Sitwell Nursery & Infant School

Single Equality Policy

Statement of intent
Sitwell Nursery & Infant School understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our school's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every child receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our children. We are committed to supporting and celebrating all children's individual identities. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school
- Promoting community cohesion
- Promoting parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of children with protected characteristics
- Regularly reviewing our policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

Legal framework
This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

This policy has due regard to statutory and good practice guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'

- DfE) 'Gender separation in mixed schools'
- DfE 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE 'School admissions code'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance & Absence Policy
- Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures
- School Uniform Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure children and potential children will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
  - Admissions.
  - The way the school provides and education for children.
  - How children are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
  - The exclusion of a child or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans in collaboration with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will:

- Implement and champion this policy, ensuring that all staff and children apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy, considering new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for children who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.
- Monitor success in achieving equality aims and objectives and report back to governors.

Staff will:

- Be alert to the possible harassment of children, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment and/or discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities and inclusivity, and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all children, and not provide material that may cause offence.

- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole school community.

Forms of discrimination
Discrimination is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. For example, refusing to admit a child because of their race.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a school has a policy or practice in place that applies to all children but puts people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a school rule that bans certain hairstyles, that would disproportionately affect children from a particular ethnic origin. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a child's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of a child who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

Protected Characteristics
Staff will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a child, or prospective children, because of their:

- Sex.
- Race.
- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.

We will not discriminate against a child, or prospective children, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the child or prospective children is associated.

We will not discriminate against a child, or prospective children, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

Sex
For the purpose of this policy, sex refers a child's biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. The school understands that some children

may identify as a gender different to the sex they were assigned at birth, and will support children through their transitioning phases.

Staff will ensure that children of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to children of other sexes. The school will only separate children by sex where there is reasonable justification for doing so, or if one of the following applies:

- Children will suffer a disadvantage connected to their sex
- One sex has needs that are different from the needs of the other sex
- Participation in an activity by pupils of one sex is disproportionately low

The school will consider non-statutory exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and regularly review the impact of any separation to ascertain whether it remains lawful. Children will be offered equal opportunities to undertake any activity in the school. Children's age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams. Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities; where separation is deemed necessary, the single-sex sports teams will receive the same quality and amount of resources.

Race and ethnicity

Staff will ensure that children of all races and ethnicities are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other children and the school will regularly review its practices to ensure that they are fair.

Staff will ensure children with EAL are treated equally and fairly, while ensuring they are supported at all times. The school will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity. The school may, however, take positive action to alleviate any disadvantage experienced by those with protected characteristics, and to address the particular challenges affecting pupils of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

Disability

Staff will ensure that children with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other children simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair. The school will avoid implementing rules that could have an adverse effect on children with disabilities (e.g. by making physical fitness a basis for admission), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

Staff will ensure that they do not discriminate against children with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for them to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

The school will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of children with disabilities, especially where the child also has SEND but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan. The school will

meet its duty to undertake accessibility planning for children with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

Religion and belief
Staff will ensure that children are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief. Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the school's Attendance and Absence Policy.

Sexual orientation
Staff will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bisexual children, or the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other children.

The school will ensure that children are taught about the nature of marriage, including same-sex marriage, by presenting the facts of English and Welsh law – teachers will not offer personal opinions when discussing marriage in RHE lessons. The school will educate children on positive relationships, families and gender identities within the LGBTQ+ community. RHE lessons will be taught in accordance with the school's policy.

Staff will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to children in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory. Staff will support LGBTQ+ pupils to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity. The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space where pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

Gender reassignment
Staff will ensure that children are not singled out or treated less favourably in relation to gender reassignment, i.e. because they are trans or have trans parents, siblings or other family members. The school recognises that gender reassignment does not necessarily involve physical change, and can be solely social and emotional.

Children will have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our School Uniform Policy. The school is aware that the law requires the provision of single-sex toilets for boys and girls over the age of 8, and single-sex changing facilities for boys and girls over the age of 11. As children who identify as trans girls (biological boys) are not permitted to use the girls' toilet or changing facilities, and children who identify as trans boys (biological girls) are not permitted to use the boys' toilet or changing facilities the school will provide suitable alternative provision, such as suitable private or unisex toilet, washing and changing facilities.

The school will support trans children to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity. The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space within the school where trans children can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

Looked-after children (LAC)
LAC and previously LAC (PLAC) children will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of the RMBC Admissions Policy.

Staff will ensure that children are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state. A personal education plan will be created and implemented for all LAC children, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

Staff will ensure that any SEND that LAC or PLAC have are duly considered and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The Public Sector Equality Duty
We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding children who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in section 3.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and children will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

Prejudice related incidents
Our objectives will detail how we will ensure equality is applied to the services listed above, however where we find evidence that other functions have a significant impact on any particular group we will include work in this area.

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. 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.

In fulfilling our legal obligations, we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity.
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging.
- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development.
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers.
- Consult and involve widely.
- Strive to ensure that society will benefit.

Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents
This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We provide both our children and staff with an awareness

of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents. If incidents still occur, we address them immediately and report them to the Local Authority using their guidance material. The Local Authority may provide some support.

We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Single Equality Policy and our equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on newsletters, in the prospectus and on our website.

Bullying and discrimination

Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any bullying incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The Headteacher will decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services and/or the police of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in the Complaints Procedures Policy.

Promoting inclusion

We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

- Ensuring that children are called by their preferred names, which may be different from their legal names, considering the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing board and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling in children an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
- Providing a variety of educational and residential visits that expose children to a wide range of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extracurricular activities and the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all children, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.
- Ensuring admission arrangements will not unfairly disadvantage a child from a particular social or racial group, or with SEND.

Children that have left school
The school's responsibility to not discriminate, harass or victimise will not end when a pupil has left school. It will continue to apply with regard to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

Staff training
New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction. Whole-school staff training for will be delivered regularly. Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, such as Black History Month, World Disability Day and International Women's Day.

Monitor and Review
Every four years, or sooner if we feel necessary, we will review our objectives in relation to any changes in our school profile. Our objectives will sit in our overall school improvement plan and therefore will be reviewed as part of this process.

This policy will be reviewed annually in the Summer term.
Summer 2026