

# Falconhurst School

## Equality Policy



This policy was approved by the Governing Body on 18th April 2016 for a period of three years.

## 1 Foundations

This Equality Policy is based on two foundations: our School Vision, and the Equality Act 2010.

### Our School Vision

Together we encourage children to take ownership of and responsibility for their learning, so they have the confidence and curiosity for life-long learning.

Together we strive for success in academic, creative, sporting and personal accomplishment.

Together we care for each other through the kind and positive choices we make.

Together we are proud of the inspiring and supportive environment we create for children, families and staff.



We believe that the implementation of this equality policy is a necessary condition for the realisation of our vision.

### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all earlier equality legislation. It governs the way we educate our pupils, the way we employ staff and the way we treat prospective pupils, parents and other members of the public.

The Act is concerned to ensure that the interests of particular groups of people who are at greater risk of unfair treatment are protected. These groups are referred to as people “who share a protected characteristic.”

As a public body, the Act requires us, as we go about our work, to have regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Protected characteristics

In the way we schools treat pupils, and prospective pupils, there are seven protected characteristics

- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

As a primary school, the last of these is not directly relevant to the way we treat pupils, but all the others are.

Marriage and civil partnership is also a protected characteristic that we must take account in the way we treat staff, parents and other members of the public.

## Advancing equality

The Act says that our duty to have regard to the need to advance equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered because people share protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics that are different from people who do not have that characteristic;
- encouraging protected groups to participate in public life and in any other activity where participation is disproportionately low.

## Fostering good relations

The Act describes fostering good relations as:

- tackling prejudice;
- promoting understanding between people from different groups.

## 2 Principles

Our actions in relation to equality are based on seven principles, all of which support our School Vision and help us to fulfil our legal duties. These principles are designed to permeate every aspect of school life. Principles 1-6 cover all aspects of school life. Principle 7 covers the way we treat staff.

### **1 All children are of equal value.**

Every child at Falconhurst should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth, whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

### **2 We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.**

We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We

believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. But we stand against practices that harm children, even though they may be said to be accepted in some cultural contexts. This includes the physical chastisement of children and female genital mutilation.

### **3 We foster positive attitudes and relationships.**

We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other. We prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.

### **4 We foster a shared sense of togetherness and belonging.**

We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of togetherness and belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

### **5 We have the highest expectations of all our children.**

We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

### **6 We work to raise standards for all pupils, especially for the most vulnerable.**

We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

### **7 We observe good equalities practice for our staff**

We recognize the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and performance management, and in continuing professional development.

## **3 How we put our principles into practice, day by day**

We set out specific timed actions in our Equality Plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually.

More generally, we implement the seven principles in our daily practice in the ways set out below.

### **Our work with pupils**

#### **Teaching and learning**

- Staff create an environment where all pupils can contribute fully and feel valued.
- Different cultural traditions are valued and made meaningful to pupils.
- Pupils are helped to make connections with their own lives and cultures.
- Staff challenge stereotypes and build pupil awareness so that they can detect bias and challenge discrimination.
- Teachers ensure access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Teachers takes account of pupils' cultural background, linguistic needs and different learning styles.
- Teachers prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.

#### **Curriculum**

- Each area of the curriculum is planned to ensure that we implement Principles 1-6.

- Pupils have the opportunity to explore concepts and issues relating to identity, equality and discrimination.
- We monitor and evaluate our effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils from all who share a protected characteristic.
- Resources and displays portray positive images and attitudes towards people in our diverse society.
- Role models and presenters from a range of different racial, cultural and faith groups are used to share a wide range of skills and experiences.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultures and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We encourage pupils and staff to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith, and encourage all pupils to understand these.
- Extra-curricular activities and events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

### **Attainment, progress and assessment**

- Pupil attainment and progress are monitored by ethnicity and gender and evaluated to identify trends and patterns of underachievement.
- Action is taken to remove disparities between different groups of pupils.
- All methods of assessment are monitored to ensure that they are, as far as possible, free of gender, cultural, linguistic or other biases.
- All pupils are appropriately supported in assessments so that they are able to show fully both what they know and what they can do.
- Particular attention is paid to identifying and meeting the needs of groups that are particularly disadvantaged.

### **Personal development and pastoral care**

- Pastoral support takes account of religious and ethnic differences and the experiences and needs of particular groups of pupils.
- We cater for, and promote dietary and dress requirements of different religious groups.

### **Behaviour, discipline and exclusions**

- In implementing our behaviour policy, we take account of Principles 1-6.
- All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and sanctions.
- We ensure that our procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair to pupils from diverse backgrounds.
- Exclusions are managed and monitored to ensure they do not involve discrimination on grounds of protected characteristics.
- Our work to integrate pupils with low attendance and excluded pupils takes account of protected characteristics.

### **Admissions and attendance**

- Our admissions are co-ordinated and managed impartially by the Local Authority. They are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristic
- We make provision for absence for religious observance.

## **Our work with parents and the community**

- All parents are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school.
- We work with parents to help them to understand that physical chastisement of children, although it may be accepted in some cultural contexts, is not acceptable within school. We offer support or guidance to families to help them improve their care of their children.
- The school's premises and facilities are fully accessible to groups from all local communities.

## **Our work with staff**

- We work to ensure that there is no discrimination and harassment in our employment practice.
- We actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce and in all aspects of employment practice.
- All vacant posts, including those for non-teaching staff, are advertised and open to the widest pool of applicants.
- Everyone involved in recruitment and selection is aware of what they should do to avoid unconscious discrimination.
- All staff appointments, rewards and promotions are made on the basis of merit and in compliance with the law.
- We monitor the composition of our workforce by protected characteristics, and where possible, take action so that it better reflects the diversity of our community.
- We make provision for staff absence for religious observance.

## **4 How we tackle discriminatory behaviour**

### **What is discriminatory behaviour?**

We respond immediately to any incidence of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

**Discrimination** is treating someone less favourably than others because they share a protected characteristic.

**Harassment** is treating someone in a way that violates their dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

**Victimisation** is treating someone badly because they have taken under the Equality Act (such as a complaint of discrimination), or supported someone else to take such action.

Discriminatory behaviour includes:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of any protected characteristic or any other irrelevant distinction.
- 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 school.
- Verbal abuse and threats on grounds of any protected characteristic or any other irrelevant distinction.

- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to someone's race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant distinction.
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion.
- Ridicule of an individual on the grounds of cultural practice including food, music, religion and dress.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of any protected characteristic or any other irrelevant distinction.
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups.

All these behaviours are unacceptable.

### **How we respond to discriminatory incidents**

- We provide training and support to all staff to deal with discriminatory behaviour.
- We make sure that pupils, parents and staff are aware of the procedures for dealing with discriminatory behaviour.
- Our Behaviour Policy sets out procedures to ensure that staff deal with all forms of bullying and harassment appropriately.
- All staff are expected to know how to identify and challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur, escalating to a class teacher/the Headteacher where necessary.
- The school works closely with the LA and other partners to tackle discriminatory behaviour within the school and the local area.
- All incidents of harassment, derogatory comment or targeted unacceptable behaviour based upon a protected characteristic are thoroughly investigated to determine whether or not they are underpinned with malicious intent. Where the balance of probabilities suggests malice then the incident is recorded and reported to parents and the Governing Body. In the event of racial incidents the report is also forwarded to the Local Authority.
- All incidents are reported to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Inclusion Leader (depending on severity and/or availability) and incidents with malicious intent are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

## **5 Roles and Responsibilities**

Acting in accordance with our equality principles is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. This policy also assigns particular responsibilities to governors, the school leadership, and staff, particularly teachers.

### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- The school complies with the Equality Act 2010, and any other legislation relevant to this policy.
- This policy is reviewed regularly.
- Equality objectives are updated at least every two years.
- The policy and is implemented and its effects are monitored.
- Actions are taken to achieve our equality objectives and their success evaluated.
- Its membership includes people with up to date knowledge of equality legislation.

- The Inclusion Governor will, at least once a year, review the incidence of discriminatory behaviour and actions taken in relation to such behaviour, and report their findings to the Governing Body.

## **Leadership**

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Act in accordance with the principles of this policy in all aspects of their work.
- Implement the policy and actions to achieve equality objectives.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the policy and their responsibilities under it.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are given relevant training and support to contribute to the implementation of the policy.
- Evaluate the success of the policy in contributing to our School Vision and complying with the Equality Act.
- Take appropriate action in response to any incidents of discriminatory behaviour.

## **Staff**

All staff will:

- Act in accordance with Principles 1-6 in all aspects of their work.
- Ensure they do not discriminate against pupils, parents, other members of staff or anyone else in school on the basis of any protected characteristic or any other irrelevant distinction.
- Respond to discriminatory behaviour in accordance with this policy and other relevant policies and procedures.

## **Teachers**

In addition to the responsibilities for all staff, teachers will:

- Ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum.
- Identify and work to overcome barriers to learning that arise because pupils share protected characteristics.
- Encourage the participation of pupils in the classroom whose engagement may be low because of a protected characteristic.
- Promote equality through teaching and through relations with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.
- Reflect on and evaluate their effectiveness in upholding Principles 1-6, in overcoming disadvantages based on protected characteristics, and in challenging discriminatory behaviour.

## **6 Managing the policy**

This policy was approved by the Governing Body on April 18th 2016 for a period of 3 years.

We will:

- Publish our Equality Plan on the school website.
- Raise awareness of our Equality Plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

- Review progress against our Equality Action Plan annually.
- Review this policy and the accompanying action plan by April 2019.