



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EQUALITY POLICY

JAN 2017

Review JAN 2020

Introduction

Mercia Learning Trust has developed this Equality Statement to help us to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act's provisions cover all aspects of school life such as the treatment of:

- pupils and prospective pupils
- parents and carers
- employees
- local community

The Equality Act 2010 has simplified anti-discrimination laws by having a single equality Act. This makes it easier for people to understand and comply with the law. The 2010 Act has also strengthened protection in some situations.

The act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to treat someone differently, either through direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and by failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

Since 6 April 2011 all public bodies including:

- local authorities
- Schools, colleges and other state-funded educational settings including academies

have been bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Age applies to a school as an employer, but not with regard to the treatment of pupils and prospective pupils.

We are bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity; and
- (c) foster good relations

The general duty is supported by specific duties, these are to:

- Publish information which demonstrates our compliance with the duty to have due regard for the three aims of the general duty and to annually repeat this.
- Prepare and publish our specific and measurable objectives to achieve the three aims of the duty and undertake this no later than in four years time.

Leadership

Within our school all **staff and Governors** at the school are responsible for ensuring the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Eliminating harassment and bullying

The school will not tolerate any form of harassment and bullying of pupils or our staff

Training

We will provide relevant training by using all suitable delivery methods.

Procurement and Contractors

We will take steps to ensure that contractors working at the school operate within the requirements of our Equality Statement.

Visitors to the School

We will take steps to ensure that all visitors to our school including parents act within the requirements of our Equality Statement.

Publishing the Statement

We will publish our statement on our website, making paper copies available on request.

Reporting our progress

We will report progress against the Duty through our regular reporting mechanisms. All policies to be reviewed using the Equality Act Toolkit to ensure compliance.

Reviewing and Revising the Equality Statement

We will review and revise the Statement no later than four years from publication of this statement.

How we will meet the General Duty & Specific Duty

We are required to meet the three aims under the General Duty as set out by the Equality Act 2010 and our approach ie information and objectives set out in Annex 1 and 2.

Annex 1

Equalities Information

We have reviewed how we currently perform as a school in the context of the requirements of the General Duty and the Protected Characteristics.

In collating the equality information we have:

- Identified evidence already in school of policies and practice and identified gaps
- Explored how we engage with protected characteristics
- Analysed our effectiveness in terms of equality

Our equality evidence highlights:

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

Annex 2

EQUALITY ACT 2010 TOOLKIT

1. Meeting our Equality Duties

Equality legislation requires that we have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

Discrimination means treating someone less favourably than a “comparator”.

Harassment (a form of discrimination) means violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation means discrimination because of a previous complaint or supporting someone's complaint.

The extended scope of the Equality Act includes discrimination by **association** or based on **perception**

To fulfil the aims of the general duty, the school has had two sets of specific duties placed on them. These are:

- To publish information which demonstrates our compliance with the duty to have due regard for the three aims of the general duty
- To prepare and publish specific and measurable objectives which we will pursue over the coming years to achieve the three aims

The duty to publish information

The first of the two specific duties must have been completed by the school no later than 6 April 2012. It must then be undertaken at least annually.

The duty to set objectives

The second duty must have been completed by the school by 6 April 2012 and must be undertaken again no more than four years later.

2. Equality Information

Stage 1

The matrix below will be used to evidence information on the three stands of the General Duty within our policies and practice.

Protected Characteristic	General Duty Aims		
	Evidence to show that we eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?	Evidence to show that we advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?	Evidence to show that we advance good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?
Race			
Disability			
Sex			
Gender Reassignment			
Pregnancy and Maternity			
Age			
Religion and Belief			
Sexual Orientation			

Notes

- Have we considered all the qualitative and quantitative equality information?
- Have we identified any information gaps?
- How we are going to fill in the information gaps and include any engagement that we will undertake?
- The information published will include information on the effects that our policies and practices have had on employees, children and young people and others from protected groups.

Stage 2

The matrix below will be used to evidence how we engage with protected groups on the three strands of the General Duty. Where there are gaps, we will indicate if evidence is not available due to not starting engagement, it is difficult to engage or that engagement is not applicable. If the latter applies, we will state why we have decided that it is not necessary to engage with this group.

Protected Characteristic	General Duty Aims		
	How have we engaged with the protected groups in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?	How have we engaged with the protected groups in order to advance equality of opportunity?	How do we engage with protected groups in order to foster good relations?
Race			
Disability			
Sex			
Gender Reassignment			
Pregnancy and Maternity			
Age			
Religion and Belief			
Sexual Orientation			

Notes

- We will engage at the beginning of the decision making process – to gather opinions, evidence and ideas.
- We will engage at the point of developing options and make our decision to better understand the perceptions, views, preferences, weigh up different options and come to a final decision
- We will engage when implementing our decision to develop action plans and implementation strategies
- Engagement will help us to:
 - Identify particular needs, patterns of disadvantage and poor relations between groups
 - Understand the reasons for disadvantage, low participation rates and poor relations
 - Design initiatives to meet these needs and overcome these barriers
 - Fill gaps in equality information
 - Determine priorities
 - Prioritise which objectives are most likely to make the biggest difference to tackling equality

Stage 3

The matrix below will be used to summarise our equality analysis using our evidence from Stage One and Stage Two. This will give us a brief analysis of our school's effectiveness in promoting each of the 3 strands of the General Duty. There should be no gaps on this matrix. This will provide the starting point for the setting of Equality Objectives.

Protected Characteristic	General Duty Aims		
	How effective are we at eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?	How effective are we at advance equality of opportunity?	How effective are we at fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?
Race			
Disability			
Sex			
Gender Reassignment			
Pregnancy and Maternity			
Age			
Religion and Belief			
Sexual Orientation			

3. Setting Equality Objectives

We can decide our own priorities. However we will need to show that any decision we make is evidence based. It is not expected that objectives are set for the sake of setting an objective.

We are expected to collect and analyse evidence relating to the protected characteristics. This will need to include evidence gathered through consultation and the involvement of people from protected groups, pupils, parents, staff and trade unions.

The equality objectives we agree need to be located within our mainstream plans. Therefore, our Equality Statement needs to be only a brief signposting document.

Equality Objectives can be set on key improvement areas such as:

- Poor attendance
- Exclusion differentials
- Attainment differentials
- Access (physical and curriculum)
- Bullying
- Incidents based on prejudice of a protected characteristic
- Children who are missing from education

- Needs of parents/carers (eg. disabled, same-sex)
- Diversity friendly resources (eg. books)
- Staff training
- Intergenerational activities
- Workforce diversity
- Monitoring

Possible areas of activity across each of the protected characteristics include:

Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gypsy/Roma/Traveller education ✓ Cultural competence of school staff ✓ Tackling racist attitudes and racial incidents ✓ Narrowing gaps in attainment ✓ English as an additional language (EAL) ✓ Communicating with parents/carers who need information in other languages ✓ Participation in activity such as Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month and Refugee Week ✓ Multicultural resources
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gender role stereotypes ✓ Involving fathers ✓ Sexual/sexist bullying ✓ Pregnancy related discrimination ✓ Gender pay gap ✓ Families affected by domestic abuse
Gender Reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bullying Policy to include reference to Transphobic bullying ✓ Adoption of Sheffield LGBT Education Charter ✓ Staff/pupils who may be going through gender identity issues ✓ Staff/pupils who may be going through gender transformation ✓ A parent/carer who might be going through gender transformation ✓ Different kinds of families, ✓ Signposting to outside support for individuals ✓ Marking LGBT History Month and International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO)
Religion or Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prayer needs ✓ Dietary needs ✓ Religious observance ✓ The needs of non-religious members of the school community ✓ Religious intolerance ✓ Religious implications of school uniform policy ✓ Parental withdrawal from visits to places of worship

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Withdrawal from other activities, Staff withdrawal from RE teaching ✓ Collective worship ✓ Vetting of speakers ✓ Multi-faith RE curriculum
Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bullying Policy to include reference to homophobic bullying ✓ Adoption of Sheffield LGBT Education Charter ✓ Role model lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) people in the curriculum ✓ Different kinds of families, including those with same-sex parents ✓ Relationships education within SRE ✓ Support for young people questioning their sexuality ✓ Tackling homophobic language ✓ Working to remove barriers to staff “coming out” ✓ Signposting to outside support for individuals ✓ Marking LGBT History Month and International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO)
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awareness of the various forms of disability ✓ Access to premises and the curriculum ✓ Narrowing the educational attainment gaps of disabled pupils ✓ Making adjustments for all stakeholders ✓ Disability-related bullying ✓ Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees
Access Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access to premises and the curriculum Increasing access to the curriculum ✓ Improving to the school’s physical environment ✓ Making written information available to pupils in a range of different ways
Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access to premises and the curriculum Increasing access to the curriculum ✓ Activity around identity and diversity ✓ School linking ✓ Using visits and guest visitors ✓ Current issues in the local community ✓ Intergenerational activity ✓ Inter generational work ✓ Using LGBT History Month and International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO), Black History Month etc

Examples of an equality objective:

- A school identifies that boys are underachieving in Maths. Average scores show that 72% of girls are achieving the expected levels, compared to 48% of boys. The school sets an objective to improve this figure over a three year period to 68% of boys reaching the required grade.

“By July 2014, the % of boys achieving Level 4+ in maths will have increased by 20%”.

- A school has identified that school events, including parents’ evenings, are poorly attended by Pakistani parents, whose children currently make up 45% of the pupil roll.

“In the next academic year, we will introduce new approaches to encourage the Pakistani community to attend school events, aiming to get at least 15% attendance from that community”.

- Having carried out an anonymous survey, a school finds that there are incidences of bullying of the heterosexual friends of LGB pupils.

“To raise the issue of homophobic bullying through assemblies, tutor group discussions and through a re-emphasis within the PSHE curriculum, so that:

- ***there is an immediate increase in the reporting of such incidents using the formal processes***
- ***a repeat anonymous survey six months from now shows a reduction in incidents.”***

Publishing our equality objectives and action plan.

- The regulations do not specify where we should publish our objectives. There are a number of places where we could publish our objectives.
- It is recommended that our equality objectives and action plan are published, along with our equalities information as an Annex of our Equality Statement.