

School Equal Opportunities Policy Drafting Guidance

Draft

This guidance has been produced to enable schools to develop their own Equal Opportunities policy. It is recognised however that all schools will have their own relevant issues and initiatives regarding equal opportunities and therefore the template policy attached at the end of this guidance may not cover the aims and requirements of all schools. Schools who use this template should therefore look to adapt this template by adding, amending and/or deleting clauses to meet the specific requirements and aims of their school. However the policy should contain as a minimum a commitment to fulfilling its legal obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Equal Pay Act 1970, and Disability Discrimination Act 1995, The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

School: _____

Member of Staff Responsible for the Policy: _____

Date: _____

Date of Next Review: _____

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the School's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity in the management and organisation of the

school, including employment, the curriculum, extra curricular activities and the treatment of individuals.

2. BACKGROUND

This document details the school's commitment to equal opportunities and fulfilling its legal obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Equal Pay Act 1970, and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 also apply to equality of opportunity in employment.

This document sets out how the [school] intends to comply with this requirement. This policy is a positive commitment by the school to work towards equality of opportunity and to ensure that discrimination and harassment are combated.

2. POLICY STATEMENT – The school's policy should confirm the school's position in relation to each of the following areas:

A Scope

This policy covers all employees of the school. Direct services such as catering, cleaning, ground maintenance and building contractors are outside the scope of the policy. However, it must be borne in mind that liability can be accrued if any school employee aids any such contractor to discriminate against any of its own employees or workers. Accordingly, where relevant and reasonably possible all employees of the school should apply the principles of the equal opportunities policy to any dealings they have with any person engaged to carry out work for the school or on its premises.

This policy provides a framework for Governing Bodies and Headteachers to provide consistent support and guidance to their employees.

The policy covers all education and associated services for pupils and prospective pupils including extra-curricular activities and school trips.

B. Statement of Values

Set out the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for example:

This School will work towards ensuring that the curriculum, extra curricular activities, organisation and management of the school shall be such that no individual within the school community will be denied opportunities or receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic origin or disability..

This School embraces equality of opportunity in employment irrespective of age, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, marital status, sexuality, culture and religion.

Unfair assumptions, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination are all unacceptable in the drive towards equalities.

There will need to be reference to the fact that the policy is applicable to all members of the school community, e.g. pupils, staff, parents, governors, partners.

Example: _____ School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, all members of the school community, will be equally valued and treat one another with respect. Everyone should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

3. Principles

C Promoting Equality of Opportunity in teaching and curriculum

This policy must indicate how the school intends to promote equal opportunities in its day to day working. The framework within which the school operates is contained in its policies. For example: -

In order to make the whole curriculum and extra curricular activities (including school trips) accessible for all pupils at the School we shall foster a climate in which equality of opportunity is supported by a policy to which the whole school subscribes and in which positive attitudes to gender, equality, cultural diversity and special needs of all kinds are actively promoted.

Equal Opportunities is about assisting all children/individuals to fulfil their potential. There is a commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and a recognition that preparation for life in a diverse and multicultural society is relevant, thus permeating every aspect of the National Curriculum.

Guidance for Personal and Social Education should enable pupils to:

Recognise and value cultural differences and diversity

Respect others, value their achievements and their uniqueness and recognise the importance of equality of opportunity

Value and celebrate cultural difference and diversity

Value cultural diversity and equal opportunity and respect the dignity of all

Be moved by injustice, exploitation and denial of human rights

Understand cultural differences and recognise expressions of prejudice and stereotyping

Value cultural diversity and equal opportunity and respect the dignity of all

Recognise and know how to challenge expressions of prejudice and stereotyping.

An example should be given of how you will work to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to pupils/students from all backgrounds. Examples should also be given on how you will promote equality of opportunity and tackle stereotypes or prejudices:

Example: The School will take account of and challenge attitudes and stereotypes present in society, which consider that some subjects are less or more relevant for one gender than for the other gender. The school will also deal explicitly with gender issues including peer pressure and sexual harassment as well as developing personal skills such as co-operation and negotiation and analyse resources for gender bias.

Example: For pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds this school recognises that there may be a need for language support in the classroom and also take into account the fact that learning is likely to be influenced by different cultural backgrounds and different experiences. (see also Race Equality Scheme).

Introducing multicultural perspectives into the curriculum will be a way of enriching the education of all our pupils. It will give pupils the opportunity to view the world from different standpoints, helping them to question prejudice and open-mindedness.

(The responsible body) will not treat a pupil less favourably or discriminate against a pupil without justification by refusing admission to her or him or excluding her or him from the school for a reason related to the pupil's disability, race or gender. (Very limited permitted forms of selection may however act as a justification).

D Tackling Discrimination

Example:

In this School any form of direct or indirect discrimination (less favourable treatment) on the basis of race, colour, nationality, culture, religion, origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability (mental or physical) will be unacceptable.

State how this relates to the school e.g.:

This School is committed to showing respect and appreciation of individuals and to educating and preparing pupils to live in a culturally diverse society. This School is committed to remove unfair stereotypes and/or prejudices and barriers/obstacles to learning.

The following policies have been put in place to tackle discrimination harassment or bullying on the grounds of disability, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexuality, culture and religion:

(Name policies e.g. Harassment & Bullying, graffiti, Race Equality Scheme, recording racist incidents etc.)

E Employment

This School will aim to ensure that every job applicant and employee receives equality of opportunity regardless of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, age or disability and is not disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified. Individuals will be selected, promoted and treated in their general employment on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

The Equal Pay Act specifies that if a woman is employed on work that is either the same or equal to that done by a man in similar employment, the terms of the woman's contract should not be less favourable than those of a man's. Men may also make a complaint under the Act if they have been treated less favourably than a woman doing the same or equal work. Governing bodies will need to take the provisions of the Equal Pay Act into account when exercising their powers in respect of terms and conditions on which staff are to be appointed.

This extends to all school employees and potential employees and school governors.

The governing body will be responsible for defining jobs where there is a genuine occupational qualification or requirement (advice can be provided from the Council's Equality Section where required).

F Responsibility

Example: All employees and members of the school share the responsibility to ensure that the school's equal opportunities policy operates fairly and effectively. However, the major responsibilities are as follows:-

In summary the **Governing Body**;

- Must not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, gender, marital status, sexuality, culture and religion.
- Must take account of equal pay legislation when implementing the provisions of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document
- Should promote and practice consistent application of the equal opportunities and other relevant equality policies (e.g. Race Equality Scheme, Access Strategies, Harassment and Bullying policy)
- Should ensure that all individuals with responsibility for staffing issues are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to equal opportunities

In summary the **Headteacher**

- Should abide by the provisions of equality legislation
- Will take, as delegated by the Governing Body, a leading role in the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy
- Will promote and put into practice the consistent application of the policy

- Will communicate the School's equal opportunities policy to all teaching and non-teaching staff
- Will ensure that teaching and non-teaching staff receive relevant training where required on equal opportunities legislation and good practice

In summary all other **teaching staff**

- Should comply with the provisions set out in the School's equal opportunities policy
- Should be diligent when looking out for and dealing with any incidents including harassment and bullying relating to a pupil's disability, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexuality, culture or religion (actual or perceived)
- Show respect and appreciation for pupils and other employees contributing towards a happy and caring environment
- Foster a sympathetic awareness and understanding of cultural diversity

In summary all other **Support Staff**

- Should comply with the provisions set out in the School's equal opportunities policy
- Should be diligent when looking out for any incidents including harassment and bullying relating to a pupil's disability, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexuality, culture or religion (actual or perceived)
- Show respect and appreciation for pupils and other employees contributing towards a happy and caring environment

G Breach of the Policy

Breaches of policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, e.g. staff disciplinary rules, racial harassment policy [pupil discipline]. Any appropriate action will be determined by the headteacher and governing body.

H Resources

Where possible, with the constraints placed upon it, the Governing body will make available any resources appropriate to ensure the full and effective implementation of this policy.

A positive commitment will be made to identifying and resourcing the different needs of pupils/students to enable them to benefit to the fullest extent from the opportunities offered to them.

I Publishing the Policy

The Governing Body will need to state how pupils, staff and parents are informed of the policy for example:

Staff will be informed of the Equal Opportunities Policy as part of their induction programme when joining the school.

Explain how parents and pupils will be informed of the policy.

J Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The School will develop or incorporate equality monitoring into relevant monitoring systems including:

The achievement of all pupils by gender, racial group, disability
Recruitment/promotion and training monitoring data for staff by gender, racial group and disability

Analysis of all complaints lodged by pupils or employees based on gender, racial group, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

The School's Race Equality Scheme also outlines specific monitoring requirements under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (please refer to the Race Equality Scheme).

5. DATE OF NEXT REVIEW

As with all policies there should be regular review. Date of the next review should be stated here for example:

This policy will be reviewed on the basis of every two years or in light of any developments in employment legislation or good employment practice. The date of the next review will be: (Month & Year)

Reference to other Policies:

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act places specific duties on schools with regards to Race Equality. The School's Race Equality Scheme details how the Schools will comply with these duties.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part 4 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) places specific duties on schools with regards to pupils with a disability. Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act places duties on schools in the provision of goods, facilities or services to the public. This will be dealt with in the LEA's Access Strategy and the Schools Access Plan, which will be in place from (date) and (date) respectively.

Further advice can be obtained from Corporate Equalities Section / Personnel Officer at Human resources and Equalities.

This document is also available in large print and other formats upon request.