



BLOSSOMFIELD

— Infant School —

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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## Check list for school staff and governors

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- Is information collected on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides?
- How has your Equality Plan been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents and pupils?
- Is pupil achievement analysed by race, disability and gender? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action, and has action been taken to address these?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to race, disability and gender?
- Are all pupils encouraged to participate in school life? Are pupils who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity?
- Is bullying and harassment of pupils and staff monitored by race, disability and gender, and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other pupils? Are racist incidents reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis?
- Is the learning environment reflective of the diversity of your school community? Are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- Is the school environment as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school, and are issues such as language barriers considered?

Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters of all cultures, faiths and nationalities and to parents who are disabled?

# **BLOSSOMFIELD INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **Equality Policy/Plan**

- 1. Philosophy and Values**
- 2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice**
- 3. Admissions & Exclusions**
- 4. Equal Opportunities for Staff**
- 5. Equality and the law**
  - a. Race**
  - b. Disability**
  - c. Gender**
  - d. Sexual orientation**
  - e. Community cohesion**
- 6. Consultation**
- 7. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 8. Tackling discrimination**
- 9. Review of progress and impact**
- 10. Publishing the plan**
- 11. Action Plan**

### **1. Philosophy and Values**

An equal opportunities policy is about fairness, compassion and the provision of quality education for all.

Children learn most effectively when they, their teachers and their parents hold high but realistic expectations of them. At Blossomfield we firmly believe that children and adults alike are to be valued and have something to contribute to school life.

All Staff have personal responsibility for the practical application of this policy when at school. Staff and pupils are encouraged to examine their behaviour and see that none of it is based on stereotyping or unfair assumptions.

At Blossomfield, 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.

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 will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

### **2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice**

As well as the specific actions 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 to 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;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.
- Employ a variety of teaching and learning styles to enable each child to maximise their potential.
- Ensure activities are provided to promote success for all children.
- Ensure rewards and sanctions are used without discrimination.

## **2. Admissions and exclusions**

We adhere to the L.A. Admissions' Policy and co-operate fully with them on admission arrangements for Nursery, FS2, and to other year groups when appropriate. All prospective parents are signposted to Admissions or to the Family Information Service.

Exclusions would always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy, in consultation with Governors.

## **3. Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Blossomfield. 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 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 of opportunity for all.

## **4. Equality and the law**

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Disability Equality Duty (2005) and Equality Act (2006).

The action plan at the end of this Equality Plan outlines the actions we will take to meet the general duties detailed below.

#### **4a. Race Equality**

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need 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 Plan which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these pupils;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such pupils, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

#### **4b. Disability**

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

##### **Definition of disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) 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'.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

##### **Legal duties**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;

- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

#### **4c. Gender Equality**

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds gender for both pupils and staff.
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Policy/Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

#### **4d. Sexual Orientation**

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation.

#### **4e. Community cohesion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

### **5. Consultation and involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and Governors. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evenings, parental partnership, informal discussion with parents
- Input from staff through staff meetings, Performance Management and annual staff discussion with H.T.
- Feedback from the class council, PSHE lessons, SEAL assemblies, Circle Time
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

### **6. 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 race, gender and disability.
- The Governing Body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.

- 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 socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The Governing Body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, gender or disability.

### **The role of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team**

- It is the H.T./SLT's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and they are supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the H.T.'s role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The H.T. 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 HT/SLT promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promote respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The HT/SLT treat 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 and racism, 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.

## **7. Tackling discrimination**

Harassment on account of race, gender or disability 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.

Racist incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / SLT/ Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis. Racist or bullying incidents will be recorded in the appropriate logs, kept in the HT room.

### **What is a discriminatory incident?**

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability 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.

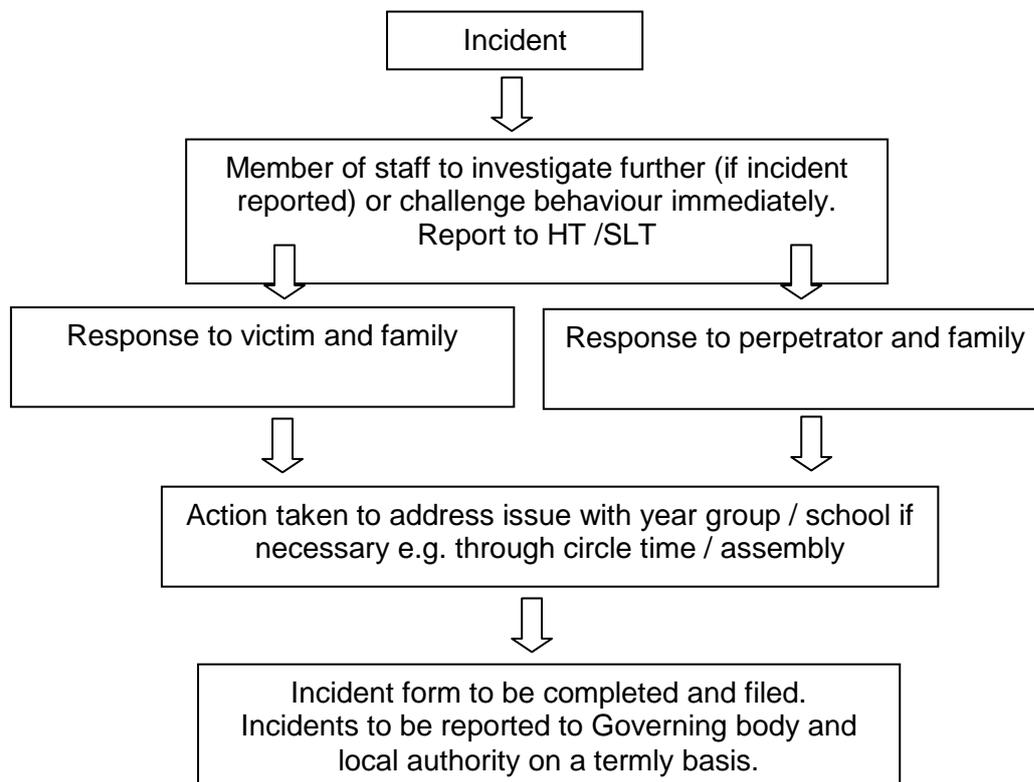
We have a set of school values to which every one subscribes. The ethos of partnership, friendship and professionalism is very strong at Blossomfield. In the context of race equality this statement from our aims is particularly important:  
'We are all different, we are all equal, we are all special.'

We aim to promote a school culture and ethos which reflects tolerance and understanding, and an acceptance that all people are different but nevertheless equally worthy. It is our expectation that all staff and children subscribe to this and make it work in school.

We do not condone any acts of discrimination, either physical or verbal. Staff quickly talk through any difficulties of stereotyping or bias with children who need help. All staff are aware of the importance of keeping up to date with legislation. Each child regardless of race, gender, religion or social status, is encouraged and supported to maximise their potential, to achieve well and to enjoy the opportunities available at Blossomfield. This can be seen in hard data, and felt in the atmosphere and relationships throughout school.

### 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.



## **8. 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 three 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.

## **9. Monitoring Processes**

- It is the role of the HT and Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities policy. This is essential to show whether the policy is working and where any improvements should be targeted. This will be achieved through::
- monitoring the progress and attainment of all pupils, compare with local and national standards to identify any groups (racial, gender etc) that may not be progressing at a suitable rate so appropriate action can be taken. However because of the small numbers of pupils within some groups, any single set of figures may be unreliable, so it is important to consider patterns and trends.
- monitoring the curriculum and teaching and learning to ensure the promotion of equal opportunities and good race relations;
- monitor the support, advice and guidance to pupils and the effect on their attitudes and behaviour;
- monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- requiring the headteacher to report to governors on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy;
- taking into consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils;
- monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policy, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.
- monitoring the appropriateness of resources for learning;
- monitoring and assessing the impact of school policies on parent involvement, commitment and confidence in the school to ensure that no groups (racial, social etc.) are excluded or disadvantaged by the school policies and attitudes.

### **Breach of this Policy**

Where this policy is not being followed, there should be:

- discussion with the HT/SLT
- identification of relevant training and support needs;
- review of practice.

## **10. Publishing the Policy/Plan**

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

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