



Equality Policy

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Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one. There is a separate Equality policy for the employment of staff.

All schools have duties to promote equality in the following areas:

- race
- gender
- LGBT students
- disability. The disability equality general duty reinforces the reasonable adjustment duties of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). In particular, it complements, and in some cases overlaps with, the anticipatory duty to make adjustments.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies, and which extends to all protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to **have due regard to the need to:**

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Where schools are concerned, age will be a relevant characteristic in considering their duties in their role as an employer but not in relation to students.

What having "due regard" means in practice has been defined in case law and means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty. For schools this means:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have "due regard" when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep them under review on a continuing basis.
- The PSED has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school's functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes or following a particular process.
- Schools cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

Boldon School welcomes the equality duties of schools, and regard these as essential for achieving the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters framework. We believe that all students and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstance.

We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school.

We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our learners, staff, governors and parents in particular.

Throughout this scheme, ‘parents’ can be taken to mean mothers, fathers, carers and other adults responsible for caring for a child. This Single Equality Policy provides a framework for our school to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations, and to tackle prejudice, discrimination and their causes in a holistic and proactive way. It is also a mechanism to further promote the Boldon School core values.

Our Single Equality Policy is based on the core principles that its effectiveness will be determined by:

- active involvement with key stakeholders, not just in developing this policy but also in its review and implementation
- proactive leadership
- prioritising activities that produce specific, tangible improved outcomes
- removal of attitudinal and cultural barriers.

We have incorporated our previous Equal Opportunities Policy into one all-embracing Single Equality Policy to create a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within our school. We have identified a set of aims and objectives to promote equality, inclusion and community cohesion. Our policy includes a plan of action to address these objectives over the next three years.

We recognise that improving outcomes such as attendance or attainment for specific groups of students will help to improve our outcomes for all. Our commitment to equality is a fundamental part of our drive towards excellence.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Underpinning Equality are the principles included in certain legislation.

On 1 October 2010, 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 and also provides some changes that schools need to aware of.

The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil;

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way it provides education for students,
- in the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

KEY POINTS

The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine major Acts of Parliament and almost a hundred sets of regulations which had been introduced over several decades. It provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by getting rid of anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time, and it extends protection against discrimination in certain areas.

New Protection in Schools

Protection against discrimination is now extended to students who are pregnant or have recently given birth, or who are undergoing gender reassignment.

Health Related Questions for Job Applicants

It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work. Schools may decide to ask necessary health questions after job offer.

Positive Action

New Positive Action provisions will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, students with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim.

Victimisation

It is now unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Act by their parent or sibling.

Auxiliary Aids

The Act will extend the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students. However this duty is not due to come into effect until a later date, following consultation on implementation and approach.

Equality Duties

The three existing general and specific equality duties on schools (race, disability and gender) to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity have been combined into a single, less bureaucratic and more outcome-focused duty extending to all of the protected characteristics. The specific duties regulations require schools to:

(a) publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and

(b) prepare and publish equality objectives.

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

To demonstrate how Boldon School is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty it is helpful to show how each of the three limbs of the duty is being addressed.

Eliminating discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act

The School is very much aware of its responsibilities in this regard and adopts an all inclusive stance where all students have an opportunity to participate in activities of their choice irrespective of any characteristic they may have. The school is aware of the requirements of the Act and determined to comply with the non-discrimination provisions. This is evident within a number of the School's policies and published documents including (but not exclusive to);

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| Accessibility Plan | Behaviour Policy | Anti-bullying Policy |
| Recruitment and Pay Policies | Admission Policy | SEN Policy |
| Pregnant & Schoolgirl mother | Premises Management Policy | Staff Wellbeing Policy |
| Religious Education Policy | Safeguarding Children Policy | Sex Education Policy |

All members of staff have access to these policies in a shared staff area on the School's intranet and are reminded of their responsibilities during staff teaching and learning training sessions. School Governors are also regularly reminded of their responsibilities with regard to equality during governor training sessions and in meetings.

All instances that are considered to fall within the remit of the Equality Act are recorded appropriately by the relevant member of staff with responsibility for that area, together with any measures that are implemented as a result of actions taken.

Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Advancing equality of opportunity involves, in particular:-

(a) Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have. For example, Boldon School has improved access to the physical environment of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education.

(b) Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic. For example with regard to inclusive teaching and learning and the wider curriculum, the School ensures provision of specialist aids and equipment, which may assist these students in accessing the curriculum.

(c) Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities. All students at Boldon School are encouraged to participate in all aspects offered within the school. For example, positive steps are taken to ensure that students with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are the able-bodied students. This includes participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits.

Fostering good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Promoting good relations between people and groups of all kinds is inherent in many things which the School does as a matter of course. This can be demonstrated throughout the curriculum for example;

- studying what justice means to Christians in terms of persecution in parts of the world
- Full compulsory GCSE unit on Religion, Prejudice and Discrimination which covers the meanings of the key words and examples of how they manifest themselves. This covers racism, ageism, disability, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexism and religious prejudice. This includes both religious and non-religious responses as well as organisations that work to tackle prejudice and discrimination in all these areas.

Engagement

The issues are also addressed regularly in assemblies that follow a different theme each week and the school provides a mentoring and counselling service for anyone affected by equality issues.

In addition to on site personnel, there are a range of options available to students and staff who wish to raise subjects including school council, learning support staff, learning mentors, staff meetings, one to one meetings with line managers, meetings with the Head Teacher and through School Governor representatives. The School has also adopted South Tyneside Council's "whistleblowing" policy so that no-one can be adversely affected through raising an issue of concern.

The school can also call on specialist support through arrangements with the Local Authority – both with their staff and through their connections with people who have special knowledge

which can inform the school's approach, such as disability equality groups and other relevant special interest organisations.

AIMS

1. To offer a curriculum which prepares students to take their place in a multi-cultural world.
2. To improve the quality of the school's environment and strengthen good relationships between the school and the community.
3. To acknowledge and value children's diverse needs and expectations.
4. To ensure that all students have the same chance to make good use of the education on offer and to take full advantage of the opportunities in society.
5. To demonstrate within the community the school's opposition to discrimination in any form.
6. To acknowledge that everyone in our school and within the wider community served by the school should have the same basic rights of freedom and access to opportunity regardless of their biological inheritance or the circumstances of their birth.

OBJECTIVES

Everyone in Boldon School must strive to: -

1. meet the diverse needs of students;
2. maximise all available human resources;
3. safeguard individuals from all forms of abuse and harassment;
4. ensure victims can be confident of support and redress;
5. ensure that aggressors can never claim the excuse of acting out of ignorance;
6. build on mutual trust and respect;
7. treat others as they would wish to be treated;
8. respect other people, their property and premises;
9. safeguard the rights and freedoms of others;
10. promote awareness of our policy within the School's community;
11. Actively pursue our aim to help our young people to be Caring, Confident and Capable.

**UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR WHICH CONFLICTS WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY
(This is not an exhaustive list)**

Abuse including: -

Verbal harassment
Social harassment
Physical intimidation/aggression

Abuse may be based upon: -

Sexism
Physical appearance
Racism
Disability
Religion
Area of residence
Age
Social deprivation
Sexuality
Marital status
Employment status
Responsibility for children as dependants
Pregnancy or maternity

STRUCTURAL ISSUES

1. Consideration must be given to any implications for staff recruitment. All selection will be based on merit, appropriate experience and training (see Policy on Staff Selection and Recruitment).
2. Arrangements for appraisal and staff development will be free of bias.
3. The physical environment must be user-friendly for all staff and students.
4. No student will be refused admission on the basis of race, religion, gender or circumstances of birth. (See Admission Policy).
5. The school's facilities should be accessible for all students and staff with disabilities or a range of cultural needs as far as is reasonable.
6. All staff will be treated equally in terms of disciplinary procedures. (See L.A. Guidelines).

ORGANISATIONAL

1. Faculty policies should include a statement on equal opportunities with relation to the curriculum.
2. The policies, atmosphere and ethos of the school should promote equality.
3. All students should have equal access to resources.

4. Teaching and learning styles should be relevant to all students.
5. Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.
6. Clear guidelines should exist for those students requiring medication. (See Health & Safety Policy and Supporting students in school with medical conditions Policy).
7. Individual staff and students should follow clear guidelines on how to deal with problems related to verbal/physical abuse or harassment. (See Anti-bullying Policy).
 - a) All incidents should be investigated
 - b) Victims of abuse should be supported
 - c) Aggressors should be challenged and helped to realise the error of their ways
 - d) Incidents should be reported to L.A.
8. All students will be treated equally in matters of discipline. (See Behaviour Policy).
9. Allocation of tasks within class and around school should not reinforce gender stereotyping.
10. Entry into school, registration etc. should not reflect any bias or stereotyping or create barriers.

CURRICULAR

1. Resources should be monitored to reflect the various contributions made by a diverse society, and purchase of appropriate resources made to counteract gender or racial misrepresentation.
2. Books, posters, fabrics etc. should reflect diversity in British society as well as to represent the whole school population.
3. Lessons should afford opportunity for co-operative, collaborative work which promotes self esteem.
4. Strategies should be employed to encourage involvement in cross-curricular issues, e.g. careers.
5. All students will have equal access to extra-curricular activities.
6. Assessment procedures will not discriminate against students and achievement will be acknowledged.
7. Students should be made aware of festivals, customs, religious, foods, traditions, dress, etc., of groups other than the Christian majority which makes up the school population.
8. Opportunity will be given to reflect upon and celebrate cultural diversity and individual talents and abilities.
9. To promote tolerance and understanding between all peoples.

WIDER COMMUNITY

1. To promote equal opportunities for all parents by giving all parents information re children's progress.
2. To keep parents informed of school activities.
3. To encourage parents to attend curricular meetings.
4. To welcome all parents into school regardless of social group, gender, race or circumstances of birth.
5. To liaise with members of the wider community and to inform them of the work of the school.
6. To encourage visitors into the school who reflect the wider community.
7. To participate in events in the community, e.g. charity work.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

All staff, governors, students and parents are responsible for implementing the school policy and maximising the benefits of such a policy for all concerned.