



Soaring Skies
Federation



Soaring Skies Federation

Colvestone Primary School and
Thomas Fairchild Community School

Equalities Policy

Equalities Policy Statement

Introduction

Soaring Skies is an inclusive federation where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

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.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles

- 1. All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- 2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- 4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- 5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
- 6. We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
- 7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Equality Information

Throughout all aspects of the curriculum Soaring Skies promotes tolerance and friendship and we share an understanding of a range of religions and cultures. In September 2015, we introduced our whole school values that are re-in forced day to day and through our whole school assemblies. The values are: Tolerance, Harmony, Openness, Morals, Aspirations, Safety, Fairness, Acceptance, Independence, Respect, Charity, Heritage, Individuality, Lifelong Learners, Democracy, Vote, Equality, Origin, Neighbourly, Enrichment.

Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

Age and marriage and civil partnership are also “protected characteristics” but are not part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties

The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

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

Two “specific duties”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012
2. Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

In May 2014 the Department for Education produced a non-statutory advisory document for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities. It was produced to help schools to understand how the Equality Act (2010) affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act. It was updated to include information on same sex marriage.

No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education, and to meet duties under equality and human rights law.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations

Development of the policy

This policy was developed in consultation with pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers. It is part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing an inclusive school.

When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the OFSTED Inspection Framework 2019, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards whilst also taking full account of policy and practise regarding safeguarding, the ‘Prevent’ strategy, equality and diversity.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 are also included in our school development plan, self-evaluation review, school web site and newsletters.

There are references in the behaviour, admission, SEND and anti-bullying policies as well as the minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and the school council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The Executive Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day today life of the school. We make a record of each specific equality consideration and this is available for review if required.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all. (Equality and Respect are two of our federation's values).
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity/paternity status.

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The school Policy on Behaviour - Rewards, Sanctions and Exclusions - takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act 2010. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

Fixed Term or Permanent Exclusions

The decision to impose exclusion is at the Executive Headteacher's discretion, every effort is made to inform parents/carers of the decision to exclude immediately. Exclusion is the last resort and will only be issued where a range of support strategies have been exhausted. They will only be issued:

- In response to a serious or persistent breach of the school's behaviour policy;
- Where allowing pupils to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupils or others in the school.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs, including mental health needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

All prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously. We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.
- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings.
- We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.

We collect, analyse and publish data:

- on the school population by gender and ethnicity;
- on the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability and by their principal need or disability;
- by year group – in terms of ethnicity, gender and proficiency in English;
- on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, gender and disability and proficiency in English

We publish an analysis of standards reached by different groups at the end of each key stage:

- White British FSM and non-FSM
- Bangladeshi
- Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Free School Meals
- EAL
- All SEND
- School Support and SEND statement/Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Looked after Children
- Pupil Premium (PP)
- We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups
- This data can be found in the Equality Data Analysis in the school office.
- We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future pupils – we will for example, be sufficiently prepared if a Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired or Irish/Gypsy Roma Traveller pupil joins our school.
- We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any pupils' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as 'less able'. Children are given the option to select 'Novice', 'Apprentice' and 'Practitioner' learning opportunities based on their confidence levels with new concepts.
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.
- We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving.
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as ability, race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impact by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys
- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

Positive Action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the school's Equality Objectives.

What we are doing to foster good relations

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through Social, Moral, Religious Education and Citizenship (SMRC) and across the curriculum (See updated guidance 2019).
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events e.g. 'Anti-bullying Week' and International Food Evenings.
- We include equalities matters in our newsletters to parents and Carers

Other ways we address equality issues.

We maintain records of all training relating to equalities.

Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of equalities.

We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and wellbeing of our pupils.

The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we:

- review relevant feedback from the parents'/carers evening, parent-school forum and/or focus meetings or governors' parent/carer consultation meeting
- secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events
- review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, from the school council, SMRC lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school;
- analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on School Support Plans (SSPs), mentoring and support;
- ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and from the governing body's working groups.

Publishing Equality Objectives (see Equality Action Plan/ School Development Plan)

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and values are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we **achieve improved outcomes** for the different groups. We produce Equality Data Analysis which inform our discussions about the Equality Objectives.

Our Federation Equality Objectives are:

- To review and adjust school curriculum plan to ensure progression in learning across the school is clearly identified in each subject strand
- To develop further provision for the teaching of reading and comprehension in KS2 so that pupils make accelerated progress in reading
- To develop further the quality of teaching and teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics so that improved rates of progress can be seen across KS2
- To develop leadership at all levels so that all leaders have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities so that can evaluate the impact of their work more accurately
- To embed our new SMRC curriculum which is in line with the objectives set out in Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019)

We produce an Equality Action Plan that shows how we will achieve our objectives. This is part of our school development plan.

Monitoring and reviewing objectives

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers.

We publish an evaluation of the success in meeting these objectives for parents and carers, on the school website.

Acts of worship

There is a general exception, which applies to all schools, to the religion or belief provisions which allows all schools to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance. This means the daily act of collective worship, which for maintained schools is mandatory and should be of a broadly Christian nature, is not covered by the religion or belief provisions. The Equality exception means that schools will not be acting unlawfully if they do not provide an equivalent act of worship for other faiths.

Schools are also free to celebrate religious festivals and could not be claimed to be discriminating against children of other faiths if, for example, they put on a nativity play at Christmas or hold a celebration to mark other religious festivals such as Diwali or Eid.

Segregating pupils by race or ethnicity

Segregation of pupils by race is always direct discrimination. It would thus be unlawful for a school to put children into sets, or into different sports in PE classes, according to their ethnicity. This stipulation in the Act is to make it clear that claims that segregated treatment is “separate but equal” cannot be sustained where race is concerned. It does not mean that schools cannot take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting children of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

Uniforms

The Equality Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or other aspects of appearance such as hair colour and style, and the wearing of jewellery and make-up, but the general requirement not to discriminate in the treatment of pupils applies here as in relation to other aspects of school policy. It is for the governing body of a school to decide whether there should be a school uniform and other rules relating to appearance, and if so what they should be. This flows from the duties placed upon the governing body by statute to manage the school. Both schools in the Soaring Skies Federation have a school uniform which pupils are encouraged to wear.

Gender reassignment

Protection from discrimination because of gender reassignment in schools is new for pupils in the Equality Act, although school staff are already protected. It is unlawful for schools to treat pupils less favourably because of their gender reassignment.

Gender reassignment is defined in the Equality Act as applying to anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes. This definition means that in order to be protected under the Act, a pupil will not necessarily have to be undertaking a medical procedure to change their sex but must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender, or proposing to do so. The protection against discrimination because of gender reassignment now matches the protection because of sexual orientation in schools. That is protection from direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation, which includes discrimination based on perception and on association.

We will ensure that all gender variant pupils, or the children of transgender parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. It is relatively rare for pupils – particularly very young pupils to want to undergo gender reassignment, but when a pupil does so a number of issues will arise and these will be sensitively handled.

Sex/gender

Soaring Skies will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. We will check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of boys or girls. For example, it would be unlawful for a school to require girls to learn needlework while giving boys the choice between needlework and woodwork classes.

Sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership

Soaring Skies will ensure that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. We will check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such pupils. For example, it would be unlawful for a school to refuse to let a homosexual pupil become a prefect because of his sexual orientation.

Teaching about marriage must be done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. Teachers are subject to professional requirements, the school curriculum, school policies, and anti-discrimination duties towards colleagues and pupils.

No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education, and to meet duties under equality and human rights law.

Disability

The disability provisions in this Act are different from those for other protected characteristics in a number of ways.

The overriding principle of equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment - i.e. that you must treat a black person no less well than a white person, or a man as favourably as a woman. However, the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and may have to make changes to your practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what you offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can. So in a school setting the general principle is that you have to treat male and female, black and white, homosexual and heterosexual pupils equally - but you may be required to treat disabled pupils differently. Discrimination is also defined rather differently in relation to disability Provisions relating to disability.

The disability provisions in the Equality Act (2010) mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995). There are some minor differences as follows:

- Unlike the DDA the Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must demonstrate that they cannot carry out, thus making the definition of disability less restrictive for disabled people to meet.
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified. The fact that it must be reasonable provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be defended as justified – bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally.
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities have a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements or from other sources. In practice this will already be being done in many cases.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Governing body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's Equalities Work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

Executive Headteacher and Leadership team

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. S/he will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

Key contacts

Staff responsible for equalities: Jo Ryan, Deputy Headteacher - Inclusion Manager

Lead governor: Dona Henriques

Equal Opportunities for staff: This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

- All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.
- We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

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

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available as paper copies in the school office, on display for visitors, including parents and carers.

We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

Complaints

Complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure.

The Learning Trust has adopted this policy from the Camden Local Authority policy for the purposes of advising its own schools.

The Learning Trust acknowledges the Camden Local Authority's copyright in the document and has sought permission for all changes relating to Hackney Schools contained in this document.

Policy written	October 2017
Policy reviewed	September 2019
Adopted by Governing Body	September 2019
Review date	September 2020

APPENDIX ONE

Check list for school staff and governors

Criteria	Tick
The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training	
This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides	
The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders	
The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties	
The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need	
The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives	
A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes	
The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy	
The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy	
The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference	
All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the school council	
The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern	
Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community	
Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies	
The school takes part in annual events such Anti-Bullying Week, National Autism Week, World Book Day etc. to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender	
The school environment is increasingly accessible possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school – including the acoustic environment	
Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered	
The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information	
The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves. Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled	

