Lytchett Matravers Primary School & Preschool

Equalities Policy

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1. History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
Oct 26		Annual Review	

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3. Introduction

Lytchett Matravers Primary School & Preschool welcomes our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture. For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Hamwic Equalities Policy.

National and Legal Context

We recognise our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. In relation to pupils receiving education, the relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Age and marriage or civil partnership relate primarily to employment duties and are not generally protected characteristics in relation to pupils receiving education. Employment matters are addressed through the Hamwic Education Trust equality policies.

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

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

School Context

We collect equality information and this can be referenced in the appendices of this statement.

Principles

To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by several principles. All pupils, families and staff are of equal value.

We see all pupils, potential pupils, their parents and carers, and staff as of equal value: -

• Whether they are disabled

- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their sex or whether they have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age
- Whether they have a connection with the forces community
- Whether or not English is their first language
- Whether or not they have refugee/asylum status
- We recognise and respect difference

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics: -

- Disability – we note that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Sex and gender reassignment – we recognise that pupils may have different needs and must not experience unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Religion and belief – we note that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we note that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – relevant primarily to employment equality duties
- Sexual orientation – pupils and members of the school community must not experience disadvantage, discrimination or harassment because of their sexual orientation
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage because of pregnancy or having recently given birth

- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote: -

- positive attitudes and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff and follow the Hamwic Education Trust's Disability and Equality policy. We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff). We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other. We consult and involve, to ensure that views are heard.

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are considered. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

We aim to foster greater community cohesion. We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

We base our practices on sound evidence. We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information can be found in Appendix A to this policy statement.

We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives. We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in Appendix B to this policy statement and consider both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Application of the public sector equality duty

The three statutory aims inform all areas of school life, including:

- admissions and attendance;
- curriculum access;
- attainment and progress;
- behaviour, suspensions and permanent exclusions;

- safeguarding;
- participation in trips, clubs and wider opportunities; and
- policy development and decision-making.

4. Curriculum, teaching and wider opportunities

The school will actively identify and address bias and stereotyping in teaching, learning and the wider curriculum. Resources will be selected and reviewed so that they reflect diversity appropriately. We will provide equitable access to the curriculum, enrichment, trips, clubs and wider opportunities; foster respectful discussion, positive relationships and a sense of belonging; and take proportionate positive action where evidence shows that particular groups experience disadvantage.

5. Reasonable adjustments

The school will take reasonable steps to avoid disabled pupils being placed at a substantial disadvantage. This duty applies to curriculum access, classroom organisation, timetabling, facilities, trips, clubs and wider school activities.

We will proactively consider individual needs and, where reasonable, provide auxiliary aids and services. Decisions will be informed by consultation with the pupil, parents or carers, the SENCO and other relevant professionals. Further information is set out in the school accessibility plan and SEND arrangements.

6. Uniform and admissions

Uniform expectations will be applied consistently. The school will consider reasonable adjustments linked to disability and reasonable requests arising from sincerely held religious belief. Admissions criteria will be applied consistently and without unlawful discrimination. Decisions will be made individually, with appropriate regard to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety and the rights and dignity of others.

7. Behaviour, suspensions and permanent exclusions

Before imposing a sanction, the school will consider whether the behaviour may be linked to disability or additional need; whether appropriate support was in place; whether reasonable adjustments are required; and whether the proposed sanction is proportionate. The school will monitor behaviour, suspension and permanent exclusion information to identify any disproportionate impact on groups of pupils and will take action where patterns of concern emerge.

8. Gender reassignment and gender-questioning pupils

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. A pupil may have this protected characteristic where they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process to reassign their sex; medical treatment is not required. Gender questioning is a wider term and does not automatically mean that a pupil has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

The school will respond sensitively and, on an individual, child-centred basis. The pupil's welfare and safeguarding will be paramount, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved where appropriate. Parents or carers will normally be involved unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that doing so may create a risk of significant harm; in those circumstances, the DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

Any decisions about names, records, privacy, toilets, changing arrangements or residential visits will be considered individually, recorded with reasons, kept confidential on a need-to-know basis and reviewed when circumstances change. The school will have regard to safeguarding, biological sex where relevant, privacy, dignity and the rights of other pupils. The lawful beliefs and dignity of all members of the school community will be respected, and bullying, harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated.

This is a legally sensitive and developing area. This section and any related school decisions must be checked against current Trust legal advice before publication or implementation.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics.

Discriminatory, prejudice-related, bullying and harassment incidents must be reported promptly, recorded consistently, investigated and addressed. Parents or carers will be informed where appropriate. The school will analyse incidents for patterns and report relevant information to governors and the Trust through agreed monitoring arrangements.

Roles and responsibilities

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 and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises. This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Governing Body in conjunction with its equality objectives every four years.

The headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:-

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons
- support pupils in their class who have additional needs

Appendix A Equalities Information

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We consider how well we achieve these aims in relation to disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Age and marriage or civil partnership relate primarily to employment duties and are not generally protected characteristics in relation to pupils receiving education.

We have also involved staff, pupils, parents and others in the following ways:

- Parent questionnaires
- Staff survey
- Contact with parents representing pupils with particular protected characteristics

Proportionate review of equality information

The school will proportionately review relevant information to understand inequalities, identify barriers and inform improvement. This will include, where appropriate:

- pupil outcomes;
- attendance;
- suspensions and permanent exclusions;
- behaviour and safeguarding information;
- bullying, harassment and prejudice-related incidents;
- access to enrichment and wider opportunities; and
- patterns affecting pupils who share protected characteristics.

Monitoring will be proportionate. The school will not collect or retain more personal data than is necessary for this purpose and will handle information in accordance with data protection requirements.

Further Performance Data can be found in the Statutory Information section on our Website.
The school has published various policies on the school's internet site, such as the SEN report, behaviour policy, attendance policy, safeguarding and child protection policies and our curriculum information. These policies evidence the school's commitment to the principles outlined in this policy and the public sector equality duty.

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Appendix B Equality Objectives

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We have considered how well we achieve these aims in relation to disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Age and marriage or civil partnership relate primarily to employment duties and are not generally protected characteristics in relation to pupils receiving education.

Having referred to and analysed our equality information, we have set ourselves the following objective(s):

Objective 1: Protected Characteristic: Religion
To widen pupils' understanding of the range of faiths, cultures and traditions within and beyond the school community.
Milestones:
Term by term – audit resources for teaching. Ask – where do pupils see themselves and their lives in the place that they learn?
Communicate changes to parents

Objective 2: Protected Characteristic: Disability
To reduce the number of days children with vulnerabilities / SEND miss school, focusing particularly on those who are persistently absent.
Milestones:
Baseline audit of wider curriculum opportunities across the school, identify potential barriers.
Engage staff in identifying how barriers can be eliminated – what adjustments can be made?
Set a protocol for all opportunities about engagement for all.

Objective 3: Protected Characteristic: Disability
To ensure full access to curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for children with physical disabilities, including related to their sight / hearing.
Milestones:
Baseline audit and make changes. Consider all aspects of positive disability examples i.e. through sport.

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