

Committee Responsible:	Children and Learning
Status:	Statutory
Review Period	4 years
Next review date:	Spring 2022

POLICY - S004

Surrey County Council Policy states:

“This Equality Policy Statement expresses our commitment to equality and sets the standards we have for achieving equality in all that we do. The agenda is very broad and in consultation with our employees, service users, carers and communities we wish to build on it further. As we start to look at the issues of equality for Surrey in greater detail we would like you to participate and let us know your experiences so that we can put equality into action.

Our vision is that Surrey County Council will embrace the principles of equality and make it a part of everything that we do.

Action for Equality outlines the Council’s approach to equality. It is our commitment and we trust it is yours too. Implementing this policy will help us improve our equality action with all our employees, service users, carers, and communities. This statement represents our corporate approach to equality and our expectation is that each service area will adopt it and develop their response within these guidelines to the equality agenda. “

By implementing our equality policy, together we can Make Surrey a Better Place for Everyone.

Our commitments to equality are:

- Building fairness into all that we do
- Eliminating all forms of inappropriate discrimination
- Listening, responding, and working together with our employees*, service users, carers, and communities to provide services
- Providing services which are available to everyone
- Continually improving all that we do based on equality
- Developing environments where people are valued and respected
- Providing equality of opportunity in our employment practices
- Providing learning and development opportunities for all our staff to enable us to fulfil our commitment to equality
- Working with other agencies to ensure our commitments to equality are delivered
- Taking any complaints about inequality seriously (please see the back page for details).

What do we mean by equality?

Equality involves:

- providing fairness and equality of opportunity
- recognising that everyone is different and that these differences must be equally respected, and
- challenging discrimination so that we demonstrate our commitments to equality and do not exclude people or make them feel isolated.

We are fully committed to tackling all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination including those on the grounds of: age, asylum or refugee status, caring responsibilities, class, colour, disability (including physical, sensory impairment, mental health problems, or learning disability), ethnic or national origin (including Travellers), gender reassignment, HIV status, language, marital status, nationality (including citizenship), part-time working, race, religion, sex, sexuality, or trade union membership.

What are unacceptable practices?

- **Discrimination.** Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional, unintentional, or institutional. Discrimination is also unlawful. Direct discrimination is where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment with some unjustifiable reason, because of sex, race or disability, for example. Indirect discrimination is applying unjustifiable requirements and conditions that have a disproportionate impact on an individual or particular group. Individuals, in law, have a responsibility not to discriminate.
- **Institutional discrimination.** Institutional discrimination is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their background or experience. It can be seen in our attitudes, behaviours and procedures that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and stereotyping which disadvantage people.

What does tackling discrimination mean?

Overcoming your own prejudices and assumptions about others is a major step towards embracing equality within our organisation. Assumptions are often based on appearances and are a part of how we, as individuals, view others. Recognising that assumptions are not necessarily an accurate assessment of a person or situation, will allow you to make decisions based on equality. We can then avoid the costly effect assumptions may have on others. We all need to rethink what we do and how we behave to achieve equality, which is not about treating everyone the same, but recognising and respecting differences and treating each other with fairness and dignity.

Who is responsible for equality?

All employees are responsible for ensuring that they work together to recognise and remove barriers so that they can promote equality, and fairness and dignity, and act in accordance with this policy.

At Kingfield School we will show our commitment to equality in these ways:

- Show respect and dignity to others
- Be open and honest, expressing any criticism in a sensitive and constructive way
- Take a stand against discrimination by showing personal responsibility: e.g. speak out against discriminatory jokes and remarks
- Make a formal complaint if you witness a racist attack, through the Surrey County Council complaints procedure, to a manager or the police
- Find out about black, ethnic minority, or Traveller history and local community achievements
- Work towards providing accessible information, venues, offices, and meeting places
- Develop team approaches to a work-life balance
- Provide services which recognise that many people have major caring roles, i.e. those who look after someone who cannot manage without help because of sickness, age or disability
- Ensure that we offer team briefings, meetings, and training which consider the needs of part-time workers, for example vary your meeting times to allow for greater participation
- Be clear about essential elements of a job profile, so we do not over specify and limit the pool of applicants.
- Promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that the school provides
- Ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school
- Challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur

- Strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls.

At Kingfield, we promote anti-discrimination in the following ways:

- If racist comments are judged to have been made through a lack of understanding, the school will aim to educate rather than punish
- Staff will make sure that boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum, and senior staff will monitor trends that could suggest inequality
- All reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate those with disabilities
- The headteacher and governors will monitor the policy and practice so that it is embedded into the school environment

What do you do if this policy is not working?

If anyone experiences discrimination or unfair practices while in our school we want to know. We want to ensure the experience is recorded and that the incident is resolved. We have a Complaints Policy and a Grievance Policy.

Breaches by employees of this policy will be treated as a serious offence, and may lead to disciplinary action, in accordance with agreed procedures.