

SANDGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Single Equality Policy

Introduction

1. With effect from 1 October 2010 much of the Equality Act 2010 became law.

The Act provides for the reform and harmonisation of equality law and, in keeping with intention of its provisions which are in force and the spirit of those which are currently not, this Single Equality Policy replaces five of the School's policies which previously existed separately, namely: Equal Opportunities Policy; Race Equality Scheme; Gender Equality Scheme;

Disability Policy (Staff and Visitors); and Disability Policy (Pupils).

Public sector equality duty

2. The Act talks in terms of "protected characteristics". The following characteristics are protected characteristics:

- (1) Age
- (2) Disability
- (3) Gender reassignment
- (4) Pregnancy and maternity
- (5) Race
- (6) Religion or belief (including a lack of either)
- (7) Sex
- (8) Sexual orientation

3. The School is a Public Authority and is therefore subject to the public sector equality duty set out in the Act. Consequently, the School's Governing Body must, in the exercise of all of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

(1) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

(2) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and

(3) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

5. The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

6. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

(1) tackle prejudice; and

(2) promote understanding.

7. Compliance with the public sector equality duty may involve treating persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under the Act.

Socio-economic inequalities

8. Whenever it makes decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, the Governing Body will also have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

Definitions

9. Broadly speaking: "discrimination" means treating a person less favourably or unfavourably or putting them at a particular disadvantage because of a protected characteristic; "harassment" means an individual engages in unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, and the conduct has the purpose or effect violating another's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them; "victimisation" means an individual subjects another to a detriment on the basis that they have done, or are believed to have done, or may do, a 'protected act' as defined by the Act; "religion" means any religion; and "belief" means any religious or philosophical belief.

Mission Statement

10. The Governing Body, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and all other individuals within the School community are committed to the elimination of discrimination and the advancement and to the advancement of equality in every aspect of school life. This is a continuing commitment that extends from working in partnership with parents to help pupils to achieve their full potential out to the School's immediate community, and beyond.

Responsibility is considered to be joint and several and non-delegable.

Key Values

11. The commitment to the advancement of equality in every aspect of School life links to the following key values:

(1) the existence of a welcoming and friendly environment and atmosphere in which all types of prejudice and unacceptable or discriminatory behaviour or language are challenged and dealt with effectively;

(2) the valuing of diversity with each member of the School feeling equally valued and being treated with dignity and respect;

(3) self-respect and respect for each other going hand-in-hand;

(4) the provision of a secure and supportive environment for all needs;

(5) the promotion of understanding and tolerance of social and cultural differences through exposure, teaching (effective learning) and role models;

(6) the encouragement of good relations and positive attitudes;

(7) equal accessibility to benefits, facilities, services and resources; and

(8) the avoidance of stereotyping and the sharing of different viewpoints.

Strategy

12. The strategy by which the advancement of equality is to be achieved, measured and reviewed consists of the following:

(1) the creation of an Equality Policy setting out the law and duties and obligations placed on the Governing Body and others;

(2) the setting of action plans for different protected characteristics and related objectives to enable evidence of the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the Equality Policy to be measured (see Appendix 1); and

(3) the implementation of a process by which an overview of outcomes is compiled annually, equality impact assessments are made, and relevant

policies revised and amended when necessary.

Disability discrimination and accessibility for those with disabilities

13. An individual has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The effect of an impairment is long-term if it has lasted for at least 12 months; is likely to last for at least 12 months; or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

14. In addition to not discriminating against an individual by treating them unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability, a further duty is imposed by the Act to make reasonable adjustments which comprises the following three requirements:

(1) the first requirement is a requirement, where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage;

(2) the second requirement is a requirement, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage (for example, removing the physical feature in question, altering it, or

providing a reasonable means of avoiding it; and

(3) the third requirement is a requirement, where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.

15. In parallel with the ongoing duty (when necessary) to make reasonable adjustments, the Governing Body is responsible for preparing an accessibility plan (see Appendix 2), over a prescribed period, for:

(1) increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum;

(2) improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school; and

(3) improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

16. It is intended that the accessibility plan will apply equally for the benefit of disabled staff and disabled visitors to the School.

17. In preparing an accessibility plan the Governing Body must have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan.

18. The local authority has a similar duty in relation to preparing an accessibility strategy for the School and other schools for which it is responsible.

Equality impact assessments, monitoring of outcomes and policy review

19. In October of each year, or at a shorter interval if necessary, a review of the Equality Policy will take place to ensure both compliance with the law and its effectiveness; to record evidence and monitor outcomes arising from the setting of action plans and objectives for the previous year; and to carry out/revise equality impact assessment, as appropriate.

OFSTED Inspections and the School's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

20. OFSTED inspections will assess:

(1) the effectiveness of the Governing Body in challenging and supporting the School so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met; and

(2) the effectiveness with which the School promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination.

21. In its Self-Evaluation Form the School will set out reasons relating to its own assessment of its effectiveness in the way it puts the advancement of equality at the heart of its practices in all aspects of School life.

Complaint handling and record keeping

22. The School's Complaints Form, a copy of which can be found on the School's website or obtained from the School Office, will be the usual method by which any complaint about an alleged act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act. The complaint will then be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy. It is acknowledged however that not all such incidents will be complained about or will justify such formal action and/or will be resolved more quickly, informally and appropriately by other means at a lower level, for example, by the giving of guidance by a teacher in a classroom setting or by a playground supervisor during a break time.

23. Regardless of how a complaint or incident is identified or pursued the details relating to it and its outcome should always be recorded on a Single Equality Policy Record Form (Appendix 3) for the purposes of data gathering, further monitoring and, where appropriate, the taking of remedial action.

Appendix 1

Disability, Race, Gender (Sex), School life, and Community

Action Plan:

1. To advance equality generally in accordance with the Single Equality Policy, but particularly in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, race and sex, in order: to eliminate discrimination and all other forms of unlawful conduct; to remove or minimise disadvantage; to make all necessary reasonable adjustments; to promote inclusion and participation in all aspects of school life; to foster good relations; to tackle prejudice; to combat bullying; to promote understanding; to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage; to promote relationships between the School and parents and learners in 'hard to reach' communities; to promote community cohesion; and to share responsibility for achieving all of these things.

Objectives:

2. The Governing Body and the School has set itself the following Objectives (which are to be reviewed annually) in furtherance of its Action Plan:

(1) To place the advancement of equality at the heart of all relevant School policies and central to all aspects of School life, including in relation to the recruitment, selection, appointment, retention and remuneration of staff and their promotion / professional development / training opportunities.

In relation to the curriculum and Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE), to ensure that the following subjects are addressed at different key stages:

(a) Key Stage 1: Different types of teasing and bullying; bullying is wrong; how to get help with bullying.

(b) Key Stage 2: Awareness of the nature and consequences of antisocial prejudicial and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism; taking the initiative in giving support; and recognising and challenging offending behaviour and stereotypes assertively.

(2) To ensure the advancement of equality is an agenda item at all meetings of the Governing Body and of the School's Senior Leadership Team;

(3) To ensure all members of staff have undertaken training relating to equality and diversity and how to identify and deal with discrimination.

(4) To reduce and eliminate via an Accessibility Plan all barriers to the curriculum and participation in all aspects of School life for prospective pupils and staff, existing pupils and staff, and visitors, including barriers connected with the physical environment of the School;

(5) To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum which is designed and modified to differentiate the learning experience in order to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils;

(6) To observe and record imbalances due to disability, race or sex across the curriculum which may be connected with exclusion or unfairness;

(7) To ensure discussions with pupils to help evaluate the effectiveness of the School's strategy to promote equality;

(8) To ensure direct observation of learners in lessons and about the School by teachers and teaching assistants (to be co-ordinated by the Assessment leader) to evaluate the impact of the School's strategies in promoting outcomes, such as pupils language and literacy skills, their social and cultural development and the ability of learners from different backgrounds to work together;

(9) To ensure community cohesion through participation between the School and the parents/carers of its pupils (in furtherance of the relevant statement of intent), the School and its PTA, the School and the voluntary sector and paid for service providers; and through outreach events, particularly those directed towards 'hard to reach' communities;

(10) To ensure discussions take place between staff and the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body in relation to attainment data and the relative performance of different groups of learners, and emphasis placed on strategies to address any underachievement; and

(11) To ensure that an effective and robust complaints procedure exists.

(12) To improve outcomes as described within the Every Child Matters

Agenda and the Kent Children's and Young People's Plan.

Equality Impact Assessment and monitoring of outcomes

3. At the beginning of each academic year the School's Senior Leadership Team will evidence for the Governing Body compliance with each objective contained within the extant Equality Policy. This will enable the Governing Body to assess compliance, monitor outcomes, and to assess the equality impact of the objectives and the Policy itself (both positive and negative), with a view (each October) to re-setting objectives or setting new ones and, if necessary, amending the Policy.

Appendix 2

Accessibility Plan

Objective Period Responsibility Outcome

1. To Improve the physical environment of the School for disabled users.

Ongoing Governing Body (a) Disabled parking bay provided mid-2010

(b) Ongoing process of identifying physical barriers which can be removed or changed to improve the physical environment of the School.

(c) Planning of improvements and refurbishments focuses on the needs of disabled users, for example, provision of a disabled toilet in the proposed community room.

2. To improve the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School

curriculum. Ongoing Senior Leadership Team

(a) Supporting Staff: TA lead to work off-line 4 sessions a week to support staff in setting up and implementing programmes for children identified with specific needs.

(b) Early speech and language intervention:

(i) Foundation stage children screened on entry for speech and learning difficulties.

(ii) Staff to attend Language Link Training.

3. To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take part in extra-Ongoing Senior Leadership Team

(a) Discussions with providers to ensure that disabled pupils are able to participate and any curricular activities. necessary reasonable adjustments are made.

(b) Specifically drawing to the attention of disabled individuals the opportunities available for extra-curricular activities.

4. To ensure all members of the School community are able to access and/or receive information about the School.

Ongoing School Office

(a) Weekly newsletter sent out in hard copy in book bags and provided in soft copy (via email) to those who have requested a preference for receiving the newsletter in this way.

(b) School prospectus kept up to date and provided free on request.

(c) Text alerts sent out to parents/carers who have expressed a preference for receiving information and reminders in this way.

(d) School website updated on a regular basis.

Appendix 3

CONFIDENTIAL

Single Equality Policy Record Form

This form should be completed following the reporting and conclusion of any equality related incident or complaint, and submitted to Beverley Thompson.

Incident reported by (print name):

Date of Incident:

Description of incident (including nature of incident, offender, victim and location):

Signed: Date:

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OFFICE USE ONLY

Outcome/ Follow-up action