

The Oak Tree Federation Equality and Diversity Policy 'Inspiring learning for life'



STATEMENT OF INTENT

At the Oak Tree Federation, we strive to celebrate individuality at the core of all that we do and seek to provide an environment which allows children to express themselves without fear of judgement. It is our belief that the best learning takes place when children feel safe. We believe that pupils, parents and carers, employees and all within our school community should have a safe and welcoming environment; free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We also promote learning about each other's identities, recognising our similarities, as well as what makes us unique. We want The Oak Tree Federation to be a place where diversity is celebrated and where individuals feel valued and respected for who they are. In order to shine a spotlight and build upon this diversity, it is essential that equality of opportunity and the absence of unfair discrimination be at the forefront of all the school's activities. We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith, religion or socio-economic background. We believe that children at The Oak Tree Federation should have a good understanding of what equality is and know that this does not mean that we all have the same but instead all have access to the resources we need to thrive; Children should have respect for what others need and be supportive of this. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.

We teach children about equality, diversity and inclusion through an in depth PSHE curriculum that shows clear progression throughout the school; teaching children about relationships, respect and keeping safe. We also adopt strong values of 'respect', 'kindness' and 'Working Together' within the school values and children know and reflect on these frequently throughout their time at school; learning about these values in stories but also making connections to their own lives. The Oak Tree Federation also delivers the 'Working with Others' programme whereby skills are taught throughout the whole school both within class and across ages in whole school 'Working With Others' events.

ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT OF INTENT

At the Oak Tree Federation we recognise that both globally and nationally, we face a growth in intolerance and racism. We also understand that within our educational setting, we have the platform to educate those in our community to challenge the normalisation of racism. We want to ensure that there is a whole school culture which actively promotes equality, diversity and inclusion for all. We seek to build a community in which everyone feels safe, seen, valued and listened to and is able to thrive in an environment that inspires learning for life. We strive to deliver a diverse education which teaches children about the changes within our country and the wider world; celebrating and appreciating cultures and traditions that are different to our own. We are committed to an ongoing, active effort to challenge racism around us and equip all those in our school community to have the resources and knowledge that they need to do this effectively. We believe that we have a duty to be educated on matters regarding race equality and to share knowledge and promote discussion with parents and carers in our community.

EQUALITY AND THE LAW

The Equality Act 2010 has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It also provides some changes that schools need to be aware of. 3

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. However, schools that are already complying with the law should not find major differences in what they need to do.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single-sex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools as follows:

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. This means that schools should no longer, as a matter of course, require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Schools are advised to review their existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations and Section 60 of the Equality Act.

The Single Equality Act reflects the Government's commitment, 'to narrowing gaps, and to tackling the barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility which hold individuals back, and bring heavy social and economic costs. Equality is central to building a strong economy and fairer society. It underpins the Coalition's guiding principles of freedom, fairness and responsibility'.

The Government believes that they need to reform education to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years. They believe, 'that too many children are held back by disadvantage and discrimination. We want to build a fair society where social mobility is unlocked; where everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to succeed. We welcome the fact that the Equality Act gives us all an opportunity to do this in a more streamlined and effective way'.

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to publish information to show how we are working to:

Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic* and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between groups of people

The ***protected characteristics** – which relate to a primary school – are:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion and belief

Other groups of pupils we believe it is also important to consider are:

- Looked-after pupils / children who were previously look-after
- Young carers
- Pupils eligible for free school meals or living in poverty

AIMS AND EXPECTATIONS

Gender Equality

What this means to us:

- Stereotyping means expecting girls and boys to behave or look a particular way. We recognise that there is still incredible pressure in society for us to conform to gender specific roles / looks and we need to teach children about this
- We value individuality and this includes individuality in children who don't want to act or dress in a way that is 'typically like a boy' or 'typically like a girl'
- We respect and support children's gender identities whether they accept, question or want to change the gender ascribed to them at birth

How do we promote gender equality?

- Staff use language carefully to reflect gender equality (for example: we wouldn't say 'ladies first', we would teach the children about letting each other through a door as a polite thing to do; we would talk about fire-fighters not firemen; police officers not police men or women; nurse not male nurse which suggests a man as a nurse is unusual)
- Teachers don't ask children to get into boy and girl groups / teams in (for eg) PE
- We run a girl-only football club to provide opportunities for girls, as these sporting activities are often dominated by boys, and to encourage greater participation among girls
- We teach the children about stereotyping within the curriculum

- We challenge stereotypes through the books we read children; choices of images we present etc
- We analyse all our data by gender to check if there is an issue we need to address (eg improving the attainment of boys in writing)

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We don't tolerate gender put-downs (for example: calling a boy 'a girl' to make him feel bad; calling a girl a tomboy because she plays football)
- We try to make sure reading books reflect our gender equality policy. If you find a book that you think gives the wrong message, please tell your child's class teacher – we won't be offended (some may slip through the net and we will be able to use them to teach children about gender equality). We do have books that are obviously aimed at girls or boys and we know these appeal to children – we are more worried about stories that give stereotypical messages about girls' or boys' roles in the world

Family Equality

What this means to us:

- We recognise the uniqueness of all family types and believe it's important to teach children that other families may look different from their own.
- We will celebrate families in within the RSE* / PSHE curriculum. Our hope and experience is that celebrating family diversity encourages children to share and therefore educate other children about the variety of family types in our community
- We use the term 'parents and carers' as a general term rather than 'mums and dads' to refer to children's significant adults
- We buy books that include a variety of family types.
- We recognise that children who are adopted into families or fostered often have specific needs and may need additional care. We are sensitive to areas of the curriculum / the calendar year that may affect children

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We don't tolerate any put downs about families and deal with them seriously – we take any put-down as an opportunity to educate children about diversity and equality
- We teach children about homophobia and homophobic put-downs. The casual use of 'gay' as a negative adjective is never tolerated and children are taught why this can never be acceptable
- We never leave children out of trips because their grown-ups can't afford to pay for them

Disability Equality

What this means to us:

- We celebrate different abilities in many ways while also supporting the specific needs children may experience. We teach children to celebrate difference and that difference is not about lack or less but about rights, needs, attitude and access. We teach the children that equality is not about everyone getting the same but about everyone getting what they need.
- We recognise that helping your child be equally included may need specific support and we will work with you and other agencies to ensure we do this well

- Disabilities can affect a child's achievement or social experience in very different ways. Although achievement is a major factor, we also are clear that a child's social experience is vital to a good education and can help your child achieve a positive social experience in a variety of ways

How do we promote disability equality and help all children get on well together?

- We teach children about disability equality through the curriculum as well as our general language and attitude
- Difference is often obvious to children and this benefits from being discussed and accepted openly to support positive relationships.
- All children at both Firlie and Laughton have equal access to all of school life.
- We are linked with 'Chailey Heritage Foundation'. The children have opportunities to learn about children from Chailey Heritage Foundation and the similarities and differences between our schools. The children have enjoyed learning about all of the activities that we do across both school.

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We talk to the children about different skills, achievements and abilities. We know that children/people can be competitive and avoid the 'top/bottom group' - this means that children experience learning with all children over time in mixed attainment groupings. They are specifically taught how to include every one and how to listen to each other's ideas respectfully
- We treat put downs related to ability/disability seriously. These can include put downs pertaining to high attainment (eg: geek; nerd) or low ability / attainment (eg: thick; stupid). Such put downs are unusual.

Race and Heritage Equality

What this means to us:

- We value all our children as individuals and value the diversity of racial and cultural heritage within our community. As a school with underrepresented ethnic and faith groups, we feel it is especially important to value and make visible not only the races and cultures represented within our community but those that are not currently represented – and to do this in a planned and proactive way.
- We teach children about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures in the curriculum and assemblies and include trailers / vans in discussions (and play resources) about 'homes'. We have books about GRT culture for the children to read. We hold assemblies to celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller month
- We make sure toys, displays, books etc reflect a range of people from different cultures and avoid stereotypes
- We have Refugee Week assemblies and teach the children about refugees as part of the curriculum
- We celebrate Black History Month in assemblies and are developing a more diverse / hidden history curriculum
- PSHE units help all children understand and respect our range of identities

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- We teach children about GRT insults (pikey; chav being the most common) and do not tolerate their use; racist comments / put-downs are never tolerated

Religious or Belief Equality

What this means to us:

- We believe that religious/belief education plays an important role in helping to keep our community a tolerant and inclusive place in which to live
- We value the diversity of religious belief and other philosophical beliefs our local and wider community. We also respect the right to have no religion or belief.
- Our Religious Education curriculum gives young people the opportunity to develop an understanding of their own and other people's beliefs and therefore helps young people live in a diverse society
- Children make visits to different places of worship within our community
- We respect the right of families to celebrate key religious festivals and authorise absences accordingly
- We respect the religious wishes of families regarding participation in school celebrations (for example Christmas performances and birthday assemblies)

What we avoid/don't tolerate:

- Put-downs related to belief or religion are never tolerated

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The responsibilities of the governors:

- Set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly and with equality.
- Ensure that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.
- Designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- Ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Support the Head teacher in implementing any actions necessary
- Engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy

The responsibilities of the executive head teacher and equality and diversity lead:

- To implement the school's equality and diversity policy and is supported by the governing body in so doing.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equality and diversity opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Executive Headteacher/Head of School ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- Promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.
- Treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

- Develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- Monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- Ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

The responsibilities of the class teachers, subject leaders and support staff

- Ensure that every person in school is treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against anyone.
- 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. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.
- When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics in our school include examples of the significant contributions women have made to developments in this country's history. In geography topics the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.
- Challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents on My Concern, and draw them to the attention of the Executive Headteacher/Head of School. Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.
- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- Understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy

TACKLING DISCRIMINATION

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour. We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns in conjunction with ESCC which collects evidence of racially motivated incidents each term, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

All staff across the Federation have been delivered trained on dealing with racist incidents in school. (See Racist Incident Policy)

All hate incidents or prejudice-based bullying behaviour are recorded on MyConcern by the staff member involved and all relevant staff are assigned to the concern.

TRAINING

Training for staff is specific to the current needs of the Federation. Whole staff training is identified on the Federation Improvement Plan. Current needs are identified through both the self-review process and staff appraisal process.

MONITORING

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Governing Body does this by:

- Appointing a designated equalities and diversity governor to monitor the implementation of this policy and progress of minority groups
- Monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school via a report from the Head of School/Executive Headteacher
- Taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents/carers, staff or pupils
- Monitoring the school's behaviour and exclusions policy, so that those from minority groups are not unfairly treated.
- Share all monitoring reports with the full governing body

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES – These can be found on the school website

- Accessibility plan
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Sex and Relationships Education Policy

REVIEW

The governors review this policy annually. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.