

Elizabeth Woodville School	
Policy Name:	Equality Policy
Owner:	Assistant Headteacher
Statutory:	Yes
Date Ratified:	By Governing Body December 2022
Review date:	December 2023

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and legislative drivers

Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities and recognising their role in promoting an understanding of equality for different groups of people. Much of this work is in response to legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings, but it also sits within the specific context of a school's role in providing learning and opportunities for all - it is about fairness, rights and justice.

Equality legislation exists to protect people but also to try and advance equality. Inequality still persists in the UK despite 40 years of equality legislation. The recognition of diversity and promotion of inclusive and equality practices will help to overcome this disparity.

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act by removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above i.e:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

1.2 Specific Duties

The Act also introduced specific duties, which are designed to help public authorities to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED is set out on the face of the Act, while the specific duties are set out in secondary legislation.

The Specific Duties require schools to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish equality objectives every four years (one or more as is proportionate to the organisation).

Section 2

2.1 School Context

EWS Academy is a fully comprehensive community school split between two sites which are 9 miles apart. The School is situated in a relatively prosperous catchment area, compared to national averages, centered around villages on the southern fringe of Northamptonshire. The School is committed to fulfilling the full positive potential of every student. Although the student profile has changed in recent years, the vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.

EWS currently has around 1082 students of whom 7% are from ethnic minorities which is well below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is 7% (national average = 21.3%).

2.2 Overall aims of our Equality Policy

The Governing Body of EWS Academy is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the school, and providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all. This Equality Policy for EWS Academy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. In the implementation of this policy the Governing Body will:

- ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio- economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction
- promote diversity and equality for all staff and value the contributions made by individuals and groups of people from diverse cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and distinctive backgrounds
- promote and sustain an inclusive and supportive study and work environment which affirms the equal and fair treatment of individuals in fulfilling their potential and does not afford unfair privilege to any individual or group
- treat part time staff fairly and equally
- challenge inequality and less favourable treatment wherever practicable
- promote greater participation of under-represented groups of staff by encouraging positive action to address inequality
- promote an environment free of harassment and bullying on any grounds in relation to all staff.

2.3 Responsibility for Implementation

The Governing Body has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed at least every two years, to ensure it remains commensurate with the law and best practice. The Senior Leader with responsibility for equalities issues will oversee the implementation of this policy.

The SLT is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all equal opportunities policies and procedures and reporting on the progress made in achieving equalities targets to the Governing Body. The Headteacher has overall delegated responsibility for co-ordinating the day-to-day operation of the policies and procedures with the senior leadership team.

2.4 Responsibility and Liability

All members of staff remain personally responsible for ensuring that they act within the law. The Senior Leadership Team of the School are responsible for ensuring that all staff perform their duties in a lawful manner and that proper training and support is provided accordingly. In certain circumstances the Governing Body could be vicariously liable for actions carried out by staff purportedly in the School's name. Any member of staff may be personally liable if, whilst on School business and despite guidance and training from the School, they behave illegally.

2.5 Related Policies

All School policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity policy. The following directly relevant policies and procedures support the School's implementation process:

- SEN Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy

- Disability and Equality Plan.

Annual data monitoring and action plans will be developed and maintained as appropriate in relation to areas such as race, disability, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation and work-life balance. Appropriate objectives will be set. Equality and diversity awareness will be built into all School planning and review processes. All related policies, procedures and action plans will be implemented with the co-operation of and in consultation with staff, students and Trades Union representatives

2.6 Community Cohesion

In order to achieve a cohesive community, we need to:

- Promote understanding and engagement between communities.
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community.
- Understand the needs and hopes of all our communities.
- Tackle discrimination and Increase life opportunities for all.
- Ensure teaching and the curriculum explores and addresses issues of diversity.

2.7 Race Equality

We aim to:

- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good race relations
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.

There are named members of the senior leadership team who are responsible for equal opportunities and with responsibility for dealing with reported racist incidents. In addition to this all staff have responsibility for promoting awareness of race equality issues, positive images, balance and appreciation of diversity through these aspects of the curriculum.

2.8 Gender Equality

EWS Academy has due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator as explored further in our school's Behaviour and Anti- Bullying policies.

We understand 'sex' to refer to the biological differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider social roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognise and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage. We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our school's functions and services. In order to do this we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area,

- Consult all staff, students, parents and relevant local communities,
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality,
- Ensure governors, staff, students, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality ,
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap

2.9 Victimisation

EWS Academy recognises it is unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Act by their parent or sibling.

2.10 Auxiliary Aids

The school will make reasonable adjustment to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

2.11 Evaluation of Provision

Set out below are the key criteria that we undertake to use as a school to evaluate our provision and to inform our targets and plans for development.

i. Curriculum and Teaching

Race equality and ethnic and cultural diversity are promoted, and racism and discrimination challenged, through learning in all areas of the curriculum and through the resources and teaching methods used

Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the mainstream curriculum, by taking account of their individual cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs, and by targeting work appropriately

Wherever possible, steps are taken to provide experience of diversity through personal encounter with diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

ii. Admission, Attendance and Discipline

The admission process (and selection criteria) is fair and equitable to students from all ethnic groups.

The school monitors pupil attendance by ethnic group and uses the data to develop strategies to address poor attendance - making appropriate allowance for leave of absence for religious observance.

The school's procedures for discipline and behaviour management, including exclusion, are fair and applied equally to all students, irrespective of ethnicity. However, we are sensitive to the fact that responses to situations may vary across different cultural /ethnic /faith backgrounds and take care to bear this in mind.

iii. Personal Development, Attainment and Progress

The school recognises and values many forms of personal and academic achievement, and all students are encouraged and enabled to reach their highest personal standards.

Planned and targeted support is given to address any disparities in progress or achievement that are identified through our ethnic monitoring procedures and analysis of data.

Provision for pastoral care and guidance (including careers guidance) takes account of ethnic and cultural diversity, seeking to promote equality and challenge stereotyping.

iv. **Attitudes and Environment**

Every care is taken to ensure that all aspects of the communal life, environment and ethos of the school promote equality, celebrate diversity and negate all forms of prejudice and discrimination

All incidents of racism or racial harassment are dealt with according to published guidance on dealing with racist incidents and collection of data.

v. **Parents, Governors and Community Partnership**

All the school's forms of communication with, and involvement of parents and carers are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all community members of all ethnic groups are encouraged to participate in the life of the school, whether as governors or in other capacities, and positive steps are taken to include under-represented groups

Community access to school premises and facilities is equally available to all ethnic groups

2.11 Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

All procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and professional development of staff are planned and monitored to ensure equality and avoid conscious or unconscious racial discrimination.

Staff are supported through training and management to develop their effectiveness in dealing with race equality issues.

2.12 The Roles and Responsibilities within our School Community

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 All governors, staff, volunteers, students and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Equality Policy.

In addition: the school governors are responsible for ensuring that the School prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews the Equality Policy

The Headteacher works with the SLT to:

- ensure staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- 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.
- curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities take account of the policy
- incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies,
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues

Our governing body will:

- 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 headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy

- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years.

Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy.

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child.

Our school staff will:

- 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
- make known any queries or training requirements.

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy.

2.13 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy was published on September 2022 It will be actively promoted and disseminated via school website and/or newsletter, with parents groups, with the school council, FROG VLE, Governor meetings, assemblies and tutor sessions.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

2.14 Equality Objectives

Using the views of pupils, parents, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed every 4 years (see Section 3).

Race

- Race hate crimes are centrally recorded and reported upon to the Local Authority. Any such incidents are treated seriously with severe sanctions imposed.
- Students' are tracked by groups, including ethnicity. Performance compared to the whole school community is monitored in relation to academic indicators as well as behaviour.
- Teaching methods will encourage positive attitudes to racial diversity and equality. Build on previous community cohesion day to promote greater understanding.

Disability

- Hate crimes based on disability are centrally recorded and reported upon to the Local Authority. Any such incidents are treated seriously with severe sanctions imposed in response.
- We will avoid stereotypical assumptions about students' abilities and aptitudes.
- We will take active steps to ensure that disabled parents are encouraged to become involved in the school. Participation will be monitored (eg parents' evenings).

Sex

- Sexual crimes are centrally recorded and reported upon to the Local Authority. Any such incidents are treated seriously with severe sanctions imposed in response.
- Students' are tracked by groups, including sex. Performance compared to the whole school community is monitored in relation to academic indicators as well as behaviour.
- Teaching methods will promote achievement equally from both boys and girls.

2.15 Responding to prejudice based incidents:

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

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, 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.