

Introduction

Meadow Vale's Single Equality Scheme provides a format for addressing the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2010 and The Children and Families Act 2014. This supersedes and brings together all previous statutory duties in relation to race, gender and disability and also addresses the duty to promote community cohesion, thus meeting the school's statutory duties in these areas. This is underpinned by a commitment to promoting positive relationships and understanding between all groups within our school community.

This document sets out how staff and pupils with the following protected characteristics will be protected in our school from harassment and discrimination:

- disability
- gender
- race
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Equalities Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction – that is to say, it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. The definition of what constitutes discrimination is more complex. Provision for disabled pupils is closely connected with the regime for children with special educational needs. Chapter 4 of the Act deals in detail with disability issues.

This scheme extends however to cover all aspects of vulnerability, including those associated with socio-economic factors (e.g. pupils from low income families).

As well as delivering high quality services to our pupils, the school is also committed to being a good employer and as such this scheme outlines how we meet our varied duties in terms of recruitment and employment practices. We are also committed to be fully inclusive of all community users, including parents and carers. As such, this scheme therefore also sets out how we will work to overcome any discrimination related to the other protected characteristics:

- Age*
- Being married or in a civil partnership

*A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment and the Act extends this (except for children) to the provision of goods and services, but age as a protected characteristic does not apply to pupils in schools. Schools therefore remain free to admit and organise children in age groups and to treat pupils in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development without risk of legal challenge.

Aims of the Single Equality Scheme

- To articulate the school's commitment to equality which permeates all school policies and practices
- To ensure that everyone who belongs to, or comes into contact with, our school community is valued and respected
- To promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- To comply with statutory duties under equalities legislation in one document

Purpose of the Equality Scheme

This equality scheme is the school's response to the specific and general duties in the current equality legislation, which has been brought together under the Equality Act 2010 (see appendix 1). It is an attempt to capture how the school is systematically establishing and implementing good practice in equality and diversity across all areas of school life. This includes a response to all aspects of social identity and diversity.

This Equality Scheme sets out how the school will:

- eliminate discrimination
- eliminate harassment or victimisation related to any aspect of social identity or diversity
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote positive attitudes to all aspects of social identity and diversity
- encourage participation by disabled people and people representing different aspects of social identity in public life
- take steps to take account of difference even where that involves treating some people more favourably than others
- take proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils

Planning to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity

This scheme is underpinned by the core belief that all children and young people belong to their local community and share the same rights to membership of that community and a quality education. This scheme encompasses our duties to promote positive outcomes in relation to race, gender and disability, but also identifies actions to address other social identities. It encompasses our **anticipatory duties to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments** (reasonable and proportionate steps to overcome barriers that may impede some pupils) we need to make to be best placed to help disabled pupils who come to our school.

This scheme replaces the school's Disability Accessibility Plan for the school (previously required under the planning duties in the Disability Discrimination Act) as it sets out how the school will increase access to education for disabled pupils, alongside other protected groups, in the three areas required:

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

The scheme is understood and implemented by all staff and is available on the school website. It is available in different formats and in different languages on request to the school office.

Our school has regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them. (NB An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the school development plan.)

Our school records all prejudice-based and hate incidents, in line with the latest guidance. Pupils and staff are encouraged to report incidents and the school responds effectively, aiming to eliminate all forms of discrimination and prejudiced-based incidents.

What kind of a school are we?

School Vision and Values

In partnership with the whole school community and through an engaging curriculum, we aspire to nurture and empower every child to flourish.

We will develop their love for learning in order to inspire and motivate them to achieve their potential so that they are confident, considerate, resilient and active members of society.

The school's vision and values statement reflects the school's ambitions for all its pupils and have been developed with the whole community. It refers to the key requirements set out in the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4> for developing an inclusive curriculum: setting suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils' diverse learning needs; overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment, for individuals and groups of pupils.

The school is committed to addressing any actions which are identified to improve our inclusive practice.

School provision

From September 2012 schools and local authorities have a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or from other sources. Additional high needs funding may be available on application to the local authority.

Reasonable adjustments the school makes as a matter of course:

- *how information is provided for disabled pupils and parents/carers including those with a visual or hearing impairment;*
- *creating communication friendly environments;*
- *the operation of a differentiated behaviour policy;*
- *the ways in which the school records and evaluates provision in personalised EHCP provision maps and/or individual learning plans;*
- *how the school ensures 'pupil voice' through pupil surveys and school council meetings;*

- *the availability of high-quality concrete resources and manipulatives for learning at every level;*
- *access to lunchtime nurture provision and a variety of nurture groups for identified pupils;*
- *access to a range of core subject interventions including pre-teach sessions for identified pupils*

Outcomes for pupils

Outcomes for pupils are analysed against social identity issues, i.e. gender, ethnicity, disability, faith background, and aspects of vulnerability identified by the school. This is compared with the outcomes made for all pupils.

These processes form part of the school's equality impact assessment to determine the impact of our provision on improving outcomes for identified pupils. In line with statutory requirements all new policies as well as existing policies and functions are evaluated for the impact they have, in consultation with identified pupils and parents/carers.⁷

Equalities objectives

Our Equalities Objectives, based on needs analysis, for the period 2020-2024 are:

- to narrow the gap in performance of disadvantaged pupils;
- to reduce exclusion rates for low income boys;
- to increase understanding of different religious groups;
- to increase awareness of differences in families throughout our school community;
- to encourage girls to consider non-stereotyped career options;
- to anticipate the needs of incoming pupils from a new group, such as traveller children.

Roles and Responsibilities in Implementing the Single Equality Scheme and Equalities Objectives

The leadership team will:

- ensure that staff and parents are informed about the Single Equality Scheme and equality objectives
- ensure that the scheme is implemented effectively
- manage any day to day issues arising from the policy whether for pupils or for the school as an employer
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the scheme;
- liaise with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the scheme and report to the Governing Body at least annually, on the effectiveness of the policy and progress towards the equalities objectives
- keep up to date with any development affecting the policy/action plan arising from the scheme

- provide appropriate support and monitoring for all pupils and specific and targeted pupils to whom the scheme and equality objectives has direct relevance, with assistance from relevant agencies

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation
- recommend all governors receive up to date training in all the equalities and SEND duties
- designate a governor with specific responsibility for inclusion
- establish that the action plans arising from the scheme are part of the School Development Plan
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- inform and consult with parents about the scheme
- publish equality objectives every four years
- evaluate the action plan annually
- publish information at least annually

Parents/Carers will:

- have access to the scheme and equalities objectives
- be encouraged to support the scheme
- have the opportunity to attend contribute to the development of the scheme
- have the right to a personalised approach to meeting additional needs and a right to have their views taken into account
- have the right to be informed of any incident related to this scheme which could directly affect their child

School Staff will:

- support the Single Equality Scheme and equalities objectives
- be aware of the Single Equality Scheme and how it relates to them
- be encouraged to express their views through a staff survey
- make known any queries or training requirements
- know how to deal with incidents of concern, including bullying and how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping
- know procedures for reporting prejudice based and hate incidents
- not discriminate on racial, disability or other grounds
- keep themselves up to date with relevant legislation and attend training and information events organised by the school or LA
- ensure that pupils from all groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum
- promote equality and diversity through teaching and through relations with pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community

Pupils will:

- be encouraged to express their views and contribute where possible to the formulation of policies
- be made aware of any relevant part of the scheme, appropriate to age and ability;

- be expected to act in accordance with any relevant part of the scheme
- experience a curriculum and environment which is respectful of diversity and difference and prepares them well for life in a diverse society;
- understand the importance of reporting discriminatory bullying and racially motivated incidents;
- ensure the peer support programme within the school promotes understanding and supports pupils who are experiencing discrimination.

The effectiveness of this scheme and progress with the equalities objectives will be evaluated and reflected in:

- school self-evaluation and reports to governors;
- pupil progress, outcomes and engagement,
- feedback e.g. OfSTED's ParentView, pupil voice through survey

Publication

Equalities objectives will be published and available to anyone requesting a copy on the school's website. Information is published demonstrating how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and the school's equality objectives. The school updates its published information at least annually and publishes the equality objectives at least every four years.

Schools' duties around accessibility for disabled pupils

4.28 Schools and LAs need to carry out accessibility planning for disabled pupils. These are the same duties as previously existed under the DDA and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010.

4.29 Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

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

4.30 Schools will also need to have regard to the need to provide adequate resources for implementing plans and must regularly review them. An accessibility plan may be a freestanding document but may also be published as part of another document such as the school development plan.

4.31 OFSTED inspections may include a school's accessibility plan as part of their review

Appendix 1: Equality Legislation and Guidance

This equality scheme responds to the current equalities legislation.

- The Equality Act 2010 is the overarching legislation for all equality duties.

The act serves two main purposes:

- a) To harmonise discrimination law;
- b) To strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The act supersedes or strengthens the following acts and regulations:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Employment Equality (Religion & Belief and Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2006 Part 2
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- The SEN Code of Practice 2001

Overview of previous equalities legislation which has been harmonised and strengthened by Equality Act 2010:

- Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976/2000
statutory positive duty to promote racial equality, promote good race relations and eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 (and Regulations 1999), Gender Equality Duty 2007
statutory positive duty to promote gender equality and eliminate unlawful gender discrimination;
- Employment Equality (religion or belief) (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003 extended to education, Equality Act (Part 2) 2007
The Act sets out that it is unlawful for schools to discriminate against a person:
 - a) in the terms on which it offers to admit him/her as a pupil:
 - b) by refusing to accept an application to admit him/her as a pupil, or
 - c) where he/she is a pupil of the establishment:
 - i) in the way in which it affords him/her access to any benefit, facility or service,
 - ii) by refusing him/her access to a benefit, facility or service,
 - iii) by excluding him/her from the establishment,
 - iv) by subjecting him/her to any other detriment.
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995/2005
statutory positive duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to, and eliminate unlawful

discrimination;

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, duty to promote community cohesion.
By 'community cohesion' the school is endorsing and adopting the definition provided by Alan Johnson, 2006, as:
"working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community."

Essential Further Guidance

DfE The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (May 2014, updated June 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Gender separation guidance, June 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-separation-in-mixed-schools>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance for schools

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/education-providers-schools-guidance>

SEND Code of Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-2>