



The Federation of Antrobus St Mark's and Great Budworth CE (A) Primary School

Equality policy

Introduction

It is recommended that schools develop a document that sets out how they comply with equality legislation. Although, there is no longer a legal obligation to produce a "Scheme", schools are still required to publish information showing how they are meeting the Equality duty and publish their equality objectives. In this way, they are encouraged to make transparent their actions and plans in relation to equality.

Background and legislative drivers

Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities and recognising their role in promoting an understanding of equality for different groups of people. Much of this work is in response to legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings, but it also sits within the specific context of a school's role in providing learning and opportunities for all – it is about fairness, rights, and justice.

Equality legislation exists to protect people but also to try and advance equality. Inequality persists in the UK despite 40 years of equality legislation. The recognition of diversity and promotion of inclusion and equality will help to overcome this disparity.

The new Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- * Age (for staff only)
- * Disability
- * Gender reassignment
- * Pregnancy and maternity
- * Race
- * Religion or belief
- * Sex
- * Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- **equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above i.e.

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when deciding or taking an action which may have implications for people with protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The equality duty must be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the duty must be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics.
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Specific Duties

The Act also introduced specific duties, which are designed to help public authorities to meet their obligations under the PSED. The PSED is set out on the face of the Act, while the specific duties are set out in the secondary legislation.

The Specific Duties require schools to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty.
- Publish equality objectives every four years (one or more, as is proportionate to the organisation). All information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public.

What information to publish or what or how many objectives to set has not been prescribed and will be proportionate to the size of the school, the extent to which its functions affect equality and the evidence that such objectives are needed. A starting point will be to look at what information the school is already publishing and consider whether this gives an accurate picture of progress on equality issues affecting staff and pupils. Looking at the data and knowing the school community will help with setting specific and measurable objectives.

Schools must publish their initial information and objective by 6 April 2012, and then will need to update the information at least annually and to publish objectives at least once every four years.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the government equalities office have produced several guides to help public bodies including schools to understand their duties in relation to the Act and they can be downloaded from their websites.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-education-providers-schools/>

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/specific-duties>

Section 2

General Introduction:

Equality Policy

This policy supports the work of the school in promoting its mission statement, aims and values.

Why have we developed this Equality Policy?

This Equality Policy for Antrobus St Mark's CE (A) Primary brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national, and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils, staff, parents/carers, governors, visitors, and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- advancing equality of opportunity; and
- fostering good relations between groups.

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents/carers, and the community in achieving better outcomes for our pupils.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability, and social deprivation.

Antrobus St Mark's CE (A) Primary serves a predominantly white British community (89.9%), and this is reflected in the pupil body. Less than 3% of pupil's first language is not English. Less than 11% of the school pupils are from minority ethnic groups.

We take pupils from Antrobus St Mark's and surrounding communities. The area in which the school is located is a mixture of farming community and residential properties. Pupil stability is in line with the national average at 88.2%.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities, and ethnic origins

Our Approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity, and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- Interdependence, interaction, and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community.
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievements throughout our community, the UK, and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.

- Personal and cultural identity. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

These key concepts are reflected in the school's mission statement and aims identified earlier in this policy and our core values of caring, happiness, understanding and compassion, responsibility, working together and perseverance.

Our vision statement with respect to equality

Antrobus St Mark's CE (A) Primary School seeks to develop confident and respectful young people with strong aspirations for their future. We respect and celebrate our uniqueness and support each other to achieve their best in a nurturing, caring Christian school family.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups, but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We will build on our similarities and differences and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create a cohesive community.

Our Duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equalities Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process to ensure better outcomes for all.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts, and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities:

- The engagement, participation, and involvement of a broad range of pupils, their parents and partner agencies
- Preparation for entry to the school
- School policies
- Breaks and lunchtimes
- The provision of school meals
- Interaction with peers
- Opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- Assessment and testing arrangements
- Behaviour management approaches and sanctions
- Exclusion procedures
- School clubs and activities
- School trips
- The school's arrangements for working with other agencies

- Preparation of pupils for the next stage of their education
- Learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- Classroom organisation
- Timetabling
- Grouping of pupils
- Home learning
- Access to school facilities
- Activities to enrich the school curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school
- School sports
- Employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Head Teacher will:

- Ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils, and visitors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy.
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policy.
- Ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy.
- Develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available.
- Monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information.
- Ensure that the Head Teacher and deputy Head Teacher is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.

Our Governing Body will:

- Designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy.
- Ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the Operational Plan for the school.
- Support the Head Teacher in implementing any actions necessary.
- Engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy.
- Evaluate and review the policy annually and objectives every 4 years.

Our Deputy Head Teacher will:

- Have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy.
- Provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- With the Head Teacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.
- Assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the Operational Plan.

Our pupils will:

- Be involved in the development of the policy and will understand it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability.
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy.

- be encouraged to actively support the policy.

Our parents/carers will:

- Be given opportunities to become involved in the development of the policy.
- Have access to the policy.
- Be encouraged to actively support the policy.
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy.
- Be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child.

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the policy.
- be fully aware of the Equality policy and how it relates to them.
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality policy.
- make known any queries or training requirements.

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- be involved in the development of the policy.
- be encouraged to support the policy.
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy.

How we developed our policy – participation and involvement

The development of this policy involved the whole of our school community. We have involved and listened to what they have to say, including people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010.

- We accessed our pupils' views through the School Council and through PSHE lessons
- We accessed our staff's views through a series of staff meetings
- We accessed parents' views through our parental questionnaire

Commissioned services (buying in services)

Increasingly we are solely responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are considered:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirements within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. Regarding disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training, and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made (unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work

– for example, ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties) or require job applicants to complete a generic ‘all encompassing’ health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators. We are aware of the specific exceptions to the religion or belief provisions of the Equality Act 2010 for employment by schools designated as having a religious character.

See the SfE website for further guidance on this:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive, and inclusive environment.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice-based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes, or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g., skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos, core values and curriculum, we want our pupils to fully understand the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our pupils.

Recorded incidents are reported to the Governing Body by the Head Teacher.

Implementing, monitoring, and reviewing

This policy was published on 1 April 2012. It will be actively promoted and disseminated through staff meetings (staff), assemblies and the School Council (pupils), governor meetings (governors) and by referring to it in the school's prospectus and by publishing it on the school's website (parents and others).

Implementation, monitoring, and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

Equality objectives

In considering our school data and the views of stakeholders we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed every four years. See section 3.

Signed: Chairman of Curriculum Committee

Signed: Headteacher

Date: November 2019

Review Date: Every 2 years

Signed T Nixon Chair of Governors

Signed: A Finney Headteacher

Date: November 2020

Review Date November 202

Policy Adopted 2020