

1. Ethos

This Single Equality Scheme brings together the school's approach for promoting equality in our policies and procedures and in our day-to-day interactions with the whole school community. It outlines the commitment of staff, pupils and governors to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all. We will treat everyone the same, understand and tackle the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of children in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity, and
- Foster good relations between groups.

We welcome our responsibility to promote community cohesion and are committed to developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious (and non-religious) and socio-economic groups.

2. Aims

This policy also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and so drives actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment across all groups, therefore enabling us to achieve a framework for action which ensures that we meet our responsibilities and duties in an inclusive way so that:

- All members of the school community are of equal value
- We recognise and respect diversity
- We value our staff
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships
- We ensure that the community as a whole benefits from our work
- We are proactive in addressing inequalities
- We consult and involve all groups affected by our policies

We ensure that our policies, procedures and practices consistently promote these aims.

3. Policy

Translating Aims into Practice

Principle 1: All members of the school community are of equal value

All learners and potential learners and their parents and carers are of equal value and we strive to make the best possible provision for all:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender/gender identity or sexual identity
- Irrespective of other factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where they live.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

We know that treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Different people have different needs and treating them all the same can lead to some people being disadvantaged because their needs

are not met. Our policies, practices and programmes will not discriminate, but will take account of differences in life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people face, in relation to:

- Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- Ethnicity, culture and religion, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, so that the different needs and experiences of boys and girls, women and men are recognised
- Factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where people live, so that different needs and experiences are recognised.

Principle 3: We value our staff

We value our staff for their ability and potential to help us establish the best possible provision for the children at Ash Green. Our policies, structures and procedures benefit all members of staff in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation
- Irrespective of other factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where they live.

Principle 4: We foster positive attitudes and relationships

We know that equality is not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views and we seek to promote good relationships between all groups. Our policies and procedures promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, and good relations between disabled and non-disabled people
- Positive interaction and good relations between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, and national origin or national status
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, and people of different sexual orientation
- Mutual respect and good relations between people from different age groups, with different income or family circumstances or who live in different places.

Principle 5: We ensure that the community as a whole benefits from our work

We recognise our role in promoting community cohesion, and actively encourage the participation in public life of all learners in our school. Our policies and procedures benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- Disabled and non-disabled people alike
- People of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Women as well as men, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as heterosexual people
- People from different age groups, with different income or family circumstances or who live in different places.

Principle 6: We are proactive in addressing inequalities

We are proactive in our efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, our policies and procedures maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between:

- Disabled and non-disabled people

- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Boys and girls, women and men, and people of different sexual orientation
- People from different age groups, with different income or family circumstances or who live in different places.

Principle 7: We consult and involve all groups affected by our policies

We seek the views of all groups affected by the policies and work of our school and strive to involve them in policy review. We recognise that it is particularly important to involve those who, in the past, may have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who may continue to face barriers:

- Disabled people
- People of minority ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Women as well as men, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as heterosexual people
- People who face challenges because of their age group, income, family circumstances or where they live.

Identifying Priorities and Determining Actions

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we formulate specific and measurable equality objectives based on robust audits in line with the guiding principles above. These take into account local and national priorities and issues as appropriate to ensure equality in terms of:

- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender and gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion and belief
- Age
- Socio-economic circumstances.

These objectives are outlined in our annual school improvement plan. We keep these objectives under review in order to ensure that our practical priorities, policies and procedures consistently promote equality.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board: responsible for ensuring that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy and actions within the school improvement plan, reviewing the impact of actions and determining further priorities on a yearly basis.

Head Teacher: responsible for the implementation of the policy on a day-to-day basis and implementation of related actions from the school improvement plan. The head teacher will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they are given necessary training and support. The head teacher will report progress to the Governing Board and will ensure that the senior leadership team is involved in monitoring the impact of related actions and therefore contribute to the head teacher's impact reports.

Senior Leaders: responsible for supporting other staff in implementing actions and provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy. Along with the head teacher they will provide advice and support in dealing with any incidents/issues.

Staff: responsible for promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school; challenge inappropriate or derogatory language and behaviour; respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment; ensure appropriate support for pupils with additional needs and maintain a good awareness of equalities issues. Staff will be involved in the development of the policy; its implementation and how it relates to them.

Parents/Carers: Involved in the development of the policy, encouraged to support it and to attend any meetings and activities in relation to the policy and related actions.

Curriculum

We ensure that curriculum planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross-curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity. All staff ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel their contributions are valued.

Positive steps are taken to include pupils who may otherwise be marginalised. We take account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, experiences and starting points and are responsive to pupils' different learning styles. All pupils are regularly consulted about their learning.

The school recognises and values all forms of achievement. We monitor and analyse pupil performance by ethnicity, gender, disability and special educational need and social background. Any disparities which are identified are addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and same day interventions wherever possible.

Organisation

We ensure that our guiding principles listed above apply to all policies, procedures and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- Pupil outcomes (pupils' progress, attainment and achievement)
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment (including teaching styles and strategies)
- Admissions and attendance
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support for pupils and staff
- Discipline and exclusions
- Partnership working with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community
- Participation of groups in wider school activities
- Preparing all members of the school community for positively contributing to a diverse society.

Addressing Prejudice and Bullying

Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently. All forms of bullying and harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies, using the whole school CPOMS system.

We are opposed to all forms of prejudice that stand in the way of fulfilling our legal duties for all aspects of equality:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs (SEND)
- 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.

There is guidance in associated policies on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with, and all staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice and are offered support in handling such matters.

We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and where requested can provide a report about the numbers, types and seriousness of these incidents and how they are dealt with.

Religious Observance

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

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.

All staff are offered the opportunity to engage in appropriate development to ensure they can support the achievement of our guiding principles.

Commissioning and Procurement

We are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We ensure that we purchase goods and services from organisations that comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

Equality Impact Assessments

We undertake equality impact assessments (through pupil interviews, pupil, parents and staff surveys) to identify the impact or effect of our policies, procedures and programmes on the whole school community. Where negative impacts are identified we take steps to deal with this to ensure the equity of services to all.

Links to Other School Policies

A number of our other school policies directly link into and inform our Single Equality Scheme:

- School improvement plan (which incorporates priorities related to the Single Equality Scheme)
- M13: Anti-Bullying Policy
- M19: SEND Policy
- M21: Inclusion Policy
- M23: Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- M25: Equal Opportunities Policy
- M26: Policy for dealing with Racial Harassment
- M27: Race Equality Policy
- M28: Collective Worship Policy
- M61: Accessibility Policy

Publishing the Single Equality Scheme and Actions

This scheme is published on our school website and hard copies available from the school office so that we ensure that the content is known to all governors and staff and (as appropriate) to all pupils and their parents and carers. Priority actions arising from audits and feedback are incorporated into the annual school improvement plan.

In addition all governors and staff will have access to a range of resources that discuss and explain the concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Breaches of the Single Equality Scheme

Breaches of this scheme will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are tackled, as determined by the head teacher and Governing Board.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In line with legislative requirements the head teacher reports on progress and performance covering protected characteristics, including access to the curriculum, physical access and access to information.

This scheme will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on pupils, staff, parents/carers and all the different stakeholders that make up our school community.

Appendix 1

Governors Statement of Equality Principles and Objectives

Equality between all human beings is fundamental to Ash Green Community Primary School. We acknowledge diversity amongst, pupils, parents, staff, governors and visitors. The governing board is therefore committed to equality both as an employer and a service provider. Our policy for Equal Opportunities (M25), in line with the Equality Act 2010, outlines how this commitment is put into practice so that we tackle barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes. In order to support the head teacher and staff the governing body has identified:

- What the policy must include
- How implementation and impact will be monitored and recorded including how any identified discrimination is tackled
- How and when we will report on how well we are progressing our aims for equality and the impact of the policy in achieving these aims

All school policies and procedures will ensure equality of access and value the diversity within the school community. The governing board has given the head teacher a clear mandate to make certain that equality permeates all aspects of school life and that this must be the day-to-day responsibility of every member of the school and the wider community.

Through all policies and procedures the school aims to:

- Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect
- Make certain that our school is a safe, secure and stimulating place for everyone
- Ensure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions (e.g.: through the school council, PTFA)
- Ensure that no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age; disability; ethnicity; colour or national origin; gender; gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; being pregnant or recently had a baby; religion or beliefs; sexual identity and orientation

In establishing policies and procedures the school recognises that:

- People have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same
- Some pupils require additional support and intervention to help them make good progress and achieve well

Appendix 2

Summary of Equality Legislation

This appendix summarises the requirements of race, disability and gender equality legislation, and the duty to promote community cohesion. It also addresses the legislation relating to age, sexual orientation and religion and belief. Every aspect of school life is covered by the above equality duties.

For Pupils:

- Admissions and attendance
- Teaching and learning, timetabling, homework, trips, visits, sports, breaks and lunchtimes, tests, clubs and extracurricular activities, and curriculum development, planning and delivery
- Behaviour, discipline and sanctions, exclusions (permanent and fixed term)
- Welfare and well-being
- Progress and attainment

Pupils are defined under the Equality Act 2010 as:

- Prospective pupils (in relation to admissions arrangements)
- Pupils at the school (including those absent or temporarily excluded)
- Former pupils (if there is a continuing relationship based on them having been a pupil at the school)

For Staff:

- Recruitment, selection, conditions of employment
- Career progress, appraisal, CPD activities
- Disciplinary, grievance, dismissal

The duties also apply to those using the services of the school, for example parents, and the wider community. The governing body carries the ultimate responsibility for implementing equality legislation.

Meeting these duties

Accessibility

There is specific disability legislation in relation to disabled pupils and accessibility which means we must plan strategically over time to:

- Increase access to the curriculum
- Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access;
- Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways.

Schools must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief

Schools must not discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation or religion and belief. Age is not a protected characteristic for the school's provision in terms of pupils.

Community Cohesion

Schools have a responsibility to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious and non-religious and socio-economic groups. This duty also includes other differences such as for example in gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Disability Equality

The general duty to promote disability equality is owed to all disabled people which means that schools must have due regard to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate disability related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life

Gender Equality

The general duty to promote gender equality means that schools must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys

The duty also includes the need to consider actions to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

Transgender

Transgendered people are explicitly covered by the gender equality duty. The term transgender refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. Schools must respect the confidentiality of those seeking gender re-assignment and provide a supportive environment within the school community.

Race Equality

The general duty to promote race equality means that schools must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to Ash Green because we are a maintained school. The Duty requires public bodies to demonstrate that they are taking action on equality in policymaking, the delivery of services and public sector employment. The duty requires public bodies to take steps not just to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, but also to actively promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. The duties also require schools to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the Duty
- Prepare and publish equality objectives

Where a school has 150 plus employees, data about these employees as well as pupil data will need to be published. In a school with fewer than 150 employees, only pupil related data will need to be published.

Socio-economic Duty

A public sector duty applies to 'authorities' who, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must consider how to reduce the inequality of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

Equality Terminology

The definitions given below relate to the terminology of the Equality Act 2010 and to its particular provisions:

Protected Characteristics

The Act protects people from discrimination and harassment based on the following 'protected characteristics':

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

Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is defined in the Act as:

- Direct discrimination (including discrimination based on perception or association).
- Indirect discrimination.
- Discrimination arising from disability.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people).

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when you treat a person less favourably than you treat or would treat another person because of a protected characteristic. So a very basic example would be refusing to admit a child to a school as a pupil because of their race or only allowing male members of staff to drive the school minibus. It is not possible to justify direct discrimination, so it will always be unlawful.

There are, however, exceptions to the schools' provisions that allow, for example, single-sex schools to only admit pupils of one sex without this being unlawful direct discrimination. There are also limited circumstances in which an employer might be able to make a case for a genuine occupational requirement for a job. For example, a school may be able to restrict applications for a PE teacher from applicants of a specified gender in terms of the duties of the role.

In order for someone to show that they have been directly discriminated against, they must compare what has happened to them to the treatment a person without their protected characteristic is receiving or would receive. They do not need to find an actual person to compare their treatment with but can rely on a hypothetical person if they can show there is evidence that such a person would be treated differently.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when you apply a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) in the same way for all people or for a particular group of people, but this has the effect of putting people sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. It doesn't matter that you did not intend to disadvantage those with a particular protected characteristic in this way. What does matter is whether your action does or would disadvantage such people compared with others who do not share that characteristic.

'Disadvantage' is not defined in the Act but may be understood to mean that a reasonable person would consider that disadvantage has occurred. It can take many different forms, such as denial of an opportunity or choice, deterrence, rejection or exclusion. Indirect discrimination will occur if **all** the following four conditions are met:

1. You apply (or would apply) the provision, criterion or practice equally to all, including a person with a protected characteristic, and
2. The provision, criterion or practice puts or would put those sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared to others who do not share that characteristic, and
3. The provision, criteria, practice or rule puts or would put the particular person at a disadvantage, and
4. You cannot show that the provision, criteria of practice is justified as a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

Positive Action

Those with protected characteristics may be disadvantaged for social or economic reasons or for reasons to do with past or present discrimination. The Act contains provisions that enable schools to take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of a, for example, a particular pupil group, provided certain conditions are met.

These are known as the positive action provisions and allow (but do not require) schools to take proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged pupil group.

Positive action is intended to be a measure that will allow schools to provide additional benefits to some pupils to address disadvantage and is not the same as positive discrimination. Positive discrimination would be providing preferential treatment for a particular disadvantaged pupil group that exceeded the positive action conditions. It is never unlawful to treat disabled pupils (or applicants) more favourably than non-disabled pupils (or applicants). That is, a school is permitted to positively discriminate in favour of disabled pupils (applicants).

'Proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'

To be legitimate, the aim of the provision, criterion or practice must be legal and non-discriminatory and represent a real objective consideration. In the context of school education, examples of legitimate aims might include:

- Maintaining academic and other standards.
- Ensuring the health and safety and welfare of pupils.

Even if the aim is legitimate the means of achieving it must be proportionate. Proportionate means 'appropriate and necessary', but 'necessary' does not mean that the provision, criterion or practice is the only possible way of achieving the legitimate aim. Although the financial cost of using a less discriminatory approach cannot, by itself, provide a justification, cost can be taken into account as part of the school's justification, if there are other good reasons for adopting the chosen practice.

Provision, Criterion or Practice (PCP)

These are not defined in the Act but can be interpreted widely and include:

- Arrangements (for example, for deciding who to admit or in preparing for a school trip)
- The way that education, or access to any benefit, service or facility is offered or provided
- One-off decisions
- Proposals or directions to do something in a particular way

They may be written out formally or they may just have developed as the school worked out the best way of achieving what it wanted to do.

Reasonable Adjustments

The reasonable adjustment duty requires steps to be taken to avoid disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage. For pupils this duty is owed to existing pupils, applicants and, in limited circumstances, to disabled former pupils in relation to the following areas:

- Deciding who is offered admission as a pupil
- The provision of education
- Access to any benefit, service or facility.

For employees and potential employees the duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that, as far as is reasonable, a disabled worker has the same access to everything that is involved in doing and keeping a job as a non-disabled person.

Schools cannot justify a failure to make a reasonable adjustment; where the duty arises, the issue will be whether or not an adjustment is 'reasonable' and this is an objective question for the tribunals to ultimately determine.