

# FIRTHMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Equality Policy

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| Date policy approved | February 2024                  |
| Review frequency     | Annual                         |
| Review date          | February 2025<br>February 2026 |

This policy should be considered alongside other related policies within the school. Other related policies are:

SEN Policy and SEND Offer  
Accessibility Policy and Plan  
Safeguarding and Child Protection  
Prevent and Protect policy (Extremism and Radicalisation)  
Admissions Policy  
Curriculum Policy  
Community Cohesion Policy  
Sex and Relationships / PSHE policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions  
Recruitment and Selection Policy  
Other related HR policies  
Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

## **Introduction**

This policy reflects the Equality Act 2010 which introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into effect in April 2011. It replaces a number of equality legislations and supersedes all previous school policies on Disability, Ethnicity, Race and Gender. It covers the same groups that were protected by previous equalities-based legislation and refers to these as protected characteristics, specifically the principle of equal opportunities for all students, staff and members of our school community (including parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies).

At Firthmoor Primary School, our legal duty as an employer and a service comes from a range of legislation and associated codes of practice to carry out our functions and specific duties. It places a positive duty on us to ensure that the services we provide encourage participation and promote equality, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and address prejudice.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups regardless of the following characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership
5. Pregnancy and Maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or Belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual Orientation

The core activities of Firthmoor Primary School are teaching and learning. At this school, we are committed to maximising the educational opportunities of all children within the school and beyond.

### **Data Collection, publication and monitoring equality information**

We collect, analyse and publish data on the school population by various groups such as, gender, ethnicity, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Special Educational Needs or Disability and pupil premium. We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance of different groups. We use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those we serve and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil his or her potential. As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to practice. We aim to provide all pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.

Governing Bodies are required to publish equality information annually, relating to pupils who share a particular characteristic and are affected by the school's policies and practices. The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 has three aims under the general duty for schools:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality or opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

These are often referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. The Equality Act explains that the second aim (advancing equality of opportunity) involves, in particular, having due regard to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

It states that meeting different needs includes (among other things) taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It explains that compliance with the general equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

We are mindful of the laws relating to confidentiality when devising this scheme and Action Plan. Although there is a statutory duty to share information about the school's Equality Policy, we recognise that care must be taken when sharing or publishing statistics, data or information to ensure that any information published cannot be used to identify individuals.

The Equalities Policy will be available to all persons on request and explained to all stakeholders through:

- School website
- Governing Body meetings
- Staff meetings
- paper copies available on request

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles:

**1. All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

**2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

**3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

**4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

**5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

**6. We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.

**7. We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school

### **Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors. Admissions to the school are coordinated by the Local Authority admissions team.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

### 3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

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
- Equal treatment for Staff in:
  - Recruitment Selection
  - Training
  - Promotion
  - Appraisal

#### Race Equality

This section 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

#### Disability Equality

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

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- 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

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

## **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 of sex and gender reassignment
- Promote equality between men and women

## **Specific Duty to support Equality**

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish Equality Objectives and revise these objectives every 3 years
- Assess the impact of our policies and objectives, on pupils, staff and parents, in particular, the achievement levels of pupils
- Review and publish the school's Accessibility Policy and Plan

## **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. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

## **Community Cohesion**

In addition to addressing the aims outlined above, our school will also work hard to meet the duty to promote community. We will increase our focus on helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values and respecting people's different backgrounds and promoting positive relationships in the school and local area.

We recognise that the biggest influence on educational outcomes is social class and that this can also strongly affect community cohesion. We have programmes and strategies within school to 'narrow the gap' and to connect people from different social backgrounds.

## **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 carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from parents and carers
- Input from staff meetings, PD days and Training
- Feedback from the school council & PSHE lesson
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support
- Feedback at Governing body meetings

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

To ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements of equalities legislation and that this Scheme and Action Plan meet those duties by:

- Establishing their 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.
- Seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- 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.
- Welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- Ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

### **The Headteacher**

To implement this Scheme, ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and to report progress to the governing body.

- 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.
- Promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

- Treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.
- Reviews this scheme and objectives annually, updating at least every third year, sooner if indicated in outcome of review.
- Oversee the implementation of this scheme and revision of the objectives, ensuring equality of academic outcomes for different student groups.
- Provide opportunities and mechanisms for the sharing of good practice
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively

### **Teaching Staff**

To promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school in accordance with the school ethos and values, enabling students to access learning and maximise their progress.

- Challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, responding appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs
- Maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.

### **Students**

To treat each other with respect, to explore diversity with a healthy and positive approach, to value diversity, to speak out if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour or feel that they have been treated unfairly.

### **Tackling discrimination**

Harassment of any nature 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 and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body.

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

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation 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.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

### **Types of discriminatory incident**

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes

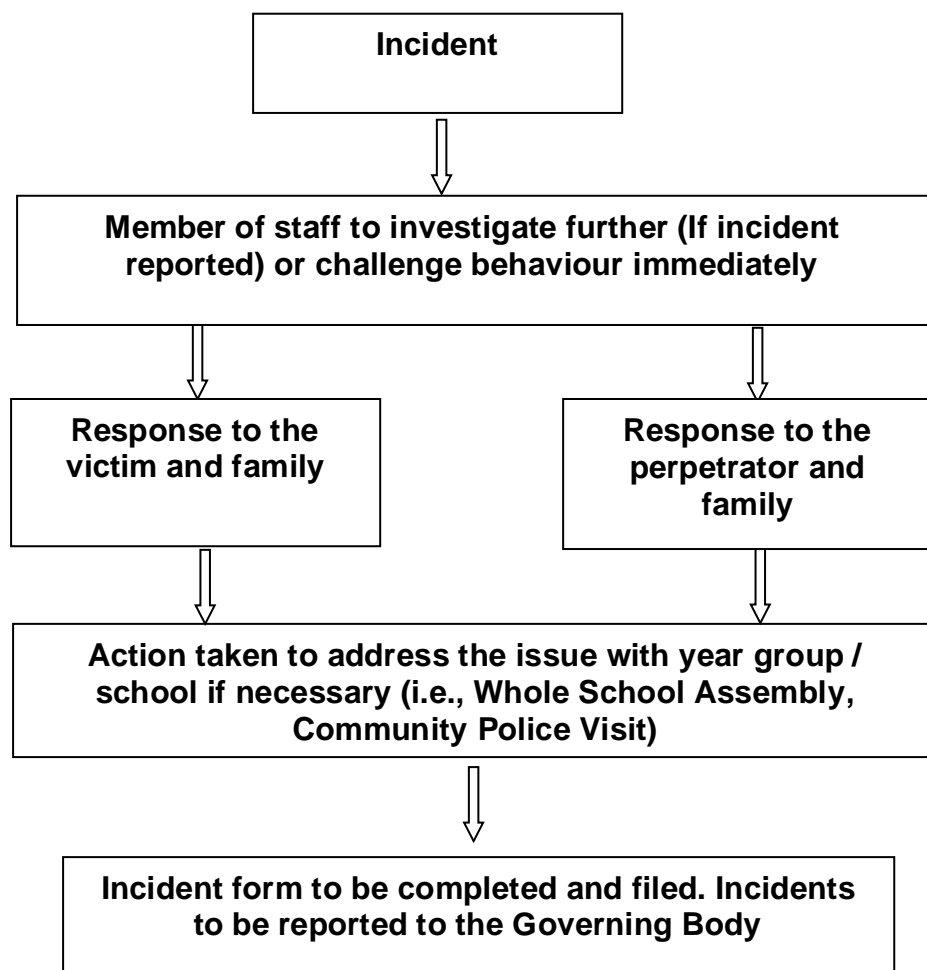
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- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia
- Bringing discriminatory material into school
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

### **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.

Our procedure for responding and reporting incidents is outlined below:



**Commissioning and Procurement**

The School, as required by law, will ensure that when we buy services from another organisation to support our function, the procured organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in our selection during any tendering process.

**Commitment to review**

The implementation of this equality scheme will be monitored within the school's self-evaluation and other review processes. The whole equality scheme will be reviewed at least every three years or earlier if there are any changes to the legislation.

**Commitment to publish**

We are committed to sharing information about our equality scheme as broadly as appropriate. To this end, we will publish an annual update consisting of impact assessment results, progress made, refinements, amendments and new actions. We will also publish the results of a full scheme review every three years– in which we will make proposals for future action.