



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy review: September 2022

Next Review: September 2023

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

The staff and Governing Body of Fens Primary School are committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel able to participate fully in school life. This policy sets out the principles under which the Governing Body of the school will operate to meet these aims. The policy is available to all staff in the school and to any prospective applicant.

Aims

- To promote mutual respect and tolerance so that positive attitudes towards self and others are encouraged and maintained regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.
- To provide a positive self-image for both pupils and staff.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to make informed choices.
- To create opportunities for pupils and staff to develop their individual aptitudes and potential.
- To provide a non-discriminatory environment in which children can meet and observe adults in positive roles regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.
- To give pupils the chance to develop a range of learning skills, thus enhancing their ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people.
- To prevent stereotyping on the grounds of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.
- To encourage all to act positively against any form of discrimination and in favour of healthy, humane and considerate actions.
- To be aware that certain groups of people have experienced discrimination and have an appreciation of the social and moral impact of these actions.
- To reinforce positive images of all regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.

Community cohesion duty

In addition to addressing the aims outlined above, our school is committed to taking action on other equality strands (e.g. 'vulnerable' children) and we will also work hard to meet the duty to promote community cohesion. We will increase our focus on helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

We are committed to following DfE guidance in providing:

- Teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them.
- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Curriculum-based activities whereby pupils' understanding of community and diversity is actively enriched.
- Support for any pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.

Curriculum Implications

Schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum (including Relationships Education) for all pupils. Through the curriculum, Fens Primary School will provide a realistic picture of the world, endeavouring to take positive steps to redress any bias stereotyping which arises.

The school will ensure that expectations of pupils are high and non-discriminatory.

Should they hear them, teachers will challenge firmly any stereotypical statements on race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.

The school will consider the role models that visitors will provide, and wherever possible will reinforce positive images of groups regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.

Curriculum Organisation

In planning and teaching the National Curriculum, staff are required to have due regard to the following principles:

Setting suitable learning challenges

Teachers should aim to give every pupil, regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief the opportunity to experience success in learning, achieving as high a standard as possible. Although the National Curriculum programmes of study set out what most pupils should be taught at each key stage, staff should teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways appropriate to pupil ability and experience. A flexible approach will be adopted to take into account any gaps in pupils' learning or experiences resulting from missed or interrupted schooling.

For pupils' whose attainments fall below National Curriculum expectations, and similarly for those who exceed them, staff will differentiate the content and tasks appropriately. Subject co-ordinators will monitor this differentiation and assess its efficacy, with guidance being offered where necessary.

Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs

Staff should set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to learn effectively regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief. To ensure pupils' diverse needs are catered for, staff are required to be fully conversant with this policy, and subject co-ordinators should monitor the fulfilment of this requirement.

We are committed to having a balanced, diverse and fair curriculum. We believe that our pupils should be exposed to ideas and concepts that may challenge their understanding, to help ensure that pupils learn to become more accepting and inclusive of others. Challenging and controversial concepts will be delivered in a way that prevents discrimination and promotes inclusive attitudes.

Staff should take specific action via:

- Creating effective learning environments
- Adopting an inclusive curriculum that is accessible to all
- Securing pupils' motivation and concentration
- Providing a range of teaching approaches
- Using appropriate assessment opportunities
- Setting challenging targets for learning
- Providing positive role models and reinforcing positive images for all groups regardless of race, gender, age, ability, sexuality or religion/belief.

Racism, Discrimination and Harassment

Clear procedures are in place to ensure that racist incidents, discrimination and harassment are reported and dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently.

Pupils are encouraged to report all incidents involving racism, discrimination and harassment. These will be appropriately recorded and acted upon.

A named member of staff (Mr C. Keen) has overall responsibility for dealing with such incidents. That person's role is widely publicised.

All such incidents are formally recorded using the Hartlepool LA 'Racist Incident' forms, which are then submitted to the LA. All reported incidents are investigated.

Active steps are taken to protect staff against discrimination and harassment from pupils and parents. Immediate action will be taken to remove racist graffiti from school property, should such a situation arise.

By adhering to the 'Hartlepool LA Support-Guidance for reporting and dealing with RACIST INCIDENTS in schools', Fens will deal effectively with racist incidents, racism, racial harassment, prejudice and stereotyping. Sensitive support is available to victims.

Procedures for reporting incidents

All persons observing incidents that may be construed as being racist must complete the 'Reporting Individual Incident Form (RI1)'. A member of the SLT will investigate the incident. Staff are made aware of these reporting requirements. Similarly, lunchtime supervisors are expected to follow and adhere to these requirements. Training may be given as required.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Pupils are encouraged to report any incident perceived to be of a racial nature by regular reminders from their class teachers. This is also reinforced through PSHEE/SMSCD (and Relationships Education). The school keeps a record of all reports/investigation forms. Any racist incidents are reported to the governors. Forms are then forwarded to the authority (a termly RI 3: Racist Incidents Monitoring Form, even if there is no data to report (i.e. nil return).

Workforce: Statement of Intent

The Governing Body of Fens Primary School is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of the school. The Governing Body recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce. The Governing Body and senior leaders of the school will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions. All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of school requirements. The only personal characteristics which will be taken into account will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups. All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

Statutory requirements

The Governing Body is bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the nine “protected characteristics” that qualify for protection from discrimination as: -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

There are some exemptions from this legislation in situations where the essential nature of a job calls for a man, woman, or a person from a particular religion or racial group. The Governing Body will not normally seek to use exemptions from the above Acts.

The Governing Body will give sympathetic consideration to requests for time off or for religious observance from staff who are active members of particular religions or beliefs, although such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the school.

The Governing Body will, wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.

The Governing Body operates a policy of automatic entitlement to interview for any disabled applicant who meets the essential criteria for a vacant post. In any event, although there may be practical difficulties in the appointment of some disabled people to the school, this will not be a factor in preventing their full and proper consideration and reasonable adjustments will be considered as required.

The Governing Body acknowledges these areas of regulation and confirms its commitment to enforce these specific duties in the school. The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, by all governors and staff in the school, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Statutory Requirements Defined

• Age

The Governing Body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.

• Disability

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination against people with disabilities based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the school. Where a candidate who has a disability is appointed to a post in the school, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or environment where this is practicable.

- *Gender reassignment*

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex.

- *Marital status or civil partnership*

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

- *Pregnancy and maternity*

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination against a woman because of her pregnancy and/or maternity leave.

- *Race*

The Governing Body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin. There may be situations in the school, which require special consideration, and where an occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

- *Religion or Belief*

The Governing Body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief.

- *Gender*

The Governing Body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on gender. There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where a genuine and determining occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of a particular gender. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance.

- *Sexual Orientation*

The Governing Body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on perceived or actual sexual orientation.

- *Harassment or bullying*

The Governing Body is opposed to any unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. The Governing Body is further opposed to any act of victimisation, harassment or bullying against any member of staff either by an employee or third party based on assumptions about their status in the above categories or any other grounds. Such action will be investigated in accordance with the school's procedure and may lead to formal disciplinary action.

- *Non-statutory aspects*

Although there is no statutory requirement not to discriminate against other groups, or characteristics of staff, the Governing Body wishes to state that it will not in any way discriminate against members of staff or applicants for posts on the grounds of their political affiliation or for any other reason.

Advertising of vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply. In most cases vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

Selection for appointment or promotion

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- a detailed job description will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post
- an objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the job description
- from these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up

- job descriptions, person specifications and selection criteria will be available to all candidates
- shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria and a written record retained of the assessment of each candidate
- selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria and no other criteria will be used
- a written record of the selection decision relating to the agreed criteria will be retained
- reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the school.

Positive Action

The Governing Body recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. The Governing Body will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups. The Governing Body will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis.

Harassment and grievance procedures

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed at them or harassment because of perception or association. The Governing Body is committed to the principles of dignity at work for all staff in the school. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues.

The Governing Body will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of the school. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly. The school has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. The Governing Body is committed to investigate any such complaint. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint. The first point of contact for any such complaint should be the Head teacher or Chair of Governors. In addition, staff have the right to approach their professional association or trade union representative for support.

Monitoring the Policy

An Equality and Diversity policy can only be shown to be effective if its implementation is properly monitored. Given the scope of our policy, this means monitoring both the existing staff of the school and all applications from outside of the school. The school will therefore keep records of existing staff and new applicants which can be analysed to provide data to assess whether this policy is working in practice.

Non-employment aspects of equality

This policy relates only to the employment aspects of the activities of the school. The principles outlined here by the Governing Body of fair and equal treatment apply equally to our approach to pupils and parents of the school and to our dealings with members of the local community and all outside agencies.

Training

The principles outlined above in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the school's operational priorities, based on the school's overall development plan and budget allocations.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The policy will be reviewed annually by the SLT Designated Safeguarding Leader in consultation with the Headteacher, the Governors and the Chair of Governors.
It will be updated, modified or amended as necessary.

Signed:..... Date:.....
(Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Signed:..... Date:.....
(Headteacher)

Signed:..... Date:.....
(Chair of Governors)