



# Equality Policy

**October 2019 (Updated October 2020)**

**Date of Next Review: October 2022**

**Person Responsible: Miss Jodie Colbourne**

## Old Park School

### 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector Equality Act 2010 by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The following characteristics are protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Further explanation of each of the above characteristics is detailed in appendix 1.

Old Park School is an inclusive school where we focus on the progress and well-being of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality, and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

1. All learners are of equal value
2. We recognise and respect difference
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
4. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
5. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
6. We have the highest expectations of all our children

### 2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board/relevant committees will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents/carers, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors annually

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in appendix 3.

### **3. Eliminating discrimination**

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training as appropriate.

### **4. Advancing equality of opportunity**

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities
- Using the information, we gather to identify underachieving groups or individuals and plan targeted intervention
- Ensuring participation of parents/carers and pupils in school development

### **5. Fostering good relations**

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes
  - Teaching in RE, PSHE education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues.
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives

from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in all school's activities.

- Work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

#### **6. Equality considerations in decision-making**

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups.

The school keeps a written record to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The record is completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored with the completed risk assessment.

#### **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This equality information and objectives will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. The policy will be reviewed by governing board/committee at least every 3 years.

This policy was approved by members of the Governing body on -

29.11.2020 (Governorhub)

14.12.2020 (FGB)

## Appendix 1 Protected Characteristics

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 did 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 - A person 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 (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 - A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- Religion and belief - Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of 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.
- Sex - A man or a woman.
- Sexual orientation - A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). 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. Schools with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against lesbian, gay or bisexual pupils. It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the pupil is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a pupil because his parents are gay men or lesbians.

- '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.
  - Victimization - 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.

## Appendix 2 Equality Information

Number of pupils on roll at the school: 151

Age of pupils: 4 to 19

### Information on pupils by protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination based on protected characteristics. Every person has several of the protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment.

To ensure that all pupils are protected from discrimination, the school collects information on protected characteristics.

### Information on other groups of pupils

In addition to pupils with protected characteristics, we gather further information on the following groups of pupils:

- Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
  - Pupils primary and secondary Special Educational Need (SEN)
  - Children Looked After
  - Other vulnerable groups
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- 72% of our pupils are boys (108) and 28% (43) are girls.
  - 19% (28) of our pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties, sensory impairment and/ or complex medical conditions based on EHC primary need
  - 36.4% (55) of our pupils are severely autistic based on EHC primary need
  - 45.0% (68) of our pupils have severe learning difficulties based on EHC primary need
  - 42% (64) pupils are in receipt of pupil premium
  - 56% (85) of are pupils are classed as 'White British' or 'White English'
  - We have a Pakistani ethnic group of 33 pupils (22%) 4 Chinese children, 7 Black African children, 4 Black Caribbean children, 4 Indian children, 1 other Asian and 4 Yemini children. The remaining 9 children are classed as 'other mixed backgrounds.'
  - We have 3 Children in Care and 1 Looked after Adult.

### **Appendix 3 Equality Objectives**

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to publish specific and measurable equality objectives. Our equality objectives are based on our school evaluation and development priorities.

#### Objective 1:

*Incorporate equality consideration on risk assessment and post visit evaluation forms completed by staff.*

Why we have chosen this objective:

- Equality consideration currently takes place during informal discussion and planning but is not formally recorded or evaluated as part of school process.

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Update the Educational Visits Policy
- Offer guidance to teachers on areas for consideration
- Monitor content of offsite risk assessment and evaluations on the EVOLVE system

#### Objective 2:

*Research, develop and implement ways for individuals who are working at pre-subject level to share their views and opinions with other less familiar adults.*

Why we have chosen this objective:

- School currently uses a questionnaire to gather views as part of the Annual Review process. This system is not suitable for a percentage of the school population.

To achieve this objective, we plan to:

- Continuing working alongside Soundswell to ensure all staff are confident in using a range of communication strategies.
- Further develop the use of 'Talking Mats' and 'Important to Me bags' for identified pupils.