

Equality Information and Objectives (Public Sector Equality Duty)

Eversley Primary School



Written by:	Flora Georgiou	Date: October 2022
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Introduction

This Equality document has been written to meet the requirements of school to carry out the Public Sector Equality Duty in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably on the basis of a ‘protected characteristic’

The protected characteristics are:

- Race
- Disability
- Sex/Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership

A person’s age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment, and in regard to the provision for goods and services. It does not however apply to pupils, and so the school is free to arrange pupils in classes based on their age group with materials appropriate to them.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (2011), which applies to public bodies, school including both LA maintained and Academies. The school must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the act
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a prohibited characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relationships across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people and who do not share it.

Having due regard in this context means that when significant decisions are being taken, thought must be given to the equality implications.

Statement of Equality

At Eversley Primary School, 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 or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At our school we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Our moral code:

Eversley Primary School is implementing a strong set of moral codes that all of our children embrace. Values such as respect, honesty and perseverance are emphasised within the classroom and good behaviour is positively reinforced. Pupils develop good relationships with their teachers and their peers. They understand that supporting one another, regardless of their age, gender or background is an important aspect of school life.

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are the responsibility of the Local Authority and are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, 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.

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 endeavour to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need 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 gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) 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 for all.

Protected Characteristics – and special issues related to some of the characteristics

Race

The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Schools have a duty to make sure pupils of all races are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Plan.

The Equality act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities. The Act defines 'long term' as lasting, or likely to last for at least 12 months.

The Act places a duty on schools to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people:

- Where something in school places a disabled pupil at a disadvantage, the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- Schools are expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled pupil when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that they pupil faces in comparison to non-disabled pupils.

Duty around accessibility for disabled pupils

Schools need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils, previous duties under the DDA have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Gender

Schools need to ensure that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. It is not unlawful to have some single-sex classes in a mixed school, providing it does not give children in such classes an unfair advantage or disadvantage. The act also contains an exception that allows single sex sport.

Gender Reassignment

This is defined as anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes. In order to be protected under the Act, a pupil will not necessarily have to be undergoing a medical procedure, but must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender, or proposing to do so.

The school needs to ensure that all gender variant pupils, or the children of transgender parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

Sexual Orientation

Schools have a duty to make sure gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils, of the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

Teaching about marriage must be done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education, and to meet duties under equality and human rights law.

Where individual teachers are concerned, having a view about something does not amount to discrimination. So it should not be unlawful for a teacher in any school to express personal views on sexual orientation provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context (for example responding to questions from pupils, or in a RE or PSHE lesson. However, it must be remembered that teachers are in a very influential position and their actions and responsibilities are bound by much wider duties.

Religion or Belief

The Act defines 'religion' as being of any religion, and 'belief' as any religious or philosophical belief. A lack of religion or lack of belief are also protected characteristics. To benefit from the Act, a religion or belief must have a clear structure and belief system and should contain a certain level of cogency, seriousness and cohesion, and not be incompatible with human dignity.

The Act is clear that unlawful religious discrimination can include discrimination against another person of the same religion or belief as the discriminator.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan 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 protected characteristics.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics.
- 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 socioeconomic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability, gender, religion and belief.

The role of the head teacher

- It is the head teacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and s/he is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the head teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The head teacher 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 head teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist 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 Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges 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 ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation, gender reassignment or pregnancy is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They 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.

Staff and governors should be aware of both direct and indirect discrimination and understand the differences. Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination occurs when a 'provision, criterion or practice' is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to class teacher/headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person'

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably, than when otherwise would have been because of something they have done ('a prohibited act') in connection with the Act. e.g. making an allegation of discrimination.

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 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 nonteaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan 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.

Publishing the scheme

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to prepare and publish objectives, we will:

- Publish our information and objectives on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

Appendix A

Ensuring Equality of Opportunity and Participation

The school will ensure that:

- Pupil achievement is monitored by race, gender and disability and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed
- All staff are aware of the Equality Plan
- There is an inclusive approach to ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council by election or cooption; class assemblies; fund raising etc.
- Disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE and dance and assemblies;
- Extended school activities such as breakfast and afterschool clubs take into account pupil needs and access issues and pupils attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status;
- Staff, pupils, parents and carers will continue to be involved in the future development of the Equality plan through input and feedback from surveys, staff meetings, school council meetings, parents' evenings etc.

The school will provide:

- Extra additional support for pupils who are underachieving, in order to make progress in their learning and their persona; well-being, e.g. ensuring that children with visual impairment have accessible texts; that children with hearing impairments have an enhanced acoustic classroom environment.
- Additional support for parents with underachieving children (e.g. reporting progress; discussing need);
- Additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. providing a sign interpreter for a deaf parent; ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible areas of the school to support wheelchair users).

Promoting Positive Attitudes and Meeting Needs

The school will:

- Promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the school community in terms of race, gender, and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in a classroom/corridor display.
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the school and support them in their work and career development and try to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce;
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the governing body and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute;
- Provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different school and communities;
- Provide extended services, with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups of;
- Support disabled children in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;
- Helping children and young people to understand others and value diversity;
- Promoting shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them;

Eliminating Discrimination and Harassment

The school will:

- Develop and adapt its procedures in anti-bullying to include equality perspectives;
- Support staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on a protected characteristic.
- Keep a record and report how these incidents are dealt with to the GB on a termly basis;
- Review its approach to race, gender, and disability whenever it reviews its policy on behaviour.

Monitoring Impact

- The school will collect and analyse evidence and data on children's achievement, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability, and use this to inform strategies to raise achievement;
- The GB will report annually on the effectiveness and success of its Equality Plan. This will be placed on the school website.