



West Exe School
Equality Policy Statement

Date adopted: October 2020

Prepared by: Deputy Headteacher

Ratified by: Local Governing body

At West Exe School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents, carers and other stakeholders, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life. The achievement of learners will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will utilise this data to support learners, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

At West Exe School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. The CEO and Headteacher have responsibility for all equalities matters and members of the local governing body in their various roles consider equalities matters that appertain to these responsibilities.

Background

The Equality Act 2010 brings together lots of different equality laws and has replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. The aim of the Equality Act 2010 is to provide a modern, single legal framework, and a clearer, more streamlined law that will be more effective at tackling disadvantage and discrimination. For the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against students/employees because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to persons who are pregnant, have recently had a baby or are undergoing gender reassignment. Employees are also protected against discrimination on the grounds of age and marriage/civil partnership.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single-sex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes as follows:

- New Positive Action provisions will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, students with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim – for example a project to engage specifically with disengaged boys.
- Introducing the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination and extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students.

Ensuring Equality in policy and practice

As well as the specific actions set out within this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways:

Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of learners
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect not only the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping, but reflect the multi-culture of the United Kingdom
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students

Equal opportunities for staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.

Employer Duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating responsibilities or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination. Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff
- Continued professional development (CPD) opportunities for all staff
- Schools Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all

Equality and the law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation, namely The Equality Act 2010. The Equality Plan outlines the actions West Exe School will take to meet the general duties detailed below.

Race Equality

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of the school as detailed in The Equality Act 2010. The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- Under our specific duty we will:
- Prepare an Equality Plan which includes our written policy for race equality
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on students, staff and carers by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these students
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such students, staff and carers towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

Disability

The definition of a disabled person as: “someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. This definition is also extended as follows:

People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities. Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognized”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal Duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005, superseded by The Equality Act 2010 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet the needs of the disabled, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years

The School will ensure that:

- Information will be collected on disability with regards to both students and staff.
- This information will be used to improve the provision of services.
- Pupil achievement will be monitored by disability; any trends or patterns in the data may prompt additional action.
- Disabled students will be encouraged to participate in school life. This will be shown through representation in school events such as Community assemblies and the school Student Voice.
- Bullying and harassment of any disabled student and staff will be monitored and this information used to make a difference.
- Disability will be portrayed positively in books, displays and in class discussions and assemblies
- The school environment will be as accessible as possible to students, staff and visitors.
- Open evenings and other events which parents or carers attend will be held in an accessible part of the school.
- It is communicated that information will be available to parents, visitors, students and staff in formats that are accessible. With advance notification signing and interpreting is possible for most languages.
- Procedures for the election of parent governors will be open to candidates and voters who are disabled.

Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on employers to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male learners and between women and men and transgender people. Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2010 confirms the provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, superseded by The Equality Act 2010 and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means enrolments, benefits and services for learners and treatment of students and staff.

Roles and responsibilities

The Role of Governors

The Governors have set out their commitment to equal opportunities and they will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability. The Governors seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at the School on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

The Governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the School environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make all communications as inclusive as possible for carers, students and the public e.g. With advance notification signing and interpreting possible for most languages

Partners, employees, volunteers

- The Governors will ensure that no one is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability

The Role of the Designated Person Responsible for Equalities

- It is the designated person's role to implement the Equality Plan and they are supported by the School Leadership Team and Governors in doing so.
- It is the designated person's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The designated person ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The designated person promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The designated person treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The Role of all Staff - Teaching and Non-Teaching

- All staff will ensure that all learners are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the Equality Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion) or the Head of Behaviour, and the Designated Person for Child Protection where appropriate.
- Teachers support the work of associate staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

Tackling Discrimination

- Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.
- All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur.
- They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.
- Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present. All incidents are reported to the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion) or Head of Behaviour, and incidents are reported to the Headteacher and Governors on a termly basis.

What is a Discriminatory Incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socioeconomic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:

'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into the school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Responding to and Reporting Incidents

All staff should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole School. Information should be passed to the Head of Behaviour using CPOMs they will then follow up as appropriate.