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WIGLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

EQUALITIES POLICY & OBJECTIVES

Executive Summary

This policy represents the drawing together of a number of the school's existing policies into an over-arching framework that stresses our commitment to the maintenance of cohesive community within and around Wigley Primary School. The school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all of its work and seeks to ensure that its aspirations are understood and acted upon consistently at all levels.

Legal framework

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It consolidated this legislation and also provided some changes that schools needed to incorporate into policies and procedures.

KEY POINTS

- The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.
- As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools are all replicated in the new Act – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single sex schools and schools of a religious character.
- Protection against discrimination is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or have recently given birth, or who are undergoing gender reassignment.

Protected Characteristics

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

In regard to all school procedures, policy and decision-making we always to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Age is a relevant characteristic in considering our duties as an employer but not in relation to pupils.

We recognise the requirement:

- (a) to publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- (b) to prepare and publish equality objectives.

We will update the published information at least annually and publish objectives at least once every four years.

Guiding principles

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, and their parents as of equal value:

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

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 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 all individuals, 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, sexual orientation, gender identity 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: We will operate procedures to ensure equality in terms of 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:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, sexual orientation, gender identity
- 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 of our policies, 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, religious backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender identity
- females and males
- vulnerable pupils, or those from more deprived backgrounds
- pupils with a protected characteristic.

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 a wide range of people:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both females and males.

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.

School Organisation in relation to:

1. Ethos and organisation

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

- learners' progress, attainment and achievement
- 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.

2. 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 plan are implemented
- A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy
- 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
- A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy
- All staff are expected to:
 - promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
 - deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
 - plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles above
 - support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
 - keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

3. The Curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principles above. In all our curriculum models there is an understanding that:

- all pupils are entitled to, and should be offered, a comparable range of educational opportunities
- there are differences in the abilities, aptitudes, interests and other characteristics of pupils which need to be catered for
- the learning environment and teaching methodology are important factors in determining whether or not some of these aims are achieved
- extra-curricular activities, such as school productions, fund raising activities, school teams, visits, residentials and Work Experience all contribute to the total learning experience
- there is a statutory obligation to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

4. Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 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 anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia or related to sexual orientation or gender reassignment

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

5. 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 through our prospectus and our website
- 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.

6. Religious observance

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

7. Staff development and training

- 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.

8. Breaches of the policy

- 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.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

- We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate
- In particular we collect, analyse and use data in 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.

10. Policies

The individual policies and plans that follow underline our commitment to equality of opportunity and detail more explicitly our approach. They are our:

- Race Equality and Cultural Diversity Policy
- Anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia Policy
- SEND Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Curriculum Policy

These all stand as individual documents and can be accessed on request from the Headteacher.

Equality Objectives 2012-16

The school has identified the following Equality Objectives to support the delivery of our policy.

- To promote cultural development and understanding through a rich range of experiences both in and beyond the school
- To continually consider how well the school ensures equality of opportunities for all its pupils
- To foster good relations further between different communities in our school.
- To be productive in reducing the likelihood of any prejudice related discord
- To narrow the gap in terms of achievement for vulnerable groups of children, in order to secure good progress for all learners
- To publish and promote the Equality Policy through the school website, newsletter and staff meetings
- To ensure that all decisions relating to staffing and recruitment are made in the context of current Equality legislation
- To monitor and analyse pupil achievement by race, gender and disability and act on any trends or patterns in the data that require additional support for pupils.