must not be singled out for different or less favourable treatment. Gender equality must still be promoted. The Act makes an exception to single sex sporting activities, when a judgement should be made as to the physical disadvantages of particular groups of students.

**Religion or belief** is defined by the Act as being any religion or belief including philosophical belief. The lack of religion or belief is also a protected characteristic. Religions include all major faith groups and denominations or sects. Belief includes non-religious world views such as humanism but not political beliefs such as communism.

**Sexual orientation** refers not only to the students' and employee's sexual orientation but also to the children and partners of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents. It is recognised that many people's views on sexual orientation and sexual activity are grounded in their religious beliefs but this is not accepted as an excuse for allowing discrimination to continue.

**Pregnancy and maternity** – the Act applies to students and is a new area of equality legislation.

**Gender reassignment** – this is a new provision for students. It is acknowledged that it is relatively rare for students to be in a programme for gender reassignment, but when a student does choose to go along this route, it is acknowledged that a number of issues will arise which will need to be sensitively handled.

**Protected characteristics** - is used as a term to refer to the categories to which the law applies eg sexual orientation

**Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if a school were to refuse to let a student be a prefect because she is a lesbian.

#### 4 **Roles and Responsibilities**

All governors, staff, volunteers, students and their families should develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Equality Policy. The school governors are responsible for ensuring that the school prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews an Equality Policy. The Headteacher

works with the Leadership Group to ensure that the policy is implemented and the school promotes equality.

All staff have a responsibility to deal with incidents of sexual harassment or bullying; help eliminate unlawful discrimination; prepare and/or help deliver a curriculum, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities (including work with parents) that take account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality.

Students and parents have a proportionate responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the policy, as do visitors to the school.

## 5 **Admissions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

## 6 **Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance**

The school policy on behaviour - takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students – designed to improve access and participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for students with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

## 7 **Curriculum, teaching and learning**

We actively promote equality and diversity through all areas of the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all. The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for all students. The allocation of students to teaching groups and optional subjects is fair and equitable to students. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills. Resources that promote equality are used across the curriculum. As part of the personal well-being programme all students attend lessons on equality issues such as sexual bullying and stereotyping.

## 8 **Examination access arrangements and reasonable adjustments**

The school has a designated SENCO who along with the exams officer ensures that all students requiring an examination arrangement are catered for. Guidance is taken from the JCQ booklet Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties. This booklet is stored in staff files and can be found at <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/access-arrangements-and-reasonable-adjustments-2015-2016>

## 9 **Prejudice and Prejudice Based Bullying**

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be recorded and dealt with. We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide an annual report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents and how we dealt with them.

## 10 **Accessibility Plan**

We are implementing our Accessibility Plan designed to increase the extent to which students with disability can participate in the curriculum, improve the physical environment and the availability of accessible information to disabled students. The school will supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not supplied through Special Educational Needs statements.

## 10 **Staff Recruitment and Career Development**

The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

## 11 **Breaches of the Equality Policy**

Where possible, breaches of the policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes. More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying and harassment procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff. Where safeguarding issues come to the attention of the school these will be dealt with according to our child protection procedures.

## 12 **Equality Impact Assessment**

We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop and review any policy or procedure and when we make significant decisions about the day today life of the school.

## 13 **Equality Objectives - Action Plan**

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

Our Equality Objectives are:

- A significant majority of students to make at least 3 levels progress across KS 2-4 in English and mathematics
- Achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the attainment gap in English and mathematics between students with a SEN/D statement and their peers
- Achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the % of fixed term exclusions for students with protected characteristics
- All extra-curricular activities and educational visits and journeys to be accessible to students with protected characteristics

## **Monitoring Evaluation and Review**

The policy will be evaluated and reviewed every three years by the senior leadership team. Our Equality Objectives will be reviewed annually.

## **Dissemination of the Policy**

This policy is available on the school website, on request to parents and carers, the LA and Ofsted through the Headteacher.

Date approved by governing body	March 2016
Date for review	March 2019