

Ashleigh Primary School and Nursery, Wymondham

“We are all stars, Ashleigh makes us shine”



**EQUALITY POLICY with
EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2021 – 2024**

Persons Responsible – Governors, Inclusion Manager

Date of policy: February 2021

**Full Review:
Annual report on website:**

Adopted by Full Governing Body

Signed

Date

Chair of Governors

Due consideration has been given to all children/adults/stakeholders with regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

EQUALITY POLICY with EQUALITY OBJECTIVES (2021 – 2024)

Aims and values

Ashleigh Primary School and Nursery is a safe & creative environment. We are a happy, positive and vibrant forward-thinking community, where each child and adult is valued. All children are encouraged to achieve, be independent, confident and resourceful. We believe our role is to facilitate children to become successful adults.

“We are all stars, Ashleigh makes us shine.”

This policy applies to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and community members. The aims and values outlined here apply to the full range of our policies and practices.

We aim to provide equality and excellence for all, in order to promote the highest possible standards. We consider all learners and their parents/carers to be of equal value, irrespective of disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion/beliefs and sexual orientation. However, treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We respect and value differences and our policies and practices therefore reflect the diverse range of life experiences, needs and viewpoints of all stakeholders.

We welcome our responsibility to foster a culture of respect for others within a caring, cohesive environment. All members of the school community are encouraged to develop positive relationships reflecting their status as members of a diverse global community. We acknowledge that it is very important for us to all work together in achieving our aim of being a fully inclusive and accessible community, promoting community cohesion and, ultimately, in providing a quality learning experience for our children.

We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, whether because of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or gender reassignment, marital status, family status, sexuality, religion or beliefs, disability, age or any other condition or requirement which places a person at a disadvantage.

The Equality Act 2010

It is the school’s responsibility to be familiar with the content of The Equality Act 2010 and ensure full compliance with the specific duties of the Single Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation, providing a single consolidated discriminatory law. The Act introduced a new public sector single equality duty which came into force on 6th April 2011. The Act forms the framework for our single equality policy, which addresses these changes.

The Equality Act 2010 encompasses:

1. The General Equality Duty

The aim of the **general equality duty** is to integrate consideration of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of public authorities.

We must take due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.

2. The Specific Equality Duties

This policy also addresses the **specific duties** of the Act to:

- engage with interested groups and individuals
- publish equality information
- formulate and publish equality objectives.

The **specific duties** place a requirement on schools to publish equality information. We must show how the school has complied with the **general duties** and we must produce information at least annually from the first date of publication.

The **specific duties** also place a requirement on schools. These must demonstrate what a school could reasonably achieve to meet one or more aims of the equality duties, showing stakeholders' involvement in developing the objectives. Our equality objectives must be published at least every 3 years.

Meeting the specific duties

We recognise our specific duties to gather, analyse and publish equality information on an annual basis. In order to improve outcomes and effectiveness, we will publish:

- information of the effect that our policies and practices have had on all members of the school community and those from the protected groups
- information on how our policies and practices have furthered the three aims of the general equality duty
- details of engagement with key stakeholders

We will formulate and publish, at least every 3 years, specific and measurable objectives in relation to the protected characteristics that relate to schools.

From September 2012 we also have a duty to provide auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments to disabled children where these are not being supplied through the SEN framework.

Protected Characteristics

Throughout this policy, reference will be made to the "protected characteristics" in order to identify groups potentially at risk of "unlawful behaviour".

These are:

- gender
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage and civil partnership
- age (Age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment. This does not apply to children)

1. Gender

We shall make sure that children of one gender are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other children. We will constantly check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of boys and girls. The Act does contain an exception which permits single sex sports but, where this applies, an opportunity to participate in comparable activities will be offered to the opposite gender.

2. Race/ ethnicity

The term race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'. Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

Segregation of children by race is always direct discrimination. We know that claims that segregated treatment is 'separate but equal' cannot be sustained where race is concerned. We have adopted the Norfolk County policy model procedure to report and deal with any racist incidents.

3. Disability

A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

In relation to physical impairment:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.
- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis.
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met.
- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.

- Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

4. Religion/ belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief. A religion need not be mainstream or well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within religions may be considered a religion. Cults and new religious movements may also be considered religions or beliefs.

'Religious belief' goes beyond beliefs about and adherence to a religion or its central articles of faith and may vary from person to person within the same religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.

A non-religious belief may be a philosophical belief, such as humanism or atheism. A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world.

The school's curriculum content is exempt. Therefore we continue to deliver a broad, inclusive curriculum to which all children are entitled, without fear of challenges based on religious views.

5. Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to.

- Some people are only attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men).
- Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people).
- Some people are only attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people).

Everyone is protected from being treated unfavourably because of sexual orientation, whether they are bisexual, gay, lesbian or heterosexual. Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.

We ensure that children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment.

6. Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, as is more likely for school pupils, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention known to someone – it does not matter who this is, whether it is someone at school or at home or someone like a doctor. Once they have proposed to undergo gender reassignment they are protected, even if they take no further steps or they decide to stop later on. They do not have to have reached an irrevocable decision that they will undergo gender reassignment, but as soon as there is a manifestation of this intention they are protected.
- start or continue to dress, behave or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person

- undergo treatment related to gender reassignment, such as surgery or hormone therapy
- have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004

It does not matter which of these applies to a person for them to be protected because of the characteristic of gender reassignment.

It is rare for primary school children to consider gender reassignment but, should the occasion occur, a number of issues will arise which would need to be handled with sensitivity.

7. Pregnancy and maternity

- The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic.

It is discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger.

It is direct sex discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.

The School as an employer

For employers, the following are also protected characteristics:

- age
- marriage/civil partnership

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development irrespective of disability, ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, age and marriage/civil partnership.

‘Unlawful behaviour’, as outlined in the Act, includes:

1. Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when you treat anyone (child or adult) less favourably than you treat (or would treat) anyone else because of a protected characteristic.

- Discrimination based on association

Direct discrimination also occurs when you treat anyone less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity). This might occur when you treat anyone less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic.

- Discrimination based on perception

Direct discrimination also occurs when you treat anyone less favourably because you mistakenly think that they have a protected characteristic.

2. Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when you apply a provision, criterion or practice in the same way for all people or a particular group of people, but this has the effect of putting people sharing a protected characteristic within the whole group at a particular disadvantage.

3. Discrimination arising from disability

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when you treat a disabled anyone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment.

Discrimination arising from disability is different from direct discrimination.

Direct discrimination occurs because of the protected characteristic of disability. For discrimination arising from disability, the motive for the treatment does not matter; the question is whether the disabled person has been treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability. Discrimination arising from disability is also different from indirect discrimination. There is no need to show that others have been affected alongside the individual disabled person, or for the disabled person to compare themselves with anyone else.

4. Harassment

There are three types of harassment which are unlawful under the Equality Act:

- a. Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic
- b. Sexual harassment
- c. Less favourable treatment of a person because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

- a. Harassment related to a protected characteristic.

Harassment occurs when a person is subject to unwanted behaviour which is related to a relevant protected characteristic and which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating a person's dignity or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

The word 'unwanted' means 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. It is not necessary for the person to say that they object to the behaviour for it to be unwanted.

In this context 'related to' has a broad meaning and includes situations where the person who is on the receiving end of the unwanted behaviour does not have the protected characteristic himself or herself, provided there is a connection between the behaviour and a protected characteristic. This would also include situations where the person is associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, or is wrongly perceived as having a particular protected characteristic.

- b. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment occurs when a person is subject to unwanted behaviour which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating a person's dignity or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person

'Of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails with material of a sexual nature.

It is unlawful to treat a person less favourably because they either submit to, or reject, sexual harassment or harassment related to their sex.

c. Victimisation

Victimisation is defined in the Act as treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act' (or because the school believes that a person has done or is going to do a protected act).

There are additional victimisation provisions for schools which extend the protection to pupils who are victimised because their parent or sibling has carried out a protected act.

A 'protected act' is:

- Making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Act)
- Helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information
- Making an allegation that the school or someone else has breached the Act
- Doing anything else in connection with the Act

Our School Overview

Ashleigh Primary School and Nursery is a two-form entry school. The pupils come from a wide spread of socio-demographic groupings. The school belongs to the Wymondham cluster which is made up of 12 schools including two high schools. It is a strong cluster and the primary schools work closely together.

Children's spiritual and moral development is intrinsic in all we do at Ashleigh. Self-awareness and understanding of the world around is fostered through the curriculum, global links with contrasting schools, assemblies, visitors and the PATHS curriculum (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) which encourages questioning and an awareness of the importance relationships with others. Children are encouraged to challenge unfairness and discrimination, to be self-confident, have self-respect and dignity.

The school and class forums reinforce the notion of aspiration and community involvement.

Promoting equality and eliminating discrimination

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy is to provide a single framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to promote equality of opportunity, and to promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. In order to achieve this, it is our aim to eliminate all forms of discrimination and harassment – as defined as unlawful behaviour.

Through our Equality Policy, we seek to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents, guardians or carers, or any other person through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified.

Advancing of equality of opportunity involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages
- taking steps to meet people's needs
- encouraging participation in any activity in which participation by people sharing protected characteristics is disproportionately low

Fostering good relations involves:

- tackling prejudice

- promoting understanding

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and prejudice-related bullying. There is guidance for the staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with and we ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training in this area. Any incidents of homophobic language or bullying on school premises will be addressed or reported to the head teacher immediately.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are addressed.

Roles and responsibilities for implementing this Equality Policy

Everyone in our school community has a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

Governors:

- ensure the school complies with current equality legislation
- ensure this policy and its procedures are followed
- monitor progress toward equality objectives and reporting annually
- investigate and respond to reported incidents as appropriate

Headteacher:

- ensure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it
- ensure its procedures are followed
- produce regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary
- ensure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- monitor impact of the policy and undertaking regular reviews
- enable reasonable adjustments to be made in regard to disability for members of, and visitors to, the school
- investigate any reports of prejudice related incidents and report to Governing Body
- provide annual summary of progress with equality objectives
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All school staff:

- model good practice, dealing with incidents of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- promote equality and good relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone within the school community
- keep up to date with the law on equality and diversity and taking training and learning opportunities
- report any incidents in relation to the protected characteristics to the Headteacher

Children:

- value others as individuals

- treat each other with respect

Visitors, including parents/carers:

- understand and follow our equality policy, though publication on our website, and inclusion in our prospectus, Home-School agreement, and newsletters.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Monitoring

This policy is supported by our school's accessibility plan. The School Development Plan also plays an essential part of the school's action plan on equality. Objectives will promote a cohesive community, inclusion and equality in our school for all.

The Headteacher and Governors will monitor this policy through various means, including the analysis of our data, reviews of our policies, and in our everyday working practices.

Reviewing

This Equality Policy, with its objectives and Accessibility Plan, will be monitored and reviewed every 3 years by staff and governors to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations for any individual and between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community. Any pattern of inequality found through monitoring will be used to inform planning and decision-making.

The School Website

Also available on the website:

- Accessibility Plan

Hard copies of these documents will be made available on request.

Useful link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85039/easy-read.pdf

Consultation and Involvement of the School Community

We involved pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers in creating our Equality Policy and Equality Objectives. This helped to ensure that the views of potentially disadvantaged groups were fully incorporated in the development of this Scheme and action plan.

Responses from questionnaires

Parents:

We had an encouraging response from parents of children in different key stages. The overwhelming response to questions asked was positive.

Comments included:

- " The school always goes beyond to provide exciting and stimulating lessons. Teachers are proactive and responsive, and we have nothing but praise and gratitude for all they do."
- "I feel Ashleigh has provided my children with the best start in their education, offers them excellent opportunities and experiences and has done their best in providing my girls with a continued education during the pandemic."
- "The communication and support from the school has been incredible and we couldn't be happier with the progress and enthusiasm staff have in understanding and meeting our children's needs."

Children:

Responses were sampled across the school, and were very positive. Children overwhelmingly enjoy coming to school and are pleased to be back after a time of school closures. They all know who to talk to if they have a problem in school. They are aware that they should speak to an adult, and they feel they are listened to.

Ashleigh Primary School and Nursery

3-YEAR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2021 – 2024

- Strive to achieve equality of opportunity for all children throughout the school curriculum and out-of-school activities, regardless of any protected characteristics.
- Develop the school community's awareness of the diversity of families, ensuring the inclusion of all in every aspect of school life, promoting understanding between cultural and religious groups.
- To implement, deliver and monitor the statutory RSHE curriculum to promote the following amongst our pupils, staff and community: emotional literacy, wellbeing, tolerance and resilience. Pupils will be able to form healthy, safe and respectful relationships and embrace cultural diversity. Our aim is to ensure that our pupils are fully prepared to navigate the demands of an ever-changing and increasingly complex world.
- Continue to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of any child or adult with a disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards protected characteristics across the curriculum through lesson content and resources.
- Ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school, e.g. through involvement on School Forum, class assemblies, fund raising etc.