



# Equalities and Cohesion Policy

Written by: **Personnel Committee**

Reviewed by the Governing Body: **Spring 2016**

To be reviewed: **Annually**

Next review: **Spring 2017**

*Under the Education and Inspections Act, 2006, there is a duty for schools to promote community cohesion, by which is meant working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; where diversity is valued and appreciated; where similar life opportunities are available to all and where strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in schools, the workplace and the wider community.*

## **Legal duties**

1. We welcome our duties under the Equalities act 2010.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these four sets of duties are essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework, and that they reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.
4. Summaries of our legal obligations are provided in Appendix A.

## **Guiding principles**

5. In fulfilling the legal obligations referred to above, we are guided by seven principles.

### **Principle 1: All learners are of equal value**

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- Whichever their gender.

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity**

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised.

### **Principle 3: 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 towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and an absence of sexual harassment

### **Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development**

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whichever their gender.

### **Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men.

### **Principle 6: We consult widely**

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys.

## **Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit**

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, girls and boys.

### **Action plans**

6. We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference.
7. Each year we draw up School Development Plans setting out the specific actions and projects we shall undertake, implementing the principles described above.

### **The curriculum**

8. We are mindful of the above principles when planning, implementing and monitoring the curriculum, encompassing 'out of hours' learning, the 'extended school agenda' and when embracing all stakeholders within the spirit of a true "professional learning community" ethos - in which everyone is helped to "*do their best*".

### **Ethos and organisation**

9. We ensure that these principles apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:
  - learners' progress, attainment and assessment
  - learners' personal development, welfare and well-being
  - teaching styles and strategies
  - admissions and attendance
  - staff recruitment, retention and professional development
  - care, guidance and support
  - behaviour, discipline and exclusions
  - working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
  - working with the wider community.

### **Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying**

10. The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to above:
  - prejudices around disability and special educational needs

- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.
- the risk of radicalisation will be dealt with according to 'The Prevent Duty' (June 2015) within the Safeguarding Policy

11. The school follows Local Authority/Human Resources guidance on how all prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

12. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

13. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

14. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

15. The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

16. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

17. All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

### **Information and resources**

18. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents.

19. All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

### **Religious observance**

20. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

### **Staff development and training**

21. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

### **Breaches of the policy**

22. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body, upon seeking advice from the Local Authority's Personal/Human Resources Department.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

23. We collect, analyse and use data relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.

24. To review good practice we make use of a range of auditing mechanisms.