



*'I can do all things through him who strengthens me...'* Philipians 4:13

# Equality and Disability Policy

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Checked and Reviewed by:	Governing Body		
Approved by:	Governing Body		
Document Title:	Policy – Equality and Disability Policy		
Version Number:	3	Date of Next Review:	January 2024

## **Vision:**

As a Christian School this policy outlines the commitment of the staff and governors of Rattlesden CEVC Primary Academy to promote equality and fairness within our community. For our school this means ensuring each child and member of staff is valued, included and respected as a member of the community where all are known and loved by God. We aim to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, removing any factors which may hinder a child to flourish or be given opportunities and foster good relations between them. We will tackle the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes and prejudice for those with a protected characteristic, those perceived to have a protected characteristic and those associated with people who have a protected characteristic. We are committed to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

## **Legal duties**

This policy was written in line with the Equalities Act 2010 and with guidance from 'Valuing All God's Children, Church of England Education Office, 2019'.

The Equalities Act 2010 defines 'protected characteristics' as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

It also outlines the four kinds of unlawful behaviour as direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

**Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if a school were to refuse to let a pupil be a prefect because she is a lesbian.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents' meeting on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be "a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim". This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

**Harassment** has a specific legal definition in the Disability Act - it is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

**Victimisation** occurs when an individual is prevented or deterred from bringing or getting involved in a complaint regarding discrimination due to or linked to a ‘protected characteristic’.

Further guidance on this can be found in The Equalities Act 2010 Advice for School leaders, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Local Authorities DFE, January 2011.

## **Guiding principles**

1. In fulfilling the legal obligations referred to above and delivering our vision, we are guided by seven principles.

### **Principle 1: Advance equality of opportunity**

- We see all learners as of equal value regardless of their disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity or marital status, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect differences and treat all members of our school community as individuals, according to their needs.**

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities do not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences so all can succeed and flourish.

This may include:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds are recognised and celebrated and experiences of prejudice are recognised and addressed.
- sex, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised and met.

**Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging**

- We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote mutual respect and positive interactions and attitudes towards all people regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity or marital status, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation and that there is an absence of harassment, discrimination and victimisation.
- We intend that our policies and practices should benefit society as a whole, by fostering positive attitudes and greater social cohesion.

**Principle 5: We aim to address, reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist and eliminate discrimination.**

We are committed to promoting the understanding of the principles and practices of equality.

Through a well-planned and age-appropriate PSHE curriculum; whole school ethos and values; collective worship and practice, the pupils at our school are taught to respect equality, differences and diversity (and where appropriate, celebrate this), challenge discrimination and prejudice and treat others with dignity and respect.

We have policies in place, including behaviour, anti-bullying and code of conduct, which clearly set out our response to any incidences of prejudice incidents or bullying linked to the protected characteristics, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.

**Development of the Policy**

This policy was developed, taking in the views of all stakeholders, including staff, pupils, parents and governors.

**Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying**

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stands in the way of fulfilling the legal duties. A prejudice related incident is any incident which is perceived to be prejudice-related by the victim or any other person<sup>1</sup>.

Common prejudice-related incidents take on the form of: prejudicial language; ridicule or jokes; verbal abuse; physical assault; graffiti or damage to property; discriminatory behaviour, e.g. refusing to work with a pupil because of their religion; incitement to behave in a prejudicial manner, e.g. wearing racist badges and cyber bullying.

In order to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations, we meet our legal duty and guiding principles by addressing, reducing and removing:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Our policies, including behaviour, staff code of conduct and anti-bullying policies outline how prejudice-related incidents are identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with in order to provide a safe environment for all staff and pupils. We report all cases of prejudice and prejudice related bullying. We record and monitor incidents on our online system, CPOMS. By monitoring incidents, it allows us to ensure accountability and to identify patterns, training needs and successful strategies for dealing with these.

We take seriously our obligation to report the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were dealt with.

We take seriously and act upon any allegation of discrimination and harassment and create an environment where pupils are encouraged to speak up; know they will be listened to and that the school will deal with issues effectively. We have clear policies and practices in place to deal with these situations. All incidents will be dealt with in line with our behaviour

## **Roles and responsibilities**

1. The Trust will comply with equality legislation, oversee safeguarding, provide training, collect data.
2. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
3. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that there are effective policies, procedures, recording and reporting systems are in place and implementing these; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given

appropriate training and support; and for ensuring that all prejudice-related incidents are dealt with effectively and reported to the governing body.

4. All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom and challenge any prejudicial attitudes and behaviours
- deliver a well-planned curriculum, which promotes equality and differences and addresses the issues around prejudice.
- report any prejudice-related incidents that may occur according to our policies and procedures.
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

5. All pupils are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their own behaviour
- Support the school's equality ethos and values
- Report incidents to staff

6. Parents and carers are expected to:

- Support the school's equality ethos and values
- Understand the behaviour expected from their child
- Work with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes should their child be involved in an incident

### **Disseminating the policy**

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents.

This policy is published on our school website.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail, including up-to-date glossary of terms.

### **Links to other policies**

- PSHE, SMSC and RSE policies
- Online safety and ICT and computing policies
- Teaching and learning policy
- Admissions and attendance
- Staff recruitment and retention policies
- Code of conduct, complaints, whistle blowing and disciplinary policies
- Behaviour, exclusion and anti-bullying policies
- SEND and medical conditions policies
- Staff absence policy

### **Religious observance**

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, are kept up-to-date with legislation, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

### **Breaches of the policy**

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the headteacher and governing body.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Questionnaires, pupil voice and monitoring of incidents will inform the review of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless there is a change in legislation. Governors are informed of any prejudice incidents on a termly basis.