

Equality Policy

This policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the SEN Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

This Equality Policy for Garden City Academy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around Equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender, SEN and Disability. It includes all the Protected Characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community.

The Equality Act protects pupils, staff and parents from discrimination and harassment based on the ‘Protected Characteristics’ of:

· Disability;

· Gender reassignment;

· Pregnancy and maternity;

· Race;

· Religion or belief;

· Sexual orientation.

**Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children’s educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community, pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies; who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to our General Equality Duty (under the Act). It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

**LEGAL BACKGROUND: Overall aims of our Equality Policy**

Our General Duty under the Equality Act 2010 is:

* To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
* To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
* To promote positive attitudes to difference and foster good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.
* To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life, the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes.

Our specific duty requires us to publish information annually and to review this policy

and its objectives every year.

**Our approach**

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members ofour school community, within all aspects of school life.

**We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:**

· Shared Humanity. Identifying and valuing commonality and shared values.

· Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.

· Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.

· Social cohesion within our school and within our local community.

· Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, for all.

· Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.

· Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

**Our Vision Statement about Equality**

Our schools seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

· All learners and their families are equally valued

· We recognise and respect differences

· We foster positive attitudes and relationships

· We strive to have good equality practices in staff recruitment, retention and development

· We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers

We recognise and respect that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive, through reasonable adjustments, to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and foster positive attitudes and learning between and towards others, to create cohesive communities.

**Our Duties**

We recognise and accept our Equality Duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

We recognise that our duties reflect international human rights standards, guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

**The roles and responsibilities within our school community**

Our Headteacher will:

· ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy

· oversee the effective implementation of the policy

· ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy

· develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school’s actions are in line with the best advice available

· monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information

· ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our Governing Body will:

· designate a governor with specific responsibility for reporting on the Equality Policy annually

· ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan and monitor progress within the school’s self-evaluation and review process

· support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

· have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy

· provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy

· with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues

Our Pupils will:

· be involved in development of the objectives

· be expected to act in accordance with the Policy

· be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our Parents/Carers will:

· be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy

· have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements

· be encouraged to actively support the Policy

· be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Our School Staff will:

· be involved in the development and review of the Policy

· provide all pupils with equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life

· understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy

· make known any queries or training requirements

· report any known or perceived harassment or victimisation to the Headteacher

Community groups and partner agencies will:

· Be invited to be involved in the development of the Policy, and especially the objectives

· Be encouraged to support the Policy

· Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

**How we developed our Policy - Participation and Involvement**

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this. We collect data to help analyse the effects of our policy on protected groups. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil voice, less formally or even anonymously.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. This includes our work with outside agencies such as Health, CAMHs, North Herts. Education Support Centre, The Grange SPLD Base, Woolgrove MLD Outreach, Attendance Improvement Officer and our local community police.

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, office and site staff and student teachers) from discrimination based on the Protected Characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators. We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers; TAs; Mid-day Supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination on the grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. With regard to disability we make reasonable adjustments as necessary to prevent a disable person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

We will provide regular training to staff to help them understand their equality duties and the differing needs of protected groups within our school community and to help them to deal with any possible prejudice related incidents.

**Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying**

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (actual or perceived), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate and prejudice based incidents or bullying, be they actual or perceived. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities. Data will be published annually via our website on the occurrence of such incidents, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act.

**Embedding Equality**

We look for ways to challenge stereotypical views and to increase awareness of the range of diversity in our school community, thus normalising it and preparing our pupils for a life in a diverse society. We offer equality opportunities throughout our curriculum to develop children’s knowledge and understanding.

Updated by Rachael Stevenson

Deputy Headteacher May 2018

**Ratifed by Governors:**

Review date: