

WEATHERFIELD ACADEMY

To become the best person you can be.



Equality and Diversity Policy

February 2023

To be reviewed: February 2024

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

This policy represents a commitment to a common set of values for promoting and achieving equality of opportunity within Weatherfield Academy.

We believe that all people (children, young people and adults) are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity.

Equality of opportunity is relevant to everyone in the school community, including pupils, staff, parents/carers, governors and visitors.

We believe that equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is underpinned by a set of common values, eg., each member of the academy community agrees that collectively and individually we will:

- *Acknowledge and value diversity;*
- *Actively promote a sense of respect towards the needs and feelings others;*
- *Comply with current equal opportunities legislation;*
- *Have zero tolerance of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination;*
- *Challenge attitudes that are based on stereotypes;*
- *Have a commitment to inclusive education in its broadest sense that will enable and support all pupils to achieve their full potential;*
- *Sustain a commitment to the positive development of all staff and governors;*
- *Ensure that all members of the school community and others engaged in school business will be accountable for complying with this policy.*

Objectives of this Policy for Equal Opportunities

The objectives of this Policy for Equal Opportunities Policy are to:

- Develop an ethos which respects and values all people;
- Actively promote equality of opportunity;
- Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society;
- Promote good relations amongst people within the school community and beyond;
- Eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour;
- Deliver equal opportunities through our academy's various policies, procedures and practices;
- Do our utmost, within available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to the academy's range of activities;
- Take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by stereotyping and cultural expectations;
- Monitor the implementation of equal opportunities and implement academy improvement strategies in the area of equal opportunities.

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The legal framework and definitions of discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 replaced and simplified nine previous acts regarding rights and opportunities for all, providing protection from discrimination. Prior to the Equality Act, laws governing equality related to race, sex, disability and sexual orientation. The new act encompasses these areas, and currently extends to religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and age (the latter in relation to employment). Alongside this Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011 stipulates how public organisations, such as schools, can promote equality. This duty replaces the former race, disability and gender equality duties. Under the Act, every school should have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; the need to foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a characteristic and people who do not.

Schools are also expected to provide extra support to stop people doing less well because of their family background or where they were born (socio-economic duty). Historically, children from more affluent families often achieve more at school than children from less affluent families, even if the poorer children are more intelligent. This is sometimes called socio-economic inequality. The Pupil Premium has been introduced to address this balance, and is allocated to pupils who receive (or have received in the last six years) free school meals.

The definitions of equality are further defined as having due regard to:

- **Direct discrimination:** Where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment because of their sex, race or disability etc.
- **Indirect discrimination:** Applying unjustifiable requirements and conditions which have a disproportionate impact on an individual of a particular group.

Protected Characteristics

Below are the eight attributes protected by the Equality Act 2010, which are referred to as 'Protected Characteristics'.

- sex
- race
- disability (1)
- religion or belief (2)
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity (3)
- age, marriage and civil partnerships (4)

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(1) the Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. In this context, a 'long term' impairment lasts 12 months or more.

(2) to benefit from protection under the Act, a religion or belief must have a clear structure and belief system, and should have a certain level of cogency, seriousness and cohesion, and not be incompatible with human dignity. The term belief includes a lack of belief - atheism.

(3) extends to the family / associates of the pupil

(4) in relation to employment, goods and services

Positive Action

New Positive Action provisions within the Equality Act 2010, allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics.

Implementation at Weatherfield Academy

- No pupil will ever be refused admission on grounds of disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture or ethnicity.
- Where feasible, teaching and learning opportunities will include topics, activities and reference to:
 1. The achievements and attributes of a diverse range of people from widely differing backgrounds.
 2. Accurately reflect the population of the UK today in preference to tokenistic or racial stereotypes;
 3. Use dialect, accents and language appropriately (ie., not to ridicule any particular group);
 4. Use a range of literature drawn from different traditions and/or incorporate stories or poems actually written by people from different cultures

The rights of all pupils to access a broad, balanced and suitably differentiated curriculum will be promoted at all times.

The relative rates of pupil progress will be analysed to identify any unexplained differences in the rates of progression secured by different groups of pupils (eg., disability, gender, race) and any inequalities will be addressed as a consequence.

The relative rates of absenteeism, incidents and commendations will be analysed to identify any unexplained differences in the rates of progression secured by different groups of pupils (eg., disability, gender, race) and any inequalities will be addressed as a consequence.

Teaching materials and school publications will be monitored to ensure the content is representative of a diverse community.

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The continuing professional development of all staff is encouraged, to meet the varied and changing needs of all our pupils. Off-site activities, including residential trips, are risk-assessed to ascertain their suitability for our population - a child would never be disadvantaged by being left behind at school or left out of a particular activity because it was deemed unsuitable.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for making sure the academy follows all of its equality and diversity policies and codes, and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for promoting equality across the school.

- Action will be taken to reduce discrimination when necessary.
- Curriculum reviews will be monitored, taking the equality duty into account.
- Prejudice-motivated bullying will be taken as seriously as any other form of bullying, and dealt with equally and according to the academy's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- New school policies and decisions made by the Senior Leadership Team will have due regard for equality under the Equality Act.
- Records will be kept to monitor equality.
- All grievances and complaints will be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.
- Setting Equality Objectives proportionate in number to size and circumstances of our school.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity and avoiding unfair discrimination;
- Making sure they know what their responsibilities are and participating in support and training as necessary in order to carry them out;
- Challenging any incidents of unfair discrimination, or racial, sexual or other stereotyping, perpetrated by students or other staff
- Following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Our Rights as an Academy

We reserve the right to ask health-related questions of applicants before a job offer in relation to intrinsic functions of the work, in line with the Equality Act. Such questions will be targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for. The school welcomes diversity and does not discriminate against people with protected characteristics. However, staff need to be able to meet the needs of our pupils.

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All allegations of inequality will be reported via the school incident book and investigated by the Head Teacher, or his authorised deputy, who will report directly to the Governing Body and Local Authority as necessary.

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