

Equality Policy

Downs Infant School

June 2013

Equality Policy Contents

		Page
1	Introduction and Context 1.1 Why we have developed this Equality Policy 1.2 Our school within the wider context 1.3 Our vision statement about equality 1.4 Overall aims of our Equality Policy	
2	Our approach 2.1 Introduction 2.2 Teaching and learning 2.3 Support for students 2.3 Pastoral Support 2.4 Admissions 2.5 Exclusions 2.6 Religious observance 2.7 Hiring out our premises	
3	Our staff	
4	Roles and responsibilities within our school community	
5	Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying 5.1 Definitions 5.2 Reporting, recording and responding to incidents and bullying	
6	Commissioned services	
7	Involving the school community in the development of our equality practice	
8	How we identify our equality objectives	
9	Implementation, monitoring and reviewing	

Equality Policy

1 Introduction and context

This Equality Policy for Downs Infant School 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 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 health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The school also has related policies on Anti-Bullying (within the Behaviour Policy), Safeguarding, Religious Education, Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and our Accessibility Plan.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils, staff, parents/carers, 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 the need to:

- **foster good relations between groups and to promote community cohesion**
- **advance equality of opportunity and**
- **eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;**

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

Our school within the wider context

As a school we are committed to having knowledge of our school community and frequently analyse data which provides evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community and the attainment and wellbeing of our pupils and groups of pupils. We use this data to plan improvements that will benefit our school community.

The school meets its duty under the Equalities Act to annually publish our equalities data.

Our vision statement about equality

Downs Infant School seeks to foster a warm, welcoming and respectful environment, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequalities, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

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 or learning. We cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We believe we all have equal rights, but may have different needs.

We aim to be a cohesive community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse society and where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between, and towards, others, to create cohesive communities. We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and seek to involve the whole school community in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We aim:

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

We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or a member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have **protected characteristics**:

- age (staff only),
- sex,
- race,
- disability,
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity

We have produced an **Accessibility Plan** in which we address our statutory duties to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils and visitors to access the building
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils, parents and carers.

The Accessibility Plan is available on our school website.

2 Our approach

Introduction

As well as the specific equality objectives that are set out in our Equalities Information on our website, the school takes a whole school approach to equality, community cohesion and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. 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 in and outside of the curriculum 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 achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. We also aim to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by the protected characteristics and take action to narrow achievement gaps.
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider world;
- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Support for pupils

2.3b Pastoral Support

The school offers a great deal of pastoral support to all pupils, including those with protected characteristics. This consists of strong and supportive relationships pupils have with their class teacher and teaching assistant; an inclusive ethos pervading the school; peer support and buddying; targeted interventions such as nurture groups, social skills groups, counselling; and the use of CAF (Common Assessment framework) as needed.

2.4 Admissions

Our admissions arrangements are fair, transparent, and do not discriminate.

For all state maintained community schools the Local Authority is the admission authority. Local authorities / schools must not discriminate against pupils in admissions or in their day to day operations, such as in the allocation of pupils to particular classes. There are a few exceptions:

- School curriculum and collective worship are not covered by legislation affecting discrimination on grounds of religion or beliefs
- Schools may treat disabled pupils more favourably than others if it prevents them being at a disadvantage
- Age discrimination legislation does not apply to the treatment of pupils or provision of education.

2.5 Exclusions

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy.

2.6 Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. Parents wishing to take time out of school for religious festivals or observance will be authorised by the school to do so when requested.

The external school meals provider will accommodate individual dietary requirements, eg no pork.

2.7 Hiring out our premises

Our Equality Policy includes governors, and members of the public who use and find themselves on school premises as part of the business of the school.

If our premises are used by other organisations to run activities or provide services which are not connected with the school, then we are not responsible for the activities or services provided. However, we will do our best to ensure through our lettings policy that groups contravening the school values and Equality policy will not be permitted to hire rooms or use our grounds.

3 Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to 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, training and employment practices and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society.

4 The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils, governors, visitors and contractors 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 (Equalities Information and Objectives; in the Autumn)
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
- take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- in partnership with governors deal with breaches of this policy

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy when necessary and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team 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 SIP

Our pupils will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how 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:

- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be expected 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 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
- model good practice by recognising and challenging prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- respond to and report any equality related bullying and incidents in line with school policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

5 Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying

For incidents involving staff the school operates according to the LA's School Dignity & Respect at Work Policy

5.1 Definitions

We recognise that hate incidents and 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, transphobia, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy defines bullying in the following way:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via social media or the internet). It can involve verbal taunts, name calling, physical injury, and damage to property, rumour spreading, shunning or ridicule and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or disability, or because a child is in care, has caring responsibilities or mental health issues. It might be motivated by actual differences, perceived differences or as a result of association with someone else.

Adapted from: *Preventing and Tackling Bullying Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies*, DfE, 2011

We define 'Prejudice related incidents' in the following way:

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or ignorance, based on a person's perceived or actual ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity or their association with someone from one of these groups. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one individual. The impact of this expression of prejudice against a group whether intentional or not can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice related incident.

We record prejudice based 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 children and communities.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender or gender identity, religion or belief;
- Use of derogatory names (name calling), insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, religion or belief;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability gender identity or sexual orientation, religion or belief.

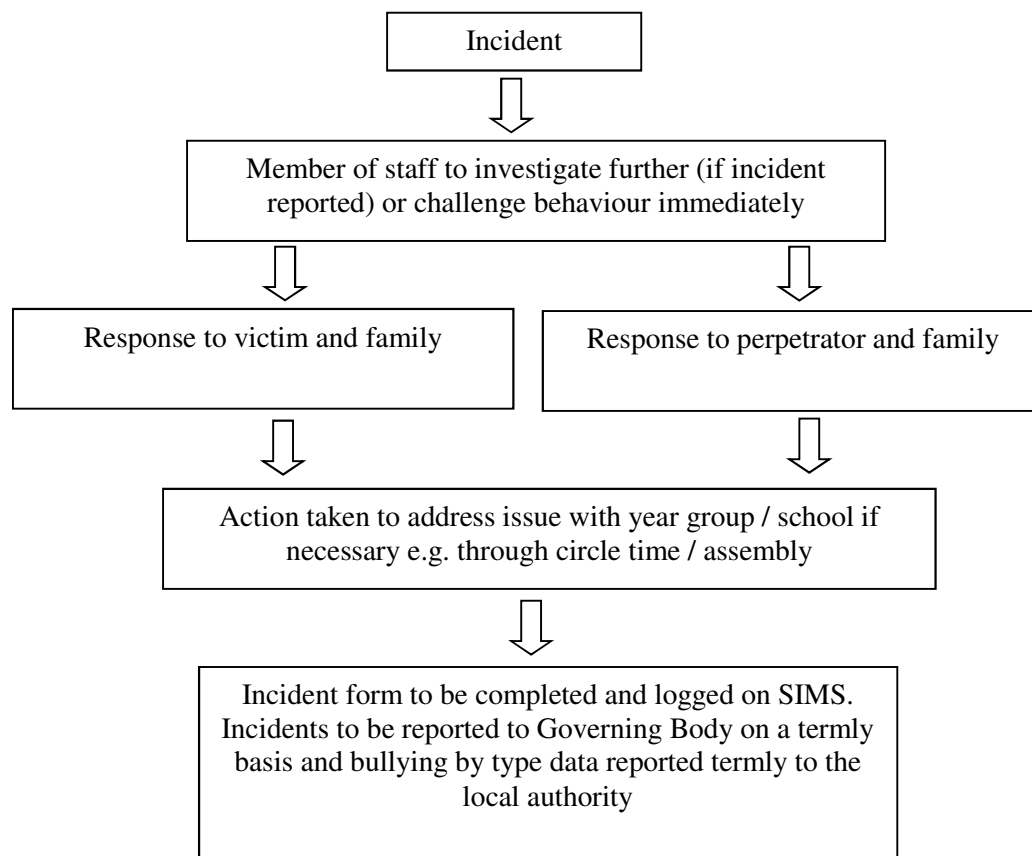
5.2 Reporting, recording and responding to prejudice based bullying and incidents

There is further detail in our Behaviour Policy, which includes the Anti-Bullying Policy.

All pupils, parents and staff are encouraged to report prejudice based bullying and incidents to members of staff. This would usually be the class teacher, but could also be the headteacher, office staff or a teaching assistant. All staff have had training in how to record such reports.

All incidents are recorded on a paper form initially and then transferred to the SIMS behaviour module.

All incidents are followed up with the victim/target and their parents and also the perpetrator and their parents. The follow-up could include a face-to-face discussion, Peaceful Problem Solving Approach, No-Blame Approach, additional and specific class circle time or class discussion, small group work. It could also include sanctions, especially if the behaviour happens repeatedly, such as removal of privileges.



6 Commissioned services (buying in services)

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.

7 Involving the school community in the development of our Equality practice

The development of this policy and of our equality objectives involves the whole school community. We endeavour to involve and listen to a wide range of individuals and groups.

- Our pupils

We hold regular school council meetings where two elected children from each class represent their class mates.

Through the delivery of our rich PHSE curriculum we provide many opportunities for pupils to be heard and listened to. Circle times are particularly powerful in this respect. We have a strong commitment to valuing pupil voice, not just in specific situations such as circle time, but throughout the school day. We are vigilant about any concerns that children may raise at any time.

- Our staff

Staff have opportunities to contribute through regular staff meetings and through discussion when relevant policies and procedures come up for consultation and later adoption.

- Our school governors

Governors are able to make their contribution through the named governor for Equalities and also through discussion when policies and procedures come to committees for ratification.

- Parents/carers

We consult with stakeholders through questionnaires and surveys, both for targeted groups and those aimed at everyone. The governing body survey all parents annually and hold termly drop-in surgeries, through which parents can have their voice heard. The school generally has an open door policy whereby teaching staff and headteacher make themselves readily available for any comments and suggestions.

- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

We take steps through our Accessibility Plan to accommodate people with disabilities. We offer spoken explanations to those parents who find reading English difficult. We have access to interpreters through the EMAS service and also to translation services for documents when needed.

8 How we identify our equality objectives

In line with our statutory duties we publish annually equality information and publish and report on equality objectives. We have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty.

9 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

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. Equalities Information and Objectives will be set annually and published on our website.