

# Somers Park Primary School



## Single Equalities Policy September 2016

Responsibility: Governing Body

Agreed: September 2016

Signed:

To be reviewed: September 2017

## **Legal Duties**

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

We understand the principle of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

A protected characteristic under the Act covers the groups listed below:

- age (for employees not for service provision)
- disability
- race (ethnicity)
- sex (gender)
- gender reassignment
- maternity and pregnancy
- religion or belief,
- sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

In order to meet our general duties, listed above, the law requires us to carry out some specific duties to demonstrate how we meet the general duties. These are to:

- Publish equality information – to demonstrate compliance with the general duty across its functions (We will not publish any information that can specifically identify any child)
- Prepare and publish equality objectives (Autumn 2016- for review Autumn 2020)

To do this we will collect data related to the protected characteristics above and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school. This will include the following areas:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Attainment
- Exclusions
- Prejudice related incidents

Our objectives will detail how we will promote equality in some or all of these areas. However where we find evidence of significant inequalities for any particular group in other areas we may include objectives to address these.

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

In fulfilling our legal obligations we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
- Consult and involve widely
- Strive to ensure that society will benefit

## Our Key Aims

- To develop successful learners who enjoy learning, make great progress and achieve.
- To develop confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
- To develop responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to the school, Somers Park and wider society.

## Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We ensure that both our pupils and staff have an awareness of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents. If incidents still occur we address them immediately and report them to the Local Authority using their guidance material. The Local Authority may provide some support.

## Responsibility

We believe that promoting equality is the whole school's responsibility:

<b>School Community</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Governing Body	Involving and engaging the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these. Monitoring progress towards achieving equality objectives. Publishing data and publishing equality objectives.
Head teacher	As above including: Promoting key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day to day duties. Ensuring that all school community receives adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.

School Community	Responsibility
Senior Management Team	To support the Head as above Leading on actions to achieve our equality objectives. Ensuring fair treatment and access to services and opportunities. Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Teaching Staff	Helping in delivering the right outcomes for pupils. Upholding the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated. Designing and delivering an inclusive curriculum Ensuring that they are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Non Teaching Staff	Supporting the school and the governing body in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders Upholding the commitment made by the head teacher/principal on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated Supporting colleagues within the school community Ensuring that they are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.
Parents	Taking an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these Taking an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment given to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.
Pupils	Helping the school to achieve the commitment made to tackling inequality. Upholding the commitment made by the head teacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated.
Local Community Members	Taking an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these Taking an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.

**We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Single Equality Policy and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the school website and in a parental newsletter.**

## **Breaches**

Breaches to this statement will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the head teacher and governing body.

## **Monitor and Review**

Every year we will review and report on our progress towards meeting our equality objectives. At least every four years, we will review our objectives, taking into account any changes in our school profile and other evidence of need. Our objectives will sit in our overall school improvement plan and therefore will be reviewed as part of this process.



## Equality statement for pupils

Our school is committed to equality. We try to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and has equality of opportunity. We also work to develop good relations between people from different groups. We recognise that in wider society, people are not always treated fairly, for example because of their: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy or maternity; ethnicity, colour or national origin; religion or belief; or, sexual orientation.

We try to make sure that our school is a safe and secure place for everyone. We do not put up with unfair treatment or bullying of any kind.

We recognise that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all the same. When people face particular difficulties they need extra support to help them achieve success and we try to do this for people in our school community.

We also try to make sure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking to pupils and parents/carers, and through our School Council.

Britain as a country is very committed to making society a fair place and the Government asks all schools to help with this. We are asked to set equality objectives and to make sure we review our progress every year and let people know how we are getting on. Our school has several equality objectives.

If you would like to know more about what our school is doing to create greater equality you can talk to our Headteacher, Mr Hansen.

# Equality statement of commitment for the whole school community (to accompany the full policy)



Somers Park Primary School welcomes our duties under the 2010 Equality Act to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity; and,
- foster good relations;

in relation to age (for adults), disability, gender, gender identity/reassignment, marriage/civil partnership (for discrimination), pregnancy/maternity, race (including ethnicity, colour or national origin), religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

In fulfilling these duties we are guided by nine principles:

1. All our learners, parents/carers, governors and staff are of equal value;
2. We recognise and respect difference and understand that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same, as different people have different needs;
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging;
4. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development;
5. We actively work to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist;
6. We consult and involve widely to ensure that those who are affected by our policies and activities are involved in the design of our work;
7. We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and participation in public life;
8. As required by the Act, we base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us – we maintain and publish information to show how we are meeting our duties and about our progress towards greater equality; and,
9. As required by the Act, we publish equality objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and the engagement with people from different groups, also taking into account national and local priorities and issues.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. Therefore we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan setting out how we shall pursue our objectives. We keep these under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

We ensure the nine principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles.

We have a full equality policy, available on request which explains:

- How we respond to prejudice and prejudice-related bullying
- Roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body and staff
- How we support religious observance
- How we support staff development
- How we respond to breaches of the policy
- Our approach to monitoring and evaluating the success of our policy



## Policy on racial and other prejudice-related incidents

### Introduction

Somers Park Primary School welcomes our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to a whole-school approach that will:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. advance equality of opportunity; and
3. foster good relations

in relation to all characteristics protected under the Act (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; 'race' which includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality; religion or belief; sex; and, sexual orientation).

This policy links to our anti-bullying policy and our overall approach to safeguarding. However, we recognise that there are prejudice-based incidents, for example racist or sexist comments, in which there is no particular victim, and therefore that prejudice-based incidents may not constitute bullying. Nevertheless we think such incidents are serious and need to be properly addressed, for the well-being of our school community, for pupils' educational development and for the health of society as a whole.

### Responding to prejudice-based incidents – general principles

We recognise that prejudice-based incidents are very varied, but must all be taken seriously in order to:

- reassure the targets/victims;
- ensure that incidents do not recur;
- ensure that all members of our school community understand that prejudice-based incidents are not acceptable; and,
- ensure that the school community as a whole remains safe.

Sometimes no overt racist or other discriminatory language may have been used and it may not be immediately apparent that an incident is based on prejudice. However we recognise that the Stephen Lawrence enquiry report recommended that for the purposes of reporting and recording, "a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person". This definition was proposed in order to ensure that incidents are always properly investigated and never treated lightly because the individual person to whom an incident is first reported is not sure that a particular incident was racist. We apply this

recommendation to all prejudice-based incidents. We therefore ensure that all prejudice-based incidents are recorded and properly investigated, and that appropriate and proportionate actions are taken.

Following the Stephen Lawrence enquiry report recommendations, Worcestershire County Council has a well-established system of racial incident reporting and we support this by reporting all incidents. The reporting form contains a list of the many different types of racial incidents, including name calling, racist statements, racist jokes, assault, damage to property, graffiti, social exclusion and spreading malicious rumours. The form also highlights the fact that incidents might be verbal or written and may include use of text messaging or other technology.

Our approach to prejudice-based incidents links closely with our approach to all bullying, which we always address robustly. We also recognise that there are features of racism and other prejudice-based behaviour that can make it particularly hurtful and damaging. Some of the features of racism have been summarised in national guidance and many of these apply to a large extent to other types of prejudice-based behaviour, such as sexism, homophobia and prejudice based on disability. These features include:

- Racism has a long history affecting millions of people and is a common feature in wider society. People are seriously harmed and injured by it.
- Most bullying involves a series of incidents over time. In the case of racist bullying, however, a single one-off incident may have precisely the same impact as a series of incidents over time. This is because it may be experienced by the person at the receiving end as part of a general pattern of racist hostility. It can in consequence be every bit as intimidating, rejecting and hurtful as a series of events over time.
- Racist words and behaviour are experienced as attacks on the values, loyalties and commitments central to a person's sense of identity and self-worth.
- A distinctive feature of racist bullying or insults is that a person is targeted not as an individual, as in most other types of bullying, but as the representative of a family, community or group. Other members of the same group, family or community can therefore be made to feel threatened and intimidated as well. People who experience racism may feel they have to stand up against it not just for their own sake but on behalf of their family and community and there is an increased danger of cycles of verbal abuse and possibly violence developing.
- The law of the land recognises the seriousness of racism by requiring that courts should impose higher sentences when an offence is aggravated by racist hostility. It is therefore important that children and young people showing racist attitudes are helped to understand the seriousness of racism so that they do not suffer the consequences of this in later life.

## **Responding to prejudice-based incidents – our approach**

Our approach to responding to individual incidents and in particular the sanctions we take will vary depending on several factors, including which of the following broad categories the incident falls into:

- 1) No offence was intended or taken;
- 2) Hurt or distress was caused, but the offending behaviour is unlikely to be repeated;

- 3) Hurt or distress was caused, and the children and young people (or adults) responsible, had previously been warned that their behaviour was unacceptable;
- 4) Substantial hurt or distress was caused; the behaviour was based on substantial hostility and prejudice; the behaviour may be repeated.

As stated above, we are never dismissive about incidents, for example ignoring or making light of them. Nor do we take a merely punitive approach – expressing disapproval or punishing without complementary teaching and learning about why prejudice-based incidents are wrong, or why comments/actions have caused hurt.

We always ensure we take the time to help children and young people understand why prejudice-based behaviour is wrong and wherever appropriate we use restorative approaches, which include: supporting the victim(s) by attending to the needs of those on the receiving end of prejudice; preventing re-offending by enabling offenders to assume active responsibility for their actions and reintegrating them into the school community; avoiding escalation; and, repairing and recreating the community damaged by the bullying or other prejudice-based behaviour.

We also ensure that we keep parents/carers informed about prejudice-based incidents that have affected their children and the outcomes of investigations into such incidents.

### **Staff responsibilities for responding to prejudice-based incidents**

Promoting equality and responding appropriately to prejudice-based incidents is the responsibility of the whole school community and we try to ensure that all members of the community are aware of their responsibilities and support the school's ethos.

The **governing body** is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. It monitors prejudice-based incidents on an annual basis and ensures that where appropriate this review informs future planning.

The **headteacher** is responsible for implementing the policy and for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities (through the staff handbook and other information sharing) and are given appropriate training and support. The headteacher also has responsibility for investigating prejudice-based incidents, contacting the local authority for advice where necessary, taking appropriate action including keeping parents/carers informed of the outcomes of investigations and reporting racial incidents to the Local Authority (though this responsibility may be delegated to other senior managers).

All **teachers and other staff** are expected to respond appropriately to any prejudice-based incidents that may occur, indicating why such behaviour is not acceptable. They also ensure that incidents are reported quickly to the headteacher and/or other senior staff. Staff know that whenever an incident is reported to them by someone else as racist or based on other prejudices, or whenever they themselves think it may be prejudice-based, they must report it to senior staff. Information for staff on their responsibilities is in our staff handbook.

All **pupils** are encouraged to treat each other, and other people they meet, with respect, and to report any prejudice-based incidents to an adult.

All **parents/carers** are made aware of this policy and encouraged to report any prejudice-based incidents to a staff member. They are encouraged to support the school's ethos and aims through their interaction with children.