



Woodhouse Community Primary School

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Equality Policy Statement

Written by: Mrs V Curry – DHT / SENCO and Mrs R Smith (Headteacher)

Agreed by: V.Hindmarch (CoG) and N. Connor (SEND Gov Link)

Dated: September 2022

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced fully in April 2011 and there is no longer a requirement that schools should draw up and publish equality schemes or policies. However, it is still good practice for a school to make a statement about the principles according to which it assesses the impact on equality of its policies and practices, and according to which it establishes specific objectives.

We must under the general duty of public sector equality duty, in the exercise of our functions, have due regard to the need to:

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- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This will apply to all pupils, staff and others using the facilities. We will give relevant and proportionate consideration to the public sector equality duty.

The protected characteristics for the schools provisions are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Age (only applicable to staff, not pupils)
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships (only applicable to staff, not pupils)

Age and marriage and civil partnership are NOT protected characteristics for the schools provisions for pupils.

We will have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity including making serious consideration of the need to

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristics that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

We will take into account the six Brown principles of 'due regard'

- awareness – all staff know and understand what the law requires
- timeliness – implications considered before they are implemented
- rigour – open-minded and rigorous analysis, including parent/pupil voice
- non-delegation – the PSED cannot be delegated
- continuous – ongoing all academic year

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- record-keeping – keep notes and records of decisions & meetings

We welcome the opportunity to be transparent and accountable. To this end we fulfil the specific duties of the Act by:

- publishing our equality information
- publishing our equality objectives

We aim to make the information accessible, easy to read and easy to find.

Legal framework

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise these duties are essential to 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 and the Public Sector Equality Duties 2010.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

**There are some areas where a school with a religious character can make exceptions on some certain prescribed grounds. These are discussed at the end of the document.*

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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, and women and men, and an absence of sexual, homophobic and transphobic harassment.
- positive attitudes and understanding of those women pregnant or during maternity.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

**There are some areas where a school with a religious character can make exceptions on some certain prescribed grounds. These are discussed at the end of the document.*

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

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

Principle 6: We consult and involve 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 consult and involve all sectors of the school community.

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.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality.

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Principle 9: Objectives

Every four years we formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them. Please see our Accessibility Plan for further information.

The curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine guiding principles.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure the guiding principles apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' 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.

**These items are discussed further at the end of the policy as there are exceptions for schools with a religious character.*

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

We define prejudice-based incidents/bullying in the following way:

Prejudice-related incidents/bullying – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, or because they have a learning or physical disability. It may include misogyny or misandry and be sexist in nature. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

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At Woodhouse Community Primary School we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice, and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice-related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We recognise that prejudice-based bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and is therefore a safeguarding concern, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse. We are committed to working with families and outside agencies to proactively prevent incidents and to create an environment in which all members of our school community feel welcomed, accepted, and safe. We believe every member of our community should be treated with respect and should not be subjected to prejudice or discrimination in any form. This includes staff, parents/carers, governors/trustees, and visitors to our school.

We provide both our pupils and staff with an awareness of the impact of prejudice to prevent any incidents. We will endeavour to proactively tackle all forms of prejudice by ensuring our curriculum is representative of all sections of society and the contributions made by people with different characteristics are consciously embedded across all subjects. In doing so, we will challenge stereotypes and work towards inclusivity and identity-safe classrooms where everyone feels validated, accepted, safe and a sense of belonging.

If incidents still occur, we will address them immediately ensuring that appropriate levels of support are provided to those affected; that we thoroughly investigate all reports/allegations; and that we will apply appropriate sanctions and address offending behaviours through a programme of education. All adults in our school community are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct. Any allegations made against staff will be investigated in line with our policies and procedures relating to staff conduct and behaviour. Any staff member/parent/carer, governor/trustee or visitor to the school, who is subjected to prejudice-based abuse can also expect to have their complaint thoroughly investigated and will be supported in accordance with their wishes.

All staff are aware of how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. (logging on CPOMS)

We take seriously the importance of recording the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with. We also investigate potential patterns and trends of incidents.

We follow the Durham County Council guidance on responding to prejudice related incidents.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. An identified member of the governing body has a supporting role regarding the implementation of this policy.

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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.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- respond to prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- incorporate the principles of this policy into the curriculum
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

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

All staff and governors are signposted towards a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

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

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development around equalities.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the schools disciplinary policy.

Monitoring and evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. We collect,

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analyse and use data in relation to achievement, relevant and appropriate to the profile of the school.

Signed: Mrs Smith /Mrs Curry

Date approved by the Governing Body: September 2022

**There are a number of exceptions for Schools with a Religious Character including:*

- Admissions
- Benefits, facilities and services
- Employment

For further information on the Equality Act 2010 and exceptions for schools with religious character please see the document published by the DfE 'Equality Act 2010: Advice for School Leaders

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

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