

Ashfield School



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Overview

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies: Race Equality; Equality & Diversity in Employment; The Equality Act 2010, Inclusion of Physically Disabled; Access; Gender Equality Scheme and Disability and Gender action plans as part of the School Improvement Plan.

This policy seeks to ensure that all individuals, both staff and students, within Ashfield School are encouraged to fulfil their potential and thereby enhance the overall life and culture of the school community.

We recognise that everyone is an individual and as such we must endeavour to ensure that everyone is valued and treated as such. Within society in general gender, race, sexual orientation, culture, age and social background can all contribute to the labelling and classifying of individuals in such a way as to obscure their individuality and limit the fulfilment of their potential. Through promoting diversity and equality for all, we will tackle and challenge discrimination. Closing the gap between the outcomes of different groups will ensure fairness, equal opportunities and celebration of diversity for all.

Principles

This policy will bring together all equality strands to set out our commitment to 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 recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of the differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages that people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual identity and orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit.
- **We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities that are 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 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 for all our students.** 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 learning school.

Aims

- To challenge any discriminatory practice in school, both inside and outside the classroom.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum so that all students may fulfil their potential

- To promote racial awareness positively through the taught curriculum and Personal Development Education / PDE, and through taking advantage of opportunities to do so as they arise on an *ad hoc* basis.
- To condemn offensive language and attitudes whenever they are exhibited both inside and outside the classroom.
- To ensure that all students are taught formally about the beliefs and customs of the world's major religions.
- To seek opportunities to raise awareness of the social implications of cultural and/or religious differences.
- To challenge stereotyped gender roles and to encourage all students and staff to fulfil their individual potential regardless of gender.
- To ensure equal access to the curriculum for all, irrespective of social financial background, gender, race or ability.
- To seek to address inequality of access to extra-curricular activities.
- To develop library resources and access to provide an effective learning environment for students.
- To remove any forms of indirect discrimination which may form barriers to learning.
- To ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair and provide opportunities for all employed in the school to achieve.

The Equality Act 2010

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).

Schools have a duty to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
3. Foster good relations between different groups.

These general duties include:

Age: Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 year olds)

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment: The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership: Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must and will be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating women unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race: Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: Relates to gender identity.

Sexual orientation: Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Practice

1. The Governors and the Leadership Team apply the LA's Opportunities in Employment guidelines on all issues regarding appointments and personnel.
2. The Governors and Leadership Team review regularly the gender balance of staff and the possible implications of this for the curriculum and pupil achievement.
3. The Leadership Team together with departments within the school demonstrate a commitment to educating students for a multi-cultural society by reviewing whole school and departmental policies and schemes of work regularly, with these issues in mind.
4. School assemblies in addition to formal Religious Education and other lessons are used as a vehicle for broadening students' awareness of religious and cultural beliefs and practices.
5. Clear procedures are in place for dealing with offensive attitudes, remarks or behaviour, when exhibited by either staff or students.
6. Racist incidents are formally logged and reported annually to the Local Authority for monitoring purposes.
7. The Leadership Team considers the gender balance within setted teaching groups, and departments review regularly the gender balance within their option groups at Key Stage 4 in order to monitor any underachievement related to gender. Strategies are implemented in order to minimise such underachievement.
8. The Careers, IAG and Personal Development/PDE programmes seek to challenge stereotyped attitudes among students regarding option choice, career choice, etc.
9. The Leadership Team and Achievement Leaders review the rewards and sanctions system in school to identify where gender discrepancies occur. Strategies are trialled to combat such discrepancies.
10. Display work is monitored by departments to ensure that it does not reinforce but challenges stereotyped roles in the areas of gender, race and ability.
11. Students with physical impairment are included as fully as possible into all areas of school life: curricular and extra-curricular.
12. Students are encouraged to identify their achievements and to express their own expectations and goals regularly as part of the Record of Achievement process.
13. Subject teachers ensure that homework tasks are accessible to and achievable by all students, irrespective of socio/economic backgrounds.
14. The Leadership Team explores all possibilities for maximising the availability of resources and facilities for private study to enable all students to complete homework and research tasks effectively.
15. The school actively promotes respect for others as a whole-school issue, within assemblies, school systems and in the daily interactions between students/staff, students/students, and staff/staff.

Roles and responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equality and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

1. The Governing Body.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation. Upholding this policy; its related procedures and ensuring strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

2. The Headteachers and Senior Leadership Team

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; for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination; and for reporting to the governors. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have knowledge of the Equality Act.

3. Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos both in the classroom and wider context.
- Be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying.
- Deal effectively with all incidents from overt name calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences.
- Support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for whom English is an additional language.
- Understand that learners have different styles of learning and multiple intelligences and need different styles of teaching and learning.
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum and in the school culture.
- Ensure the materials and content of lessons cover a wide diversity of different cultures and people.
- Keep up-to-date with equality legislation, development and issues relevant to their work by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school principles, for example, providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability.

Training and guidance on Equalities and the expectation of duties will be delivered to all staff at the beginning of each academic year. This training will also be delivered to new staff as part of their induction process.

Equal Opportunities for staff: This section deals with all aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. 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. To observe this we will

- Ensure that all staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability in compliance with the law.
- Ensure, wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- Strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- Respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils and parents and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- Ensure that all staff, including support staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and evaluation.

We review the information and outcomes of our equalities action plan annually and make adjustments as appropriate, policy development takes place every four years. Our review involves students, staff, governors, parents and carers. In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to detailed protected characteristics.

Reviewed and ratified by Governors: November 2016
To be reviewed every 3 years – next review 2019

General Data Protection Regulation

All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.