

## Academy Equality Policy

### Legal Framework

Fishponds Church of England Academy welcomes its general duties under the 2010 Equality Act and the 2011 Equality Duty to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations,

in relation to age (for adults), disability, gender, gender identity/reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnicity, colour or national origin), religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

### Note:

The term 'ethnicity' is generally used in preference to 'race' or 'racial group', on the grounds that it better reflects the intentions and concerns of race relations legislation. The term 'gender' is generally used in preference to 'sex'. The duty to promote community cohesion is integrated into the policy, particularly but not only in the third of the nine principles.

We also welcome our specific duties under the Equality Act to:

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the general duties annually; and,
- Prepare and publish equality objectives (at intervals of not greater than four years).

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Published: November 2014**

## Our context and values

Fishponds Church of England Academy is a larger than average urban Primary Academy providing education for children from 3 to 11 years old. Situated in the City of Bristol, a large majority of pupils are of heritage other than white British. The proportion of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding is approximately 50%. More than a third of children join the Academy with English as an additional language. The pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) include those with physical disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and language as well as emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is this rich diversity which supports our deep rooted inclusive nature.

Our Vision statement is **Loving to Learn, Learning to Love** and it is this vision which underpins our core purpose and values. As a Church of England Academy, we have established a number of values and understand that these values need to be lived as well as taught by everyone in our school.



We aim to ensure that every child progresses through Fishponds Academy excited about learning and able to **fulfil their potential** without fear of harm or abuse or by being treated differently. We want to equip children with confidence, **courage**, **patience**, resilience and a passion for **justice** and the **truth**. These qualities will enable them to thrive and to champion **kindness** and **respect** at all stages of their future lives.

We have a strong sense of **respect** for each other and for every member of the Academy and local community, valuing our differences and being **thankful** for our diversity. We will ensure we have the **courage** to stand up for our right and the rights of others to be treated with **respect**, dignity and **kindness**.

## **Our overall aims**

We aim to:

- promote equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice
- involve people from different groups in the development and review of our equality work
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination
- eliminate harassment and bullying
- ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups
- narrow the attainment gap in outcomes for children and young people
- improve other outcomes where we identify inequality
- take positive action to meet needs when appropriate
- to increase participation of under-represented groups in activities and public life
- promote positive attitudes and good relations between people from different groups and support community cohesion

## **Guiding Principles**

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

### **Principle 1: All learners, parents/carers, governors and staff are of equal value**

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, and our local board and staff, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, race, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whether or not they are pregnant or mothers
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual orientation
- whether they are married, in a civil partnership or not married
- their age

## **Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference**

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and of the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made and needs met
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised, and specific needs met
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised and met
- pregnancy and motherhood, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- religion, belief or faith background, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- sexual orientation, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- so that the different needs of those with different marital status are recognised and met
- age, so the experiences and different needs of older or younger people are recognised and met

We also understand that people have complex, multiple identities. No-one is just one thing and people have many affiliations and loyalties. We know that although social class is not explicitly mentioned in the Equality Act, we need to consider and address inequalities of income and social class as part of our work to address other inequalities.

## **Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, those of younger and older ages, fair treatment for those who are pregnant or mothers, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment

#### **Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development**

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity
- whatever their age

#### **Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

We use a social model of disadvantage, understanding that disadvantage is often caused by the structures, systems, attitudes and opinions of society as a whole, not by the people that suffer the disadvantage. Therefore, in addition to avoiding or minimizing possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

#### **Principle 6: We consult and involve widely**

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We recognise that there are risks that consultation processes do not always access the views of some disadvantaged groups. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

### **Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit**

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

### **Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us**

We maintain and record quantitative and qualitative information (as appropriate) about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

We also record other information needed to show how we are meeting our duties to eliminate discrimination/harassment/victimisation, advance equality and promote good relations between different groups.

### **Principle 9: Objectives**

We formulate and record specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement through which we have involved people from different groups (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

Accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate.

We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

### **The Curriculum**

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles set out in paragraph 7 above.

### **Ethos and Organisation**

We ensure the principles listed in paragraph 7 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- involvement in extra-curricular activities
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

## **Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying**

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1-3:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of racial incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Local Board is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

A member of the Local Board has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support, and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles in paragraph 4 above
- support pupils in their class who have particular needs arising from disability, Special Educational Needs, or for whom English is an additional language or who are Travellers
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

## **Information and Resources**

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

## **Religious Observance**

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice where it does not affect the education of the children they serve.

## **Staff Development and Training**

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams, to ensure that we are able to meet our obligations under the Equality Act.

## **Breaches of the Policy**

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Principal and Local Board.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We collect, study and use quantitative data and qualitative evidence relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data on achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, and gender.

## **Meeting our specific duties under the 2010 Equality Act**

We publish information annually on our school website to show that we have complied with our general duties under the Act.

We set equality objectives and review annually our progress towards them. For the period from September 2014 to September 2016 our equality objectives are:

- To monitor performance of pupils with free school meals ensuring progress is in line with other pupil groups
- To develop our EAL provision to ensure any pupil who joins us other than in Reception is fully integrated into school life gaining additional support if required
- To ensure appointment of any new staff fully encompasses our equality duty

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON RACIAL AND OTHER PREJUDICE-RELATED INCIDENTS

### Introduction

Fishponds Church of England Academy welcomes our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to a whole-school approach that will:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
2. advance equality of opportunity; and
3. foster good relations

In relation to all characteristics protected under the Act (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; 'race; which includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality; religion or belief; sex; and, sexual orientation).

This guidance links to our Say no to Bullying Policy and our overall approach to safeguarding and equalities. However, we recognise that there are prejudice-based incidents, for example racist or sexist comments, in which there is no particular victim, and therefore that prejudice-based incidents may not constitute bullying. Nevertheless we think such incidents are serious and need to be properly addressed, for the well-being of our school community, for pupils' educational development and for the health of society as a whole.

### Responding to prejudice-based incidents - general principles

We recognise that prejudice-based incidents are very varied, but must all be taken seriously in order to:

- reassure the targets/victims;
- ensure that incidents do not recur;
- ensure that all members of our school community understand that prejudice-based incidents are not acceptable; and,
- ensure that the school community as a whole remains safe.

Sometimes no overt racist or other discriminatory language may have been used and it may not be immediately apparent that an incident is based on prejudice.

However we recognise that the Stephen Lawrence enquiry report recommended that for the purposes of reporting and recording, *"a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person"*:

This definition was proposed in order to ensure that incidents are always properly investigated and never treated lightly because the individual person to whom an incident is first reported is not sure that a particular incident was racist. We apply this recommendation to all prejudice-based incidents. We therefore ensure that all prejudice-based incidents are recorded and properly investigated, and that appropriate and proportionate actions are taken.

Following the Stephen Lawrence enquiry report recommendations, we have a well-established system of racial incident reporting and we support this by reporting all incidents. The reporting form means we are able to list one or more of the many different types of racial incidents, including name calling, racist statements, racist jokes, assault, damage to property, graffiti, social exclusion and spreading malicious rumours.

We also recognise the fact that incidents might be verbal or written and may include use of text messaging or other technology. Our approach to prejudice-based incidents links closely with our approach to anti bullying, which we always address robustly.

We also recognise that there are features of racism and other prejudice-based behaviour that can make it particularly hurtful and damaging. Some of the features of racism have been summarised in national guidance and many of these apply to a large extent to other types of prejudice-based behaviour, such as sexism, homophobia and prejudice based on disability.

These features include:

- Racism has a long history affecting millions of people and is a common feature in wider society. People are seriously harmed and injured by it.
- Most bullying involves a series of incidents over time. In the case of racist bullying, however, a single one-off incident may have precisely the same impact as a series of incidents over time. This is because it may be experienced by the person at the receiving end as part of a general pattern of racist hostility. It can in consequence be every bit as intimidating, rejecting and hurtful as a series of events over time.
- Racist words and behaviour are experienced as attacks on the values, loyalties and commitments central to a person's sense of identity and self-worth.
- A distinctive feature of racist bullying or insults is that a person is targeted not as an individual, as in most other types of bullying, but as the representative of a family, community or group. Other members of the same group, family or community can therefore be made to feel threatened and intimidated as well. People who experience racism may feel they have to stand up against it not just for their own sake but on behalf of their family and community and there is an increased danger of cycles of verbal abuse and possibly violence developing.
- The law of the land recognises the seriousness of racism by requiring that courts should impose higher sentences when an offence is aggravated by racist hostility. It is therefore important that children and young people showing racist attitudes are helped to understand the seriousness of racism so that they do not suffer the consequences of this

## Responding to prejudice-based incidents – our approach

Our approach to responding to individual incidents and in particular the sanctions we take will vary depending on several factors, including which of the following broad categories the incident falls into:

1. No offence was intended or taken;
2. Hurt or distress was caused, but the offending behaviour is unlikely to be repeated;
3. Hurt or distress was caused, and the children and young people (or adults) responsible, had previously been warned that their behaviour was unacceptable;
4. Substantial hurt or distress was caused; the behaviour was based on substantial hostility and prejudice; the behaviour may be repeated.

As stated above, we are never dismissive about incidents, for example ignoring or making light of them. Nor do we take a merely punitive approach – expressing disapproval or punishing without complementary teaching and learning about why prejudice-based incidents are wrong, or why comments/actions have caused hurt. We always ensure we take the time to help children and young people understand why prejudice-based behaviour is wrong and wherever appropriate we use restorative approaches, which include:

- supporting the victim(s) by attending to the needs of those on the receiving end of prejudice;
- preventing re-offending by enabling offenders to assume active responsibility for their actions and reintegrating them into the school community;
- avoiding escalation; and,
- repairing and recreating the community damaged by the bullying or other prejudice-based behaviour.

We also ensure that we keep parents/carers informed about prejudice-based incidents that have affected their children and the outcomes of investigations into such incidents.

### Staff responsibilities for responding to prejudice-based incidents

Promoting equality and responding appropriately to prejudice-based incidents is the responsibility of the whole school community and we try to ensure that all members of the community are aware of their responsibilities and support the Academy's ethos.

**The Local Board** is responsible for ensuring that the Academy complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. It monitors prejudice-based incidents on an annual basis and ensures that where appropriate this review informs future planning. A member of the Local Board will have a 'watching brief' over prejudice based incidences and equalities monitoring.

**The Principal** is responsible for implementing the policy and for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities (for example through the staff handbook and other information sharing) and are given appropriate training and support. The Principal also has responsibility for investigating prejudice-based incidents, contacting relevant outside support for advice where necessary, taking appropriate action

including keeping parents/carers informed of the outcomes of investigations and reporting racial incidents to the Local Authority (though this responsibility may be delegated to other senior managers).

**All teachers and other staff** are expected to respond appropriately to any prejudice-based incidents that may occur, indicating why such behaviour is not acceptable. They also ensure that incidents are reported quickly to the Principal and/or other senior staff.

Staff know that whenever an incident is reported to them by someone else as racist or based on other prejudices, or whenever they themselves think it may be prejudice-based, they must report it to senior staff. Information for staff on their responsibilities is in our staff handbook.

**All pupils** are encouraged to treat each other, and other people they meet, with respect, and to report any prejudice-based incidents to an adult.

**All parents/carers** are made aware of this policy via our school website and other media and are encouraged to report any prejudice-based incidents to a staff member. They are encouraged to support the school's ethos and aims through their interaction with children.