

Name	Single Equality Scheme
Issue date	13 th March 2019
Reviewed on	March 2019
Review date	March 2020
Owner	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Single Equality Scheme

Introduction

This document sets out an overarching framework for advancing equality and diversity at Portfield School. It includes a set of objectives to help us embed equality and diversity in all that we do. This has been developed within Autism Wessex's organisational framework in accordance with the Equality Act (2010) and related codes of practice.

Aims and objectives

Our Single Equality Policy affirms Portfield School's commitment to both the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the positive advancement and celebration of equality and diversity.

We believe that all people are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

We recognise that there are other forms of discrimination and commit to applying general principles of fairness, justice and equality for all. We will continue to work towards an environment where mutual cooperation, respect, dignity and trust are fostered.

Single Equality Statement

We value all members of our school community equally and aim to create a positive learning environment and provide opportunities which enable young people with differing abilities to achieve their potential.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging all forms of prejudice-based bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

We celebrate diversity amongst our students, staff and visitors and recognise the contribution which individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences can make to the life of school.

We recognise that some individuals and groups experience discrimination and disadvantage in their access to education, training and employment and are committed to policies and practices which promote equality and redress disadvantage within the current legislative framework. In particular, we believe that no individual or group should receive less favourable treatment as a consequence.

We actively promote British values in the context of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, through our pledge to be a Rights Respecting School and work towards being an International School.

Our commitment to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination extends to all.

What is the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan?

This Single Equality Scheme brings together the school's approach for promoting equality in our policies and procedures and, most importantly in our day to day practices and interactions with the whole school community and all those within our extended school community.

We acknowledge that it is very important for us all to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible and ultimately in providing a quality learning experience for our children and young people.

Our Single Equality Scheme and action plan integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability and gender and promoting community cohesion. The duties cover staff, students and people using the services of the school such as parents and carers.

It also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and therefore includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan enables us to achieve a framework for action which covers all six equality strands and ensures that we meet our responsibilities of the public sector duties in an inclusive and open way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by reporting annually on the progress of the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. This will be reviewed by the Local Governing Body and will cover activity undertaken in relation to the six equality strands and promoting community cohesion.

Statutory requirements

As a specific service within Autism Wessex, this scheme is set within an overarching corporate approach. Portfield School develops its own equality objectives within this framework. We are 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 'protected characteristics' that qualify for protection from discrimination.

Within the overarching corporate approach Livability 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 Local Governing Body acknowledges these areas of regulation and confirms its commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the school.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality within the school, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

The principles that inform our Equality Scheme

Meeting the duties will mean that all our actions will embody key principles and values, which include:

- Every student must be respected, valued and nurtured and their voice must be heard
- The individual young person must be at the centre of all we do
- We respect diversity. We know that treating people equally is not simply a matter of treating everyone the same.
- We recognise the importance of inclusion to the individual and the community and to taking the necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life
- We know that equalities are not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views, and seek to promote good relationships between all groups, and positive attitudes towards disabled people, people from different ethnic or cultural groups or faith backgrounds and people of different gender or sexual orientation.
- We value staff, parents/carers and governors for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the students in our school
- We are proactive in our efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities
- We seek the views of groups affected by the policies and work of our school, and try to involve them in policy review
- We recognise our role in promoting community cohesion, and actively encourage the participation in the community of all our learners in our school

Meeting our duties

Under the statutory duties all schools have responsibilities to promote race, disability and gender equality.

Ethnicity

The general duty to promote ethnicity means that we must have due regard to:

1. Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
2. Promote equality of opportunity
3. Promote good relations between people of different ethnic or cultural background

Disability equality

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

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. Eliminate unlawful discrimination
3. Eliminate disability related harassment
4. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
5. Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
6. Take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people

Accessibility

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

1. Increase access to the curriculum
2. Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access
3. Make written information accessible to pupils and others in a range of different ways
4. We must ensure that disabled pupils and others do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments

Gender equality

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

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and
2. Promote equality of opportunity between men and women, girls and boys.
3. 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 transgendered refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender. The school will respect the confidentiality of anyone seeking gender reassignment and will provide a supportive environment within its school community.

Appointment or promotion

We need to have a clear acknowledgement of equality duties when making appointments or promotion.

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

- a detailed role profile will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post
- an objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the role profile
- from these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up
- role profiles, 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
- all interview panel members must be trained in selection techniques
- at least one person on each panel will be trained in equality and the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation
- 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

We recognise that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. We will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this scheme. This is action designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

We will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but will take positive action which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis. Positive action measures may include:

- promoting flexible working where operational factors make this possible
- encouraging applications from specific groups which are under represented in the school
- encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts advertisements which encourage applications from individuals of a particular sexual orientation, or religion or belief, but make it clear that selection will be on merit
- supporting training measures for under-represented groups
- assistance with applications for candidates with language problems
- exploring the possibility of career breaks for women to assist with family commitments
- commitments to interviewing disabled people who meet the basic criteria for the post
- supporting staff to become representatives of trade unions/associations
- language/literacy training

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.

Similarly, the training of the school managers and governors in issues of equality and discrimination, is an essential part of our Equality policy.

Where training is scheduled to take place on site, the school will, where possible, adapt the methods of training delivery if current arrangements disadvantage particular individuals or groups of staff.

Marital status or civil partnership

We are opposed to any discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

Harassment or bullying

We are 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. We are 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

Hard to reach families

Hard to reach families / groups are offered individual home or off site visits by a supporting member of staff.

Student Involvement

We have strategies in place to promote the participation of students in decision-making and in making a positive contribution to school life. We will embed equality and inclusion into these strategies so that learners from diverse backgrounds are involved in shaping provision and improving practice.

We ensure that outcomes from these involvement activities are acted upon by the school's senior leadership team.

We involve all children through a whole school council. One member of the Senior Leadership Team will have specific responsibility for capturing pupil/student contribution through the School Council.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body will:

- Monitor the implementation of the Scheme and Action Plan to check progress and assess impact on staff, learners and parents. Ensure that all governors are aware of their legal responsibilities under equality legislation.
- Receive and discuss regular equality reports on progress and performance.
- Monitor achievement of equality targets.
- Check that implementation of the Scheme and Action Plan achieves improved outcomes for people who share an aspect of their identity in relation to race, disability, gender (including gender identity), age, sexual orientation, religion and belief

The Headteacher will:

- Provide proactive leadership to create a community that recognizes and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation
- Ensure staff, students, parents /carers and any other interested stakeholders are aware of this Scheme and their roles and responsibilities in implementing this Scheme
- Monitor to ensure effective implementation of the Scheme and Action plan
- Allocate appropriate responsibilities, and provide suitable training and development for staff to implement this Scheme

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Drive forward implementation of the Scheme and Action Plan
- Support staff to carry out their role in implementing this Scheme
- Provide effective leadership on equality, inclusion and community cohesion
- Ensure the Scheme is successfully promoted
- Respond in a timely and appropriate manner when dealing with any incidents or issues of discrimination, harassment or victimization
- Ensure equality issues form part of the staff induction programme

All staff will recognise that they have a role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to:

- promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and report these
- Highlight to the senior leadership team any staff training or development that they require to carry out the above role and respond appropriately

All staff will also ensure that students are encouraged to recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so that they understand and are able to:

- promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- work to promote anti-bullying strategies
- respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these

When is a child disabled?

The Equality Act states that someone is disabled if “they have a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

There are 3 important features of this definition:

- The impairment itself
- Its duration - whether it lasts for a year or more.
- Its effect on the person’s daily life

There are an additional two groups of children covered by the Act. These children do not have to prove their condition has a substantial adverse effect:

- children whose treatment (excluding glasses) offset the effect of the condition e.g. children on medication for epilepsy which is necessary to control the fits.
- children with cancer, HIV infection, progressive conditions such as muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis at the point of diagnosis are all taken as meeting the criteria without proving an adverse effect, together with children with severe disfigurement

Disability is not the same as special educational needs (SEN). Almost half the children with an SEN do not meet the DDA definition of disability. Children with SEN experience difficulties in learning in school but may not have an impairment that impacts substantially on their daily life. Similarly, a significant proportion of disabled children do not have special educational needs, including those with health and mental health needs.

Collecting and analysing equality information for students

We collect and analyse the following equality information for our students:

- The attainment of boys and girls against National expectations for students with learning difficulties
- The progress of children from ethnic backgrounds
- The progress of children who are Looked After and/or receive the Pupil Premium grant
- Attendance

Collecting and analysing equality information for employment and governance

Portfield School is committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

We also aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and governing body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to provide a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of our local population.

We are able to collect and analyse the following profile information for our staff and governors:

- Applicants for employment
- Staff profile
- Governing body profile
- Attendance on staff training events
- Exit interviews

Data is held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2008. Analysis of staff data would be carried out by The Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, Training Services Coordinator and Human Resources.

We have identified the following from our information gathering exercises:

- Most staff are female. Attracting the most suitable candidates whether they be male or female is the priority
- We should analyse whether our advertising for posts attracts a varied field of applicant

Consultation and involving people

We will involve pupils, staff, governors, parents /carers, and our wider school community in creating the Single Equality Scheme and action plan. This will help to ensure that the views of potentially disadvantaged groups are fully incorporated in the development of this Scheme and action plan. Examples may include:

- Discussions at student council
- Discussions at staff meetings
- Discussions at governing body meetings
- Involvement within local community activities

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality impact assessment is a systematic method of rigorously checking all school policies, procedures and practices to ensure they are genuinely accessible and meet the needs of our staff and the local community in relation to age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation. See Equality Impact Assessment Policy 2016. We will undertake equality impact assessments to identify the impact or effect (either negative or positive) of our policies, procedures and functions on various sections of the population. Where negative impacts are identified we then take steps to deal with this and make sure of equity of service to all.

Other School Policies and Procedures

We have used our existing school policies, procedures and guidance to inform our Single Equality Scheme. These include:

- School Development Plan
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Recruitment policies and procedures
- Equality Impact Assessments Procedure

Commissioning and Procurement

Portfield School is required by law to make sure that when we buy services from another organisation to help us provide our services, it is essential that the organisation complies with equality legislation. This requirement will inform our selection during any tendering process.

Ongoing involvement of our Scheme

We will continue to involve people from all aspects of our school community in the ongoing involvement of our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. This includes:

- A regular slot at School Council meetings to discuss equality and diversity issues
- An item at staff meetings
- Staff able to discuss equality and diversity matters during parent consultation meetings and/or be able to direct concerns to the appropriate person.
- Having school visits and events for the wider school community to celebrate the work of pupils and give the opportunity for feedback
- Regular surveys to gather information

Monitoring and review

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by analysing relevant information, evaluating it and carrying out the appropriate actions.

We will undertake Equality Impact Assessments on all relevant policies, procedures and practices in order to assess their impact on different groups of people with protected characteristics and to ensure that Portfield School's decisions and activities do not disadvantage protected groups.

Portfield School's implementation plan for the Single Equality Scheme sets out annual objectives and actions and includes milestones. Our equality objectives are developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders. We prepare and publish details of these.

We are aware of the need to review the Equality and Diversity Policy regularly to ensure we remain compliant.

Further sources of information:

Notes and guidance on the Equality Act 2010 can be found here:

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx (Equality Act)

www.equalityhumanrights.com (Guidance for employees, employers, service providers, service users and education providers)

Additional notes for completing Equality Impact Assessments:

Equality Impact Assessment Quick Start Guide from www.equalityhumanrights.com

Equality: Making It Happen

A guide to help schools ensure everyone is safe and included and learning