

St. Margaret's Church of England Primary
School

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



Introduction

St. Margaret's Church of England Primary School is committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. Equal Opportunity applies both for employees of The Federation and in the way The school provides education for the children in its care and will take all steps necessary to ensure equality of opportunity for all. We aim to equip children with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference.

Every member of the school is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her disability, religion/belief, culture, class, race, gender, age, sex and/or sexual orientation. Every aspect of our activities has an equal opportunities dimension. This may be expressed explicitly in teaching materials and display, implicitly in classroom practice, or as part of the 'hidden curriculum' of social interaction amongst and between staff and children

The school's environment influences the developing attitudes of the children within it and can be a powerful vehicle for the promotion of understanding and practice of equal opportunities

The school aims through its proactive approach to inclusion to enable our children to enjoy an equality of access to their community.

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in comparable circumstances because of their disability, religion/belief, culture, class, race, gender, age, sex and/or sexual orientation.

We promote the inclusion of all children and recognise the particular needs of those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). The school's Special Educational Needs Policy contains a definition of SEND and should be read in conjunction with this policy. The specific needs of those children with medical conditions (both short and long term) will also be met so far as we are able in a main stream educational setting and in consultation with parents/carers of children with specific needs.

The Law and Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination because of age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality; religion or belief – this includes lack of belief; sex; sexual orientation. It also applies to marriage and civil partnership but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Equality Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have **due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Have **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by the school – such as in how it acts as an employer, how it develops, evaluates and reviews its policies, how it builds the principles into its teaching both explicitly and implicitly and how it influences the developing attitudes of the children.

The Equality Duty also explicitly recognizes that disabled people's needs (adults and children) may be different to those of non-disabled people. The school is required to take account of disabled people's impairments when making decisions about policies or services. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs.

Reference Document: Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty (June 2011)

Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure that children and staff recognise that discrimination on the basis of disability, religion/belief, culture, class, race, gender, age, sex and/or sexual orientation is not acceptable.
- To provide an environment in which all children and staff feel safe enough to express and question views.
- To ensure that all staff feel valued and supported and have appropriate advice and encouragement for professional development.
- Ensure the principles and practice of equal opportunities applies to all members of The Federation community: pupils; teaching and non-teaching staff; parents; governors and visitors.
- Equal Opportunities practices should be evident in

a) the formal curriculum (the programme of lessons);

b) the informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities); and

c) the 'hidden' curriculum (the ethos of The Federation, the quality of personal relationships etc).

- To educate, develop and prepare all our children for life whatever their disability, religion/belief, culture, class, race, gender, age, sex and/or sexual orientation.
- Children and teachers contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.
- Children are seen as individuals and each child's education and care is to be developed in direct relation to their needs and abilities. This approach is to be based upon sound knowledge and awareness of an appropriate range of teaching and learning styles,

teaching interventions, behavioural methods, medical and diagnostic issues.

Policy into Practice

a) Admissions

The Federation follows the Local Authority and Governing Body Admission Policies that do not permit religion/belief, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality, age or disability to be used as criteria for admission.

b) Registration

Children and staff names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Children will be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

c) Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school 's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. Parents should be aware of the school 's commitment to equal opportunities.

All cases of discrimination or prejudice will be taken seriously and dealt with, as appropriate, according to existing sanction procedures. A record of incidents should be kept.

d) Language

The Federation views linguistic diversity positively. Children and staff must feel that their natural language is valued.

e) Culture, Class and Race

The school acknowledges that children and adults come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a school and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony.

We will take positive action to enable every individual to raise his/her self esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life.

We understand the need to be different without being excluded.

We are happy for pupils to wear special forms of dress where these are an essential part of their religious or cultural background - sikhs' turbans, Muslim girls' headscarves etc.

We value the history, experience and contribution of our multi-cultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and life of our school.

We try to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views.

We will not tolerate racist behaviour in any form.

f) Gender

We aim to have no gender bias at all in the work that is carried out in school and the example that we set.

We are committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. All pupils experience all subjects .

We try to ensure:

- That teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes,
- That all pupils have opportunities for working with pupils of both sexes,
- That we break down traditional sex stereotypes
- That pupils are encouraged to pursue any subjects and interests
- We do not differentiate between the sexes in respect of our school uniform.

g) Religion/Belief

We acknowledge that members of the school come from diverse backgrounds: some have no religious faith, others are committed to a greater or lesser extent to a variety of religions. We seek to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of and respect for the beliefs and practices of others.

We do not seek to make pupils religious, but to teach them about religion.

h) Sexual Orientation

The school will respect the sexual orientation of members of the school and will ensure there is no direct or indirect harassment against anyone as a result of his or her actual or perceived sexual orientation, or because he or she is friends with or associates with someone of a particular sexual orientation.

i) Disability

We will take steps to promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others, and ensure that disability is portrayed positively in school. We will eliminate harassment that is related to disability, and take steps to meet the needs of disabled people. The school will produce a Disability and Accessibility Plan which will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis. When promoting equality of disabled people, this includes not only physical disabilities but also medical and learning difficulties.

j) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We aim to ensure that everyone, both adults and children, respect the needs of those children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. We will not tolerate any discrimination or harassment against anyone as a result of his or her SEND.

k) Resources

The school's aim is to provide for all children according to their needs. Resources are to reflect cultural and racial backgrounds of children to support positive self imagery. We try to ensure that our resources reflect the whole range of races, gender, religions, cultures etc. that will benefit all children. When appropriate, displays will reflect a range of cultures and races.

l) Relationships

Relationships between staff, children and management should be such that any member of the school acting in a manner contrary to the spirit of this policy is made aware of the unacceptable nature of his/her behaviour. This will be done in a supportive manner to encourage change and reinforce the principles of equal opportunities.

When it is uncomfortable or inappropriate to address an issue between staff then management must be made aware of the incident and the leadership team will address the incident with the staff or child involved. In extreme circumstances formal procedures may be taken by the Headteacher in line with local education authority policy.

m) Recruitment

The Headteacher will ensure that in recruitment procedures any advertisements, short-listing and interview procedures are without any hint of direct or indirect discrimination and so promoting equality of opportunity. During employment it would be unlawful to discriminate in the way opportunities for promotion, transfer or training were offered. It is also unlawful to discriminate in dismissals, particularly in redundancy dismissals.

n) Policies

The school’s Governing Body will ensure that they carry out their Equality Duty when developing, evaluating and reviewing policies.

o) Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted conduct which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them on the grounds of religion/belief, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality, age and/or disability. We will take steps to eliminate any form of harassment within the school.

Awareness of policy

Parents and pupils should know that the school has an equal opportunities policy and is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and pupils.

Monitoring and review

The school’s Governing Body monitors the impact of its policies and procedures on different groups (by race, gender and disability) and the effectiveness of such policies are assessed through the school self-evaluation procedures.

Reviewing the Policy:

Date of next review: September 2016

Signed Head Teacher

Signed Chair of Governors

Date