



Meopham School

Equality Policy & Objectives

Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

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1. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It has consolidated this legislation to provide a single source of discrimination law.

2. Rationale

At Meopham School everyone is valued highly and tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all students to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion or disability.

There is a commitment to providing equal opportunities to everyone within the school's learning community, including staff, students, parents and visitors to the school. We value, respect and acknowledge that it is unlawful to discriminate against a student or prospective student by treating them less favorably because of their:

- age
- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity

Discrimination in any form is actively discouraged and students are encouraged to show respect for others. We recognise the important role which school plays in helping to form attitudes and values in young people and will actively promote anti discriminatory behaviour and work to prevent anti-social behaviours.

As such Meopham School will ensure a learning and teaching environment which is free of discrimination. Education is about maximising opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment. Opportunities will be available to all, regardless of ability, age, gender, ethnic or social background. These opportunities are secured through positive action by the school and the community.

At Meopham School we celebrate diversity of culture, race and talents and try to ensure that everyone is given opportunities to value their own contribution to Meopham School and to have this noticed and valued by others. The school's aim is to ensure that students of all backgrounds will be part of our community. We seek to give all students equality of opportunity, irrespective of gender, ability (both physical and cognitive), race or religion. We seek to close the gap between the achievements of different groups of young people so that all have equal opportunities in their adult life and empower them in all areas of life to contribute purposefully to society.

3. Aims

Meopham School is committed to the following aspects of equality:

- To ensure high quality education for all students.
- The school has high expectations of all students.
- To support the positive development of personal and cultural loyalties and identities, preparing students for full participation in society.
- To promote the principles of equality, respect, fairness, and justice for all.
- To develop universal values and citizenship by celebrating cultural diversity and supporting students in developing a positive self-image.
- To provide students with equal access to the full range of learning opportunities.
- To promote good relations between people of different racial groups, challenging stereotyping, prejudice and acting promptly to remove any forms of direct or indirect discrimination.
- To ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion, and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- To collect information with regard to ethnic origin for monitoring purposes.

4. Cohesive Community

The school seeks to:

- Promote understanding and engagement between communities.
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community.
- Understand and respond to the needs and hopes of all our communities.
- Tackle discrimination.
- Increase life opportunities for all.
- Ensure that learning, teaching and the curriculum explore and address issues of diversity.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Ensuring the school complies with current equality legislation.
- Ensuring the equality policy is properly implemented.
- Ensuring related procedures are followed.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that school policies take account of equal opportunities.
- Implementing and reviewing the Equality policy.
- Ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of and implement the policy.
- Ensuring that the policy is implemented with regard to staff selection and appointments.
- Taking seriously reports of discrimination from parents/carers, students or staff by investigating them and ensuring that appropriate action is taken.
- Ensuring that information with regards to ethnic origin is collected and entered into the School Management Information System and that this information is used as part of the monitoring of equality of opportunity in line with the Data Protection Act.

Specifically, this includes:

- Monitoring curriculum planning.

- Monitoring school procedures and organisation.
- Undertaking initiatives to improve provision for all students.

and ensuring that:

- Cover for absent colleagues is distributed.
- Requests for leave of absence are consistently met.
- Duties are fairly allocated.
- Non-contact time is distributed as per the recommended formula.
- Workload expectations are reasonable.
- Interviewing procedures adhere to safer recruitment guidelines.
- Equal access to professional development is provided.
- Pay and conditions are implemented as per school policy.
- To create an environment which affirms and supports ethnic, cultural, religious, and social diversity and effectively promotes good personal, community and race relations.

The Role of Subject Leaders:

When designing schemes of work, this policy will act as a guide both in their choice of topics for study and in how to approach sensitive issues:

- To ensure opportunities are provided in curriculum content to promote students' understanding of different environments and societies other than their own.
- When devising curriculum policies and selecting resources all staff will ensure that teaching material is non-discriminatory.
- To provide balance in themes or topics and planned learning experiences, taking into account the interest of both boys and girls;
- To implement strategies to raise levels of achievement, aspirations, and self-esteem in all students.

The Role of the Teacher:

The teacher has a crucial role in providing for equal opportunities and enabling students to develop universal values that encompass the principles of equality, respect, fairness and justice.

- The class teacher will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect and therefore will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the classroom.
- They do not discriminate against any child.
- They model good practice and deal with discriminatory incidents.
- They recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping.
- When selecting classroom material, teachers' pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature.
- They will strive to provide material which gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.
- They will choose learning styles and teaching strategies that avoid gender bias and stereotyping and that also reflect the diverse and multi-racial nature of our society.
- They will use teaching styles, methods, language, questioning and classroom management that includes and engages all students.

Students are responsible for:

- Supporting the school's equality ethos.
- Sharing concerns or issues with a member of staff.

- Keeping equality and diversity issues on the School Council agenda, which will recognise good practice and enable review and development.

This may include:

- The anti-bullying policy and specifically racist and homophobic bullying.
- Developing school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behavior.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Supporting the school's equality ethos
- Sharing concerns of issues with senior staff

Visitors and Contractors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy.

5. Whole School Application

Admissions

The school does not permit gender, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission.

Registration

School lists are organised chronologically or alphabetically, not by group (unless this is required by an outside agency for a particular purpose).

Students' names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Students should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

Discrimination

All forms of discrimination within the school should be treated seriously. Incidents will be logged whenever they take place in the school. It will be explained to the offender why the behaviour is unacceptable.

Curriculum

All students have access to the school's curriculum. Staff are aware how their own expectations affect the achievements, behaviour and status of each student. The curriculum is balanced, objective and meets the needs of all students.

Resources

The school's aim is to provide for all students according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origins. In selecting curriculum resources, staff should aim to present positive images that are non-racist and non-sexist. Students should be presented with accurate information about similarities and differences between cultural groups.

1. Books and resources are checked before use to ensure that they do not give a stereotypical or over-simplified view in terms of gender, race, culture, or disability.
2. When choosing new materials, we seek balance in the representation of the sexes and minority groups, looking for positive role models in stories and settings.
3. Language used in resources is monitored for bias so that we do not promote negative or derogatory images.
4. Display materials and illustrations reflect the diversity of our society where appropriate and show both men and women in positive situations and roles.

School and Classroom Organisation

- Equal opportunities will be considered when grouping students for activities. This may involve special specific groupings to ensure that every child participates fully.
- Each child will be given opportunities to exercise responsibility within the classroom or the school, with care taken regarding stereotyping of roles. We see boys and girls equally in the opportunities we provide for achievement and leadership.

Strategies for creating an equal opportunities environment

- Positive reinforcement of good behaviour, rather than giving a high profile to students who are misbehaving, including use of praise, certificates and rewards.
- Clear and concise school rules, phrased in terms that the students can understand. All students need to understand that name-calling, bullying or biased attitudes and behaviour are unacceptable in our school.
- Changing groupings for specific tasks, so that students have opportunities to join in co-operative activities with different people.
- Creativity and role-play, including acting out feelings or conflicts and restorative justice, in order that students can see why their behaviour is unacceptable and be encouraged to change their attitudes.
- Visits from people who have non-stereotypical jobs.
- Visits from people from different races and cultures.
- Visits from disabled people.
- Contacts with multi-ethnic schools and Academies.
- Taking part in multi-cultural activities and events.
- Contact with disabled students.
- Recognition and praise for all forms of achievement from all students.

6. Human Resources

The school gives equal treatment to all its employees and prospective employees. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less than favourable treatment on grounds of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sex orientation, or is disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. Selection and promotion criteria will be kept under continuing review to ensure that individuals are selected and promoted on the basis of their relative merits and abilities, having agreed to the need of the specific job.

Where possible, training will be given to enable employees to have an opportunity of promotion and progression according to their ability and potential.

All staff

- All our staff will challenge incidents of prejudice or racism.
- Serious incidents are recorded and reported to the attention of the Headteacher.
- All staff will support the work of other colleagues and intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

7. Training

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.

8. Action in Cases of Discrimination against Students

All staff must challenge incidents of prejudice or discrimination. Incidents are to be recorded using Bromcom and must be followed up.

9. Serious Incidents

If a student or a group of students are found to be in breach of the Equality policy, the school will apply an appropriate sanction, which will be recorded in a special file and the student's personal file. The following sanctions may be used:

- restorative justice
- use of inclusion room
- off-site direction
- fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

10. Discrimination by Staff

Staff are required to adhere to Meopham School Equality policy.

The complaints procedure will be invoked if it is found that the equal opportunities policies have not been adhered to by a member of staff. The Headteacher will make a record of the interview with the member of staff, and both should sign it as an accurate record. The Headteacher is responsible for conducting an investigation within ten working days and informing those concerned of the outcome. The disciplinary procedure is followed if a member of staff is found to be in breach of the Equality Policy.

11. Discrimination against Staff

If a member of staff feels that they have been treated unfairly, or have suffered harassment, on the grounds of age, sex, marital status, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, colour ethnic/national origins, religion, or belief they should report this without fail to the Headteacher. Complaints of discrimination, harassment or bullying among the workforce will be dealt with under the school's Fairness at Work Policy.

If they feel unable to discuss the matter with the Headteacher they may refer to the Governing Body. In this case the Chair of Governors or a governor appointed by the Chair of Governors, will respond to the member of staff within ten working days.

12. Equality considerations in decision making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to students with disabilities.
- Has equivalent facilities for different genders.

The school keeps a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions. This is recorded at the same time as the risk assessment when planning school trips and activities. The records are completed by the member of staff organising the activity and is stored electronically with the completed risk assessment.

13. Equality Objectives

Objective 1 - To promote cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school community.

Objective 2 - To monitor and promote the involvement of all groups of students in extracurricular activities, including leadership opportunities, especially those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupil premium and looked after children.

Objective 3 - To close gaps in attainment and achievement between students and all groups of students; especially boys and girls, students eligible for free school meals, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, looked after children, students from different heritage groups and children known or previously known to social care.

Objective 4 - To further improve accessibility across the school for students, staff and visitors with disabilities, including access to specialist teaching areas.

Objective 5 - To reduce the incidence of DRB language by students in the school.

14. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure there is a procedure in place to monitor and evaluate:

- The progress of students of all groups compared to the progress made by other students in the school.
- The staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post is discriminated against.
- Behaviour incident forms and exclusions to ensure that students from minority groups are not unfairly treated.
- The impact of additional support on standards achieved.

APPENDIX 1 – Access and Disability

Any changes to the policy required as a result of monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and or changes in the law must be disseminated to students, parents and staff.

Access and Disability

The school has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to provide access to the site and its facilities or to have a plan to do so. Meopham School is committed to ensuring that all reasonable adjustments and alterations are made to ensure that no students with a disability are disadvantaged compared to students without a disability.

Parents are encouraged to provide information with regard to age, sex and ethnic origin for monitoring purposes as per the Data Protection Act. An individual's race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, disability, or religious beliefs do not form part of the admissions process at Meopham School.

In order to decide whether the school can meet the needs of a student, parents are requested to complete the part of the Registration Form detailing whether a student has a disability, special educational need or medical condition. Meopham School may also take advice and arrange for assessments.

Where it is practicable, reasonable adjustments are made to enable a student to be admitted.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing the school's policy, procedure, and facilities with regard to the admissions, physical layout of the school and its facilities, access to the curriculum and extracurricular activities.

To meet the requirements of the above the Governing Body will:

- Assess and monitor the impact of the Equality policy on students, staff, and parents, in particular the attainment levels and participation of students from different groups.
- Record racist incidents and respond to them in the most appropriate way.
- Regularly review the policy.

APPENDIX 2: Unlawful Behaviour

Discrimination is unlawful and can be identified as direct/indirect discrimination, harassment, segregation, and victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.

Indirect Discrimination involves the inclusion of a condition or a requirement which adversely affects applications from a large proportion of persons.

Harassment consists of any repeated and unwanted comments, looks, suggestions or physical contact that a person finds objectionable and offensive and causes them discomfort at work.

Segregation is unlawful and occurs when a person or group of people are kept separate from others on the basis of their particular race or sex.

Victimisation is unlawful and occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others would be in the same circumstances.

Examples of incidents requiring serious response

Race and Religion

- A physical assault against a person or group because of colour, ethnicity or religion;
- Verbal abuse, derogatory name calling, insults, threats, racist jokes;
- Racist or religious graffiti;
- Issuing/wearing of racist or religious materials e.g. leaflets, magazines, insignia;
- Inciting others to behave in a racist or religious manner;
- Making racist or religious comments or suggestions in the course of discussions or lessons;
- Refusing to co-operate with colleagues or students because of colour, ethnic origin or religion;
- Excluding students from activities, or recruiting and selecting in preferential ways.

Age and Gender

- Physical abuse against a person or group because of their age or gender;
- Verbal abuse and intimidation, insults, threats against a person or group, because of their age or gender;
- Using lurid or suggestive vocabulary to cause offence or humiliation;
- Reference to an individual or groups sexuality;
- Making sexist comments or suggestions in the course of discussion or lessons;
- Refusing to co-operate with colleagues or students because of their age or gender.

Disability

- Physical assault against an individual because his/her disability;
- Verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats against the individual because of his or her disability;
- Offensive reference to an individual's disability inside or outside lessons;
- Refusing to co-operate with an individual because of his/her disability.