

Oak Farm Primary School

Equality Scheme and Objectives



OAK FARM
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Written: December 2020

Date: 10 December 2020

Last reviewed on:

Reviewed by Governors Dec 2020 - Approved at FGB Mar 2021

Next review: October 2022

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1. Equality Statement

At Oak Farm, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in our school community where equality of opportunity is implicit throughout our school values.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

We ensure that all individuals within the school are entitled to learn, teach or work in a non-threatening and supportive environment in which self-esteem is enhanced.

We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. We identify unacceptable behaviour (racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and/or any other discriminatory or harassing behaviour) and offer strategies to educate all those involved.

At Oak Farm, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998. It is our aim that everyone involved in our school community can develop to their full potential within a context of mutual respect, justice and fairness.

Our aims are recognised specifically in the following Human Rights of the Child that are expressed from the UN Convention:

UNCRC Article 2: All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

UN Article 14: You have the right to your own beliefs and religion, if this is not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.

UNCRC Article 15: You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, if it is not harmful to others.

UNCRC Article 23: You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

UNCRC Article 28: You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

UNCRC Article 30: You have a right to learn and use the language and customs of your own family, even if these are not shared by most of the people.

This scheme should be read alongside the school's:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Admissions Policy

2. Equality and the law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from Equality Act (2010).

The Public Sector Equality duty (PSED) which came into force April 2011 extends schools equality duties to all protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity and race
- Gender (sex)
- Gender identity and reassignment
- Pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

The three main elements of the PSED requires public bodies to have regard to the need to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by 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.

The Specific Duties of the Act enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

- Publish annually information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Set every 4 years one or more specific measurable equality objective that further the aims of the equality duty.

3. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific action plan (equality and accessibility) set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways:

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed and reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Teach about different families which include; families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, same-sex parents, single parent families and foster parents/carers, among other family structures such as co-parenting relationships.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all families in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

4. Equal Opportunities

For Staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as age, disability, ethnicity and race, gender identity and re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership are considered when appointing staff or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

5. Protected Characteristics

We are guided by the principles that all learners are of equal value. We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value. We recognise and respect differences and foster positive attitudes and relationships.

Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy, The school's SEND Information Report and Accessibility Plan.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a person has a disability if:

- (a) A person has a physical or mental impairment and
- (b) The impairment has a substantial and long term effect of the person's ability to carry out normal day to day tasks.

Ethnicity and race Equality

At Oak Farm School we aim to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Scheme which includes race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies and action plans, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of pupils from minority ethnic groups;

Religion and Belief

At Oak Farm School we aim to

- Eliminate religious discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different religious groups.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Statement which includes equality in respect of religion and belief

Age, Gender identity, Sexual orientation, Pregnancy, Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Oak Farm aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on all of these grounds and to promote equality of opportunity between all groups.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality.
- Teach students about differing and varied family groups which are reflective of the local demographics and diverse British society.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Statement which covers our protected characteristics and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

6. Community Cohesion

The Education Act 2002 outlines a duty on the Governing Body of schools to promote Community Cohesion. At Oak Farm we recognise our responsibility for educating pupils from diverse backgrounds, in terms of culture, religion and beliefs, ethnicities, family make-up, gender identity and socio-economic status. We aim to promote good relationships between all these families.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Governors

The Governing Body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this scheme and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils and responsive to their needs based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

The Governing Body confirms its opposition to unfair discrimination in employment and commits itself to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunity. We aim to ensure that the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of staff are based solely on the criteria of merit and ability, and that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, ethnic or national origin, marital status, domestic circumstances, age, sexuality, disability, trade union activity, political or religious beliefs.

The Governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.

The Governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's or surrounding families' socio-economic background, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

The role of the Headteacher and senior leaders responsible for equalities

It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Scheme and Action Plans and they are supported by the governing body in doing so.

It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Scheme and Action Plans, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The Headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this scheme, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist/homophobic/transphobic incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Statement and Objectives.

All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability and challenge stereotypical images.

All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Headteacher.

Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

9. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. Circle Time is used effectively to address issues arising. All staff are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher, Year Group Leader, Assistant Head and Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher in line with local authority procedures.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

'A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: "Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person." At Oak Farm, all incidents are identified as discrimination of any type if they are hurtful to the victim or perceived as discrimination by any other person. This includes incidents of homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, ableism or any other discrimination based on protected characteristics.'

There are four types of discrimination which are defined as:-

- 1) Direct Discrimination - this result from treating a person less favourably on the grounds of the areas covered in this policy.
- 2) Indirect Discrimination - this arises where a condition or requirement, although applied equally has the effect of excluding, penalising, or treating less favourably any person indicated in the statement.

3) Victimisation - this occurs if the person is given less favourable treatment than others because she/he has exercised her/his right under the policy or legislation.

4) Harassment - this is defined as behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, directed at an individual, that is found to be offensive to the recipient, and that might threaten an employee's job security or create an intimidating environment.

Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's ethnicity and race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

10. Review of progress and impact

The Equality Scheme has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality and Accessibility Plans annually and review the entire scheme and accompanying action plans on a four year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

11. Publishing the Plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish our Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan, we will:

- Publish annually information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010;
- Set every 4 years one or more specific measurable equality objective that further the aims of the equality duty;

- Publish our plan on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Provide copies in alternative formats where requested;
- Ensure that hard copies are available from the school office.

12. Equality Objectives

- A. To promote cultural understanding and awareness of the varied religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school community.
- B. To engage in the learning of diverse family groups within our local community including; families headed by grandparents, adoptive parents, same-sex parents, single parent families and foster parents/carers, among other family structures such as co-parenting relationships.
- C. To monitor and promote the involvement of all groups of pupils in the extra-curricular life of the school, including roles of responsibility.
- D. To close gaps in attainment and achievement between all groups of pupils; especially pupils eligible for free-school meals, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and pupils from different heritage and gender groups.
- E. To endeavour to ensure that the staff body is reflective of the local community.
- F. To ensure that the use of homophobic, sexist and racist language is not used by pupils in the school.

Date: December 2020 – to be ratified by FGB Spring 2021

Review: Spring 2022 for Statement, Objectives Spring 2026