

GARSTANG ST THOMAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY: SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

Introduction

This policy outlines the commitment of the governors and staff of Garstang St Thomas Church of England Primary School to eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation; promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. For our school this means not simply treating everybody the same, but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, celebrating and valuing the equal opportunity achievements and strengths of all members of the school community.

School Ethos and Aims

This policy builds upon the Mission Statement, core values and ethos of the whole school community. We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent. We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. All parents/carers are encouraged to work in partnership with us to help their child achieve their potential.

We are committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a governing body which is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

We will endeavour to ensure that when we buy services from another organisation that will help us provide high quality education, that organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

Objectives

The school will:

- ensure the school's equality policy is implemented consistently by all staff;
- challenge and work to eradicate any type of discriminatory and/or bullying behaviour e.g. though unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions;
- identify barriers to learning and participation and provide appropriately to meet a diversity of needs;
- monitor pupil performance to enable us to identify and address gaps between different groups;

- ensure all pupils have access to an appropriately differentiated curriculum;
- recognise, value and celebrate pupils' achievements, however small;
- work in partnership with parents and carers in supporting their child's education;
- guide and support all staff, governors, parents and carers in equality issues;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behavior;
- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- provide educational visits and extended learning opportunities that involve all pupil groups.

Statutory Requirements (See also Appendix 1)

The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the "protected characteristics" that qualify for protection from discrimination as:

- age (relevant in considering our duties as an employer, but not in relation to pupils)
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), sometimes referred to as the general duty. The combined equality duty has three main elements and in carrying out our functions we will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimization that are prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The specific duties, which will help us to fulfil our obligations under the general duty require us to:

- publish information to demonstrate how we are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- prepare and publish equality objectives.
- In light of the specific duties the school will publish and review annually appropriate information. We will also prepare and publish equality objectives that will be outcome focused.

Roles and Responsibilities

- the governing body will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy and action plan.
- the headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of this policy and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the governing body.
- all staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs and maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.
- all members of the school community have a responsibility to treat each other and staff with respect, to feel valued, and to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour.
- we will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school adhere to our commitment to equality.

Equal opportunities for staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. 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. All those involved in recruitment and selection are aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process.

We encourage the career development and aspirations of all school staff. It is our policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils

Data Monitoring

We collect and analyse a range of equality information for our pupils/students: We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress. The governing body receives regular updates on pupil performance information.

School performance information is compared to national data and local authority data, to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances.

As well as monitoring pupil performance information, we also regularly monitor a range of other information. This relates to:

- Attendance
- Exclusions and truancy
- Racism and all forms of bullying
- Parental involvement
- Participation in Extended Learning Opportunities

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance and provide specific support as required, including pastoral support, in order to make necessary improvements.

Consideration is also given to the physical learning environment – both internal and external, including displays and signage.

We are also committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a governing body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

Issues identified from analysis of data inform our equality objectives and action plan.

Measuring and reporting the impact of this policy

This policy applies to the whole school community. The policy will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. In line with legislative requirements, we will evaluate and report annually on the impact of actions taken against our published objectives. The objectives will be published at least once every four years. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The policy, objectives and annual progress review will be published on our website and signposted from our newsletter.

Appendix – Equality Legislation Guidance – What does a school need to do?

(Note: The duties outlined below are now elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty)

Race

The term race includes colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin and citizenship as well as race.

The Race Equality Duty

What is it?

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (which includes the Race Equality Duty) amended the Race Relations Act 1976
- It came into effect from April 2001

Who is covered?

- Pupils, parents/carers, prospective pupils and parents/carers, staff, job applicants, governors and others using school facilities

General duties

- Tackle racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups

Specific duties

- From May 2002 publish a Race Equality Policy which includes an implementation strategy or action plan (effectively a Race Equality Scheme), monitor it annually and review it every three years
- Involve appropriate and diverse stakeholders in developing the policy
- Monitoring the impact of the school's policies on pupils' performance and progress
- Provide ethnic monitoring data on their staff in regular returns to the Local Authority

Reporting racist incidents in schools

Schools are required to have in place a procedure for dealing with and reporting racist incidents, which includes providing an annual summary of racist incidents to Lancashire County Council.

Disability

What is a disability?

- Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be:
 - substantial (more than minor or trivial)
 - adverse
 - long-term (it has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

There is no need for a person to have a specific, medically-diagnosed cause for their impairment – what matters is the effect of the impairment, not the cause.

Examples include hearing or sight impairments, a significant mobility difficulty, mental health conditions or learning difficulties. There are many other types of condition, illness or

injury that can result in a person being *disabled* (eg diabetes, asthma, cancer, arthritis, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, heart conditions, facial disfigurement).

General duties

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate disability-related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage disabled people's participation in public life
- Take steps to take into account people's disabilities.

Specific duties

- From December 2006 for secondary schools and from December 2007 for primary schools, special schools and PRUs, must prepare and publish a disability equality scheme, monitor it annually and review it every three years
- Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme
- Set out in their scheme:
 - how disabled people have been involved in its preparation
 - their arrangements for gathering information on the effect of the school's policies on:
 - o the recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
 - o the educational opportunities available to and the achievements of disabled pupils
 - o the school's methods for assessing the impact of its current or proposed policies and practices on disability equality
 - o the steps the school is going to take to meet the general duty (the school's action plan)
 - o the arrangements for using information to support the review of the action plan and to inform subsequent schemes.

GENDER

The term gender includes boys, girls, men and women, and transgender/transsexual people. Sexual orientation is a distinct protected characteristic. (The term transgender refers to a range of people who do not feel comfortable with their birth gender).

What is the difference between sex and gender?

- Sex refers to biological status as male or female. It includes physical attributes such as sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures, and external genitalia.
- Gender is a term that is often used to refer to ways that people act, interact, or feel about themselves, which are associated with boys/men and girls/women. While aspects of biological sex are the same across different cultures, aspects of gender may not be.

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexism is any prejudice and discrimination against individuals and groups who are lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) or are perceived to be so. It is based on the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual. Expressions of dislike, contempt or fear based on heterosexism are usually known as **homophobia**, although **lesophobia** and **biphobia** are also coming into use.

Whether through institutional practice or personal behaviour, the prevalence of heterosexism is likely to mean that LGB people feel excluded and unsafe. This effect can be mitigated by an actively welcoming and supportive environment.

Sexual orientation is defined as an individual's sexual orientation towards people of the same sex as her or him (gay or lesbian), people of the opposite sex (heterosexual) or people of both sexes (bisexual).

General duties

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between male and female pupils and between men and women
- Promote good relations

Specific duties

- From April 2007, prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme, showing how the school will meet its general and specific duties and set out its gender equality objectives, as well as its plans for stakeholder consultation and impact assessment
- Monitor the scheme annually and review it every three years.

Transgenderism and gender re-assignment

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from that usually associated with their birth sex. Gender re-assignment is the process a transgender person goes through to change sex.