



# Mountjoy School

## Equal Opportunities Policy

**January 2021**

Reviewed by SLT & FGB

Date: January 2021

Date of next review: January 2022

At Mountjoy school we are a passionate, respectful, optimistic, understanding and determined learning community where everyone is enabled to achieve the most they can, progress as far as they can and learn the most that they can.

Mountjoy School is committed to Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools project and has explicitly adopted a child rights approach based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and has embedded it in school policy, practice and culture (UNCRC Articles 23, 28 and 29). Our Equality Opportunities Policy is essential in ensuring that this can happen.

- We promote and value diversity
- We promote and value human rights
- We challenge stereotypes

### **Definitions**

At Mountjoy, "equality" is about opportunity, access, participation and contribution on a fair and equal footing and providing a framework for this to happen.

The term "diversity" acknowledges there are differences between people and the school values and respects the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values and beliefs of its community.

### **Aims**

- To enable all members of our school community regardless of race, gender, disability, social background, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity or age to have the opportunities to develop in every area of our school life to the highest level
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils
- To encourage respect and tolerance for others, their faith, culture and way of life
- To provide a clear statement about the school's commitment to promoting equality and diversity within employment. This policy should be read alongside the Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Mountjoy's ethos, policies and practices respect and protect the rights of all individuals and promote positive action to ensure that all pupils, staff, parents, carers and volunteers within the Mountjoy community are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities.

At Mountjoy, we fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and take account of the updated guidance from the DfE published in May 2014.

This policy ensures, we will:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

### **Equality at Mountjoy School**

At Mountjoy School all pupils can be described as having a disability 'as the act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long term effect and adverse on that person's ability to carry out normal and everyday activities.'"

As a special school we believe we have a key responsibility in the area of disability equality.

Our mission statement includes the following principle:

'Making a difference today for tomorrow.'

This includes teaching and learning about rights and through rights in a way which pupils understand and experience is central to the ethos at Mountjoy, so that they become aware of their own rights and the rights of others.

The Equality Act enshrines equal treatment for all but makes clear that disability discrimination is different and that those with disabilities should be treated 'more favourably than a person who is not disabled.' (The Equality Act 2010 and schools, 4.2 pg. 24)

In order to ensure equal opportunities for all we ensure there is no discrimination, harassment or victimisation to pupils, potential pupils, staff, parents and volunteers. We do this by reviewing our work in the following areas:

- Policy, Leadership and Management
- Provision of education (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Assessment)
- Admissions, Attendance, Positive Behaviour Management and Exclusion
- Pupils Personal Development, Attainment and Progress (MAPs)
- Attitudes, Environment and access to any benefit, facility or service
- Parents, Governors and Community Partnership, including multi-agency partners
- Staffing – Recruitment, Training and Professional Development
- Pupil Voice and Participation (School Council)

At Mountjoy we take positive steps to ensure the continued development of equal opportunities throughout the school.

### **School Environment**

The site is designed to ensure access for all and physical resources are made available to allow full access to the curriculum as required and to meet the needs of all our pupils.

There will always be sufficient staff on duty to ensure children are in a safe environment.

In the playground pupils will be encouraged to play together. Our staff lead and model play activities to promote positive play and appropriate behaviour.

### **Learning**

We organise and deliver a curriculum which ensures equal participation by pupils of both sexes in all the elements of learning, knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

We encourage positive attitudes towards everyone.

We celebrate racial and cultural diversity.

We plan the curriculum and its delivery to take into account the age, ability, gender, ethnicity, background and SEN of pupils.

We ensure our children are prepared to be included in society, regardless of their needs or disabilities.

We expect all staff to ensure that classes are an inclusive environment and that all contributions are valued.

Teachers ensure the tasks set meet the needs of all pupils with whom they are working.

Teachers communicate using a wide variety of methods and the school constantly reflects on and improves its practice in this area alongside our Speech and Language Therapist.

Challenging, individually appropriate targets are set for all children to encourage them to learn as much as they can, progress as far as they can and achieve the most that they can at a given time.

We aim to minimise the effect on pupils' learning of social and economic deprivation and target our Pupil Premium Grants at those pupils who may be affected most by this.

The school has an inclusive approach to educational visits and risk assessments are carried out beforehand to ensure full access for all pupils and staff.

We pay full attention to the physical needs of the children and work in collaboration with NHS therapists.

## **Pupil Organisation**

We take into account pupil need when organising class groups and do not organise them due to any of the protected characteristics such as gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Some pupils with profound needs who need to follow a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) curriculum are taught in groups with a high degree of staffing and expertise in this cohort of pupils.

We prevent discrimination, harassment or bullying on the basis of the following 'protected characteristics'

All incidents of harassment are taken seriously and dealt with immediately by staff. Serious incidents are logged on MyConcern, outcomes agreed and reported to parents.

## **Resources**

We deploy resources effectively and efficiently to ensure that all children receive appropriate Support.

Playground and sporting equipment is supervised to ensure fair and equal access.

Equipment across the school and in classrooms is selected to accommodate the needs of all.

## **Staffing and Administration**

We seek to ensure that our working environment is one that respects and includes everyone regardless of their gender or gender reassignment; marital status (including civil partnership); sexual orientation; race, language, ethnic or national origins and nationality (including citizenship); religious belief; disability and / or medical conditions; age; whether they have dependants; trade union membership status and activity or political views/affiliations

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating discrimination. (See Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy)

## **Employee responsibilities**

All employees, irrespective of their role, have a personal responsibility to comply with this policy, associated policies and to abide by the Equality Act 2010, in dealing with each other, managing staff and in their relationships with children, parents, carers, governors and other stakeholders.

In particular, employees, must not:

- discriminate against colleagues, other workers, job applicants, children, parents, carers, governors or other stakeholders
- bully or harass colleagues, other workers, job applicants, children, parents, carers,

governors or other stakeholders

- encourage or try to encourage another person to treat others unfairly or to practice unlawful discrimination
- victimise people who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who have provided information about such discrimination.

We will not tolerate any of the above behaviours. Where employees commit an act of unjustified or unlawful discrimination, or allow discrimination to occur without taking appropriate action, then they could be liable to a claim being brought against them as an individual, for example at an Employment Tribunal. The employee could also be liable to disciplinary action for a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, which could result in dismissal.

### **Employer Commitment**

We will carry out the following activities in order to demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity, and also to fulfil our legal responsibilities.

### **Employment Policies**

We will ensure that our employment policies, practices and associated guidance are fair to all. We will monitor the implementation of these policies to ensure that they remain fair in practice and that any barriers to and within employment are removed.

### **Consultation**

Dorset council have consultation arrangements with a number of trade unions and professional associations.

We provide information to parents and carers in a form which is accessible to them if they have language or literacy difficulties.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Governing Body will monitor and evaluate this policy annually alongside all other related policies with a view to considering the impact of our main activities on people with protected characteristics.

### **Relationship with other policies**

This policy will inform all other school policies, but will be of particular relevance to the following:

- School Accessibility Plan
- Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy
- Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools Agenda

**Links to further guidance**

The DfE publication, Equality Act 2010: Departmental Advice for School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies in maintained schools and academies (DfE May 2014), is available to download from their guidance web page, and is particularly helpful in suggesting ways in which schools may wish to demonstrate compliance with the specific duties.