

Oaks Park High School

Title of Policy:	Equality
Person responsible:	J Hamill
Date for review:	2017

Context

Oaks Park is an inclusive school which focuses on the wellbeing and progress of every child. 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. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and under-achievement within differing 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 Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

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

- 1. All learners are of equal value** whether they are disabled; whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status; gender and gender identity; religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and sexual orientation.
- 2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove the barriers and disadvantages 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 who learn, teach and visit the school.
- 3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between different groups and communities.
- 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 equality practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including recruitment and promotion and continuing professional development (CPD).
- 6. We have the highest expectations of all students.** We expect all students to make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
- 7. We work to raise standards for all students - especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

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 students or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. 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 relationships between different groups.

Aims of our School

Broad Principles

Our school motto is *'Learning Together, Achieving Together'*. As a school we are committed to:

- raising the attainment of all students;
- creating a caring, supportive environment in which each student feels secure and valued;
- promoting equality of opportunity in every aspect of school life;
- providing all students with the opportunity to reach their full potential;
- ensuring that all students respect and view positively the differences in others arising from race, gender, ability and disability;
- actively promoting the value of the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the community we serve;
- challenging discrimination and harassment in whatever form;
- ensuring that all incidents of discrimination and harassment are reported and recorded in line with school policy;
- actively promoting good relations between all groups in all aspects of school life.

Leadership, Management & Governance

Commitments

Governors and staff are committed to:

- actively tackling and eliminating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities;
- encouraging, supporting and helping all students and staff to reach their potential;
- working with parents/carers and the wider community to tackle racial discrimination and follow and promote good practice;
- ensuring that the Equality Policy and its procedures are followed.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

Ensuring that:

- the school complies with legislation;
- this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

Responsibilities (cont.)

Headteacher

- Implementing the policy and its related procedures and strategies.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive appropriate training and support.
- Taking appropriate action in any cases of discrimination.

All Staff

- Dealing with racist incidents. Knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good relations and not discriminating on any grounds.
- Keeping up to date with legislation by attending training and information opportunities.

Students

Students should:

- understand the main principles of the school's Equality Policy;
- have, as appropriate, a role in supporting, communicating and implementing the school's Equality Policy.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to understand and support the Equality Policy.

Visitors and Contractors

Visitors and contractors should be aware of and comply with the schools Equality Policy.

Note:

The governor with special responsibility for the Equality Policy is responsible for coordinating the governors' work on Equality.

The Chair of Governors is responsible for receiving and responding to, on behalf of the governing body, complaints about discrimination or harassment in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

Disability Equality Scheme

Oaks Park High School will:

Promote equality of opportunity for disabled staff, students and parents/carers by:

- working proactively to incorporate adjustments for disabled students, staff and parents/carers into policy and whole school practices;
- ensuring increasing access to the school's curriculum, the physical environment and to written information through the Accessibility Plan. The Disability Equality Scheme will be reviewed simultaneously with the Accessibility Plan to ensure the principles of disability equality are fulfilled.

Eliminate unlawful discrimination under the Disability Discrimination Act by:

- raising awareness of disability issues, providing training on relevant adjustments and encouraging sharing of good practice;
- reviewing and adjusting the school's policy and practice;
- raising expectations amongst all those working with disabled students, staff and parents/carers.

Eliminate harassment of disabled staff, students and parents/carers related to their disability by:

- raising awareness amongst staff and students of disability-related harassment;
- raising awareness of the importance of reporting possible bullying, however mild it may seem, to people without a disability;
- involving students themselves in combating bullying.

Disability Equality Scheme (cont.)

Promote positive attitudes towards disabled staff, students and parents/carers:

- through assemblies and the PSHE curriculum;
- through staff meetings;
- at parents' evenings;
- by displaying positive images of disabled people throughout the school.

Encourage participation by disabled staff, students and parents/carers in school life by:

- proactively seeking representation of disabled students, staff and parents/carers on the School Council and any of its committees;

- supporting disabled people who offer feedback to disabled students, staff and parents/carers to ensure that they feel confident in putting themselves forward for future participation;
- including information on the involvement of disabled people in the school's prospectus and newsletters;
- taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme

Overall responsibility for the scheme will rest with the Governing Body. The Governor's Curriculum Committee will consider the progress of the scheme and report on an annual basis to the Governing Body (Autumn Term).

Governors will review current and future policies and plans to ensure that they fulfil the 6 principles of the Disability Equality Scheme as follows:

- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled staff, students and parents.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled staff, students and parents/carers which is related to their disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled staff, students and parent/carers.
- Encourage participation by disabled staff, students and parents/carers in school life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The Headteacher, together with senior members of staff, will take responsibility for ensuring that relevant aspects of the scheme are incorporated into and acted upon in the school's policies and development plans. Steps will be taken to meet the needs of disabled staff, students and parents/carers, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

In reviewing policies and development plans the school will consider whether:

- there is any evidence to show higher or lower take-up or participation by different groups;
- there is any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy;
- there are opportunities to promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the policy.

The school will have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals, when particular policies or functions create problems that are specific to them.

Publication and Review

The Disability Equality Scheme will be reviewed alongside the school's Accessibility Plan, which sets out how the school intends to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- improve the delivery to disabled students of written information which is provided to students who are not disabled.

Disability Equality Scheme (cont.)

Publication and Review

The Curriculum and Finance & Personnel Committees will be involved in the review of both documents and will advise on wider involvement in the Disabled Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan.

L GLEESON 1/1/1970 08:00

Comment [1]: This needs to be done. Please add to finance and personnel committee agendas. I have added it to curriculum