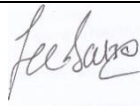




# Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust

*Unlocking the Potential of Collaboration*

## Equality Duty Policy

It was ratified by the Board of Trustees in:	July 2019
Signed by the Chair of Trustees:	
This Policy will be reviewed by the Trust every three years. Next review date:	July 2022

## **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 outlines the three aims of the general duty to have due regard for Equality across all organisations:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

As a Trust we will continuously strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Every person in our schools will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability.

The Trust will work actively to promote equality and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality. Please note that some points within this Policy may not be applicable to the Special School in our Trust.

The information below is a summary of how the Trust has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

- The Trust are aware of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 that it is unlawful to discriminate, treat some people less fairly or put them at a disadvantage
- All Members and Trustees have been briefed on their legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and have also been involved in supporting all our schools to meet its public sector equality duty
- The Trust will develop IT solutions to collect information to produce a Trust profile of our pupils and employees to inform future decisions
- Each of our schools' Behaviour Policies outlines the Trust's expectations of both pupils and staff in their interactions with each other, including their approach to tackling bullying and prejudice
- Each of our schools deals promptly and effectively with all incidents and complaints of bullying and harassment
- Each school keeps a record of all such incidents and will notify those affected of what action has been taken
- Training is provided to all staff in relation to dealing with bullying and harassment incidents
- Each school has a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy that outlines the provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs
- Our Complaints Policy sets out the procedures through which complaints are dealt
- The Trust aims to observe and implement the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in its employment practices
- The Trust pays due regard within its recruitment practices, to safeguarding and protecting its pupils
- Procedures are in place for addressing staff discipline, conduct and grievances
- The Trust aims to engage and consult with pupils, staff, parents and carers, and the local community, in order to develop its awareness of equality issues, review the impact of the Trust's policies, set equality objectives and improve what we do

## **DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY SCHEME**

1. The Trust is committed to ensuring equal treatment of all its pupils, staff and any others involved in our community with any form of disability and will ensure that disabled people are not treated any less favourably in any procedures or practices. The Trust will not tolerate harassment of any member of the school community with any form of disability. We have a culture of inclusion and we encourage people to disclose their disability and to participate fully in school life. We will attempt to make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment is as accessible as possible but are constrained in this task by the design of some buildings.

### **Definition of disability**

2. A disabled person is defined in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

3. The definition includes people with cancer, diabetes, HIV, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions; people who have hearing or sight impairment (except where the sight can be corrected by glasses or contact lenses) or a significant mobility difficulty. It also includes people with hidden disabilities such as diabetes, epilepsy and dyslexia and people who have mental health conditions or learning disabilities.

4. Pupils with Special Educational Needs and those with long term medical needs will be treated as disabled.

### **The General Duty**

5. The Trust will actively seek to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled and able-bodied persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. This means not representing them in a demeaning way and not pretending that they don't exist.
- encourage participation by disabled people in the life of the school. However, being mindful of disabled pupils' feelings with regard to being pushed into physical activities and accepting that they may not wish to take part.
- take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that means treating disabled people more favourably.

### **How the trust will meet the General Duty**

6. The production of this disability equality scheme provides the school with a framework for integrating disability equality into all aspects of school life and demonstrates how we are seeking to meet the specific duty.

### **Pupils**

7. Pupils who have learning and/or physical disabilities are supported by the Learning Support department and/or SENCO and an individual education plan is created. Resources are allocated to pupils according to their needs which enable them to increase their access to the curriculum.

8. Resources available to pupils are:

- specialist teachers who work with pupils in small groups
- Learning Support Assistants who can support with in-class note taking; and/or by reading text

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- support in examinations with LSAs reading and scribing; extra time allocation
- accommodation for examinations carefully considered to provide maximum support
- laptops
- large print texts
- specialist teachers to work with pupils where English is a second language

9. The needs of those pupils with mental health conditions are carefully considered by the Learning Support and pastoral care teams.

10. There is provision for children with disabilities to participate in a range of activities such as extra-curricular clubs and learning support.

11. Pupils with disabilities are able to participate in all aspects of life in our schools and achieve both socially and academically. Pupils are able to attend school trips through being supported by a Learning Support Assistant.

### **Involvement of Disabled People in Developing the Scheme**

12. Pupils are invited to make their comments known in a variety of ways in school on life in school through:

- pupil councils/Pupil Voice
- Faculty and Pastoral reviews
- PSHE lessons
- debates in lessons

13. Staff make their views known through:

- Staff surveys
- Staff Meetings
- Local Governing Body
- 1:1 with Head of HR requesting support through Access to Work
- Occupational Health
- Performance Reviews
- Line Manager meetings

### **Admissions**

14. Prior to the annual round of admissions to the school, parents are invited to contact the Admissions Officer with regard to any special requirements that will be needed whilst their child is at school, eg large text print for letters.

15. Parents and children with a Statement of Education Need or Education, Health and Care Plan who are to be admitted in September are invited to spend time in the school in the summer term with the Learning Support department. The children meet the team and are shown around the school to enable a smoother transition.

### **School buildings**

16. Some school buildings present significant problems for those who are physically disabled. Some modifications have been made to buildings where appropriate.

## **Impact Assessment**

17. Impact Assessment will be an ongoing process to ensure that each of our school's practices and policies develop and evolve. All Behaviour policies are regularly reviewed and pupils are aware that bullying will not be tolerated.

## **Staff**

18. Personnel policies in school are regularly reviewed and all staff are circulated via email with draft copies and are invited to comment. It is the Trust's policy to recruit the best person for each vacancy, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or disability.

## **GENDER EQUALITY DUTY SCHEME**

19. The Trust has due regard for the need to, and works to:

- eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- eliminate sexual harassment
- promote gender equality

20. By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on the 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.

21. 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. (Refer to our schools' Behaviour Policy).

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender, we will seek specialist HR advice. In taking due regard we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance. By this we mean that the weight we give to gender equality will be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. The greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater regard we will pay to it.

## **The Specific Duties**

25. We welcome the responsibility to think and act more strategically about gender equality. We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our schools' functions and services. In order to do this we:

- collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information
- review all our policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- ensure Members, Trustees, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality

## **Responsibilities**

26. The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that each school promotes gender equality through:

- Staff recruitment, training opportunities and conditions
- Existing and planning policies are assessed for the ways in which they impact on gender equality
- Curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities take account of the need to promote gender equality
- Incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to our Behaviour/Anti-Bullying/Code of Conduct policies

27. All staff have a responsibility to deal with incidents of sexual harassment or bullying; help eliminate unlawful discrimination; prepare and/or help deliver a curriculum, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities (including work with parents) that take account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality.

28. Pupils and parents have a proportionate responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the policy, as do visitors to the school.

29. We recognise that both sexes can suffer from sexual stereotyping and that sometimes the same policies and practices can impact differently on men and women and boys and girls. We will make appropriate adjustments if this is found to be the case with any of our existing policies and practices.

30. We recognise that different genders can experience different forms of discrimination in relation to their ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age or disability and we will take this complexity into consideration. In these ways, we will strive to improve the situation for pupils and staff within our school community.

## **Breaches of the Gender Equality Policy**

31. We understand that eliminating gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change. Where possible, breaches of the policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes. More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying and Code of Conduct procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

32. Where safeguarding issues based on sex and gender come to the attention of the school/Trust, these will be dealt with according to our safeguarding procedures.

33. We will continue to develop awareness of what constitutes unlawful gender discrimination and harassment, and of the need to eliminate this and to promote gender equality.

## **RACE EQUALITY DUTY SCHEME**

34. The Trust has a firm commitment to address racism whenever and wherever it occurs and is totally committed to treating people fairly regardless of race, ethnicity and culture. The Trust considers that all manifestations of racism are wholly unacceptable and will act positively to eradicate racism where it occurs.

35. The principles within this Policy underpin all school policies including: Admissions; Behaviour; Anti-Bullying; Curriculum; Assessment and Marking; Recruitment; Equality and Diversity in Employment. All strategies used to monitor and raise individual levels of achievement are also underpinned by these principles.

36. The Trust demonstrates through its ethos, culture and climate that every individual is valued; that each person is treated according to her or his particular needs; that differences between people are positive and enriching; and that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are totally unacceptable.

37. Educating against racism and developing multicultural awareness should ensure that all pupils:

- develop a positive self-image
- develop understanding of and empathy with others
- develop appreciation of and respect for others
- evaluate experiences with an open mind
- think and act independently as well as part of a group
- work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, prejudice, discrimination and racism
- are equipped to recognise and challenge appropriately bias, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination
- recognise different types of racism, understand that all forms of racism are wrong and learn how to challenge racism appropriately or get help to deal with it
- understand the importance of combating racism and working towards Equality in a school environment with an ethnically diverse population
- have access to a curriculum that is relevant to them and which leads to greater appreciation of their own cultural traditions
- participate in a curriculum that takes full account of the richness and diversity of the world's cultures so that they can develop understanding of and respect for people of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- understand the contribution different cultures have made to each of the areas covered by the subjects of the national curriculum
- are prepared for life as citizens in a multicultural society and the opportunities and challenges presented by increasing globalisation
- receive their statutory entitlement and are granted their rights in respect of the development of education against racism and multicultural awareness

38. This statement also acts as a means of communicating to parents and other members of the local community the Trust's clear stance on these issues.

The Trust's Equality Objectives set out how the school tries to achieve true equality in the school:

- promotion of cultural understanding and awareness of different religious beliefs between different ethnic groups within our school community and beyond
- monitoring and promotion of the involvement of all groups of pupils in the extra-curricular life of the school, including leadership opportunities, especially pupils with special educational needs and disabilities
- actively close gaps in attainment and achievement between 'disadvantaged' pupils and all groups of pupils
- actively monitor the attainment and achievement of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and pupils from minority ethnic groups. Ensure that attainment is as good or better than similar groups of pupils nationally
- continue to improve accessibility across the school for pupils, staff and visitors with disabilities, including access to specialist teaching areas

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- endeavour to ensure that the staff body and representation of staff in leadership roles is reflective of the local community
- eliminate the use of sexist and racist language by pupils in the school and phobic language relating to gender perception