

Equalities Policy

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Equalities Policy Introduction

This Equalities policy for Dorothy Stringer 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. We are committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments.

Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy should be read with reference to the following policies, reports and plans;

- Anti-Bullying policy
- Special Educational Needs and disability policy
- Behaviour and relationships policy
- Dignity and respect at work policy
- Equalities Accessibility plan
- Wellbeing Framework

Our Equalities policy is inclusive of our whole school community – students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

Our vision

Dorothy Stringer School strives to foster a welcoming and respectful environment, which encourages us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation in all aspects of school life. We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences, thereby promoting understanding and learning within Dorothy Stringer and local communities.

We seek to learn free from harassment and confrontation and seek to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Our school within the wider context

As a school we are committed to having knowledge of our school community and frequently analyse data which provides evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community and the attainment and wellbeing of our students and groups of students. We use this data to plan improvements that will benefit our school community.

School Profile (Jan 2023)

- Cohort of 1643 (January Census 2023)
- 18% children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM)
- 13.5% of students are registered either SEN Support or in receipt of an EHC Plan

- On the IDACI (Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children Index), Dorothy Stringer is deemed to be 'average'.
- Just over a fifth of our intake live in the bottom third of deprived areas in Brighton and Hove.
- Our BME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) population is 24.9%.
- We have a number of students across all year groups, who are gender fluid or an in the process of transitioning.
- Children with physical disabilities have appropriate provision (please see accessibility provision; regularly reviewed).
- The school has a small number of GRT children (Gypsy, Roma, Traveller).
- The school staff is comprised of a varied range of people, reflecting the increasingly diverse nature of Brighton and Hove.
- We are an accredited 'school of sanctuary' working within Brighton and Hove's Sanctuary City status

Overall Aims of our Policy

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create a cohesive community where everyone feels a sense of belonging. We welcome our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and seek to involve the whole school community in order to ensure better outcomes for all. The aims of this equality statement are:

- To promote understanding of and respect for others whatever their ability, race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion or beliefs
- To promote greater awareness of the effects of discrimination
- To prevent racism, sexism, negative attitudes towards disability and other discriminatory practices through challenging any form of discrimination
- To ensure equality of access to the workplace, curriculum and extra-curricular activities for all students and staff in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
- To celebrate and affirm the diverse nature of the whole school community through both curricular and extra-curricular activities

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality

We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a student, prospective student or a member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have protected characteristics:

- age (staff only)
- sex
- race
- disability (physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect

- on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities)
- religion or belief or no belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage or civil partnership (staff only)

Our duties

We recognise and accept our duties to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, including the requirement to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all. Our statutory duties are contained within:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty and to publish equality objectives
- This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.
- Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education and Inspection Act 2006 (which introduced the Community Cohesion duty).

See *Appendix A* for further information about this legislation. They are also guided and shaped by a range of other national and local initiatives such as the Brighton and Hove Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit and guidance from the partnership manager for health and wellbeing at the local authority.

Roles and responsibilities

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

Our governing board will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for Equalities
- ensure that the objectives arising from the statement are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the Head teacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the statement
- evaluate and review the statement annually and the objectives every 3 years

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equalities 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 statement and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the statement and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the statement or actions arising from it
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- In partnership with governors, deal with breaches of this policy

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Equalities policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Equalities policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the School development plan

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the policy
- be fully aware of the Equalities Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equalities Policy
- model good practice by recognising and challenging prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- respond to and report any equality related bullying and incidents in line with school policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Our students will:

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

Our parents and 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 Equalities policy
- be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child

How we monitor our equality duties

In line with our equality duties, the development and review of this policy will involve the whole of our school community. We are committed to listening to what they have to say and include people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities. We will take account of: Ethnic and cultural background, gender, gender reassignment, ability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic backgrounds.

Definitions and examples of discriminatory behaviour

Racial discrimination

Racism is not just about intentional attitudes or behaviour; a lack of intention does not stop the impact of racism being felt by individuals and communities. It is important to recognise that racist incidents are often complex and interrelated with other events and may involve group as well as individual behaviour. Racism is a learned belief system or ideology, premised on the superiority of particular racial groups with power relationships and systems set up to favour these groups.

Disability discrimination

Discrimination against people with disabilities takes many forms, and barriers are often created within society which makes it more difficult for disabled people to reach their full potential or to have equal access to the services they need. This appendix should be read in conjunction with the curriculum policy, the inclusion checklist, the School Accessibility plan and the SEND policy.

Sex discrimination

Discrimination based on sex can affect both men and women, is linked to stereotypes and may include the belief that one sex is intrinsically superior to another.

Other Protected Characteristics

Discrimination based on gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation is linked to stereotypes and these characteristics, whereby someone is treated less favourably than another person without these characteristics.

Examples of how discrimination may manifest itself (this outlines the most common forms of discrimination, but does not constitute a complete list)

Bullying

- Name calling, discriminatory jokes, offensive mimicry
- Offensive graffiti, damage to property
- Physical intimidation or attack
- Incitement of others to behave in a discriminatory manner
- Verbal, online or written threats

Disrespect

- Disregard for proper pronunciation and use of names
- Devaluing an individual's language, culture, sex or abilities

Exclusion

- Being non-cooperative with people because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion or beliefs
- Making general assumptions about an individual because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion or beliefs

- Having false or low assumptions about an individual because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion or beliefs Inclusion or exclusion in activities on race, sex or disability
- Refusing to employ or promote individuals because of their race, sex, gender reassignment, disability, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- Failure to ensure the curriculum reflects the diversity of the school community

Communication

- Discriminatory terms in the course of discussion
- Abuse of personal property
- Bringing in racist, sexist or other discriminatory materials
- Discriminatory text messages
- Downloading and passing on of discriminatory materials

Employment

- Refusing to consider the needs of fathers who wish to adapt their working practices due to the need to be the principal child carer
- Planning CPD in such a way that part-time employees (statistically more likely to be women) cannot access it

Curriculum

- Allowing stereotypical images to persist in the delivery of the curriculum

Our students

Issues of diversity and equality form the basis of many curriculum areas such as PSE, RSE, RS and Citizenship and in our tutor and assembly programmes. We have participated in the BAME mentoring project with the University of Brighton, alongside working with the local authority to develop student of colour focus and support groups facilitated by trained school staff.

Students are able to comment, put forward ideas and challenge school procedures and statement via our Student Voice representatives, LGBTQIA+ student group and School Forum and this actively informs and influences the approach school takes to the equality agenda.

We involve and consult with the parent/carers of our students regarding equality agendas.

Our students are integral in how we design and share the reporting process for prejudiced-based incidents with our student community so they can be followed-up by staff appropriately.

Our staff

All school staff are regularly consulted to monitor the effectiveness of the school approach to ensuring equality for all. Equality/Diversity are a focus of our continuing professional development programme.

Our school governors

A link governor is charged with supporting the Senior Leader overseeing the equality statement and procedures and to check they are up to date and implemented accordingly. The link governor reports back to the governing board on a regular basis.

How we identify issues and prioritise our actions

Key to this process will be the implementation of regular consultation and reviews, to collect information about ourselves. Other people also help us to do this.

OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection.

We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, disability and gender.

We complete a Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) which constantly monitors the make-up and needs of our staff and students – and assessing how well we are meeting those needs.

We value more qualitative information which may be given to us through a variety of methods, including those passed on anonymously through surveys such as the Safe and Well at Schools survey, undertaken by all our students every two years in November.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. For example, we receive regular support from: local health partners, RUOK (substance misuse), Sussex Police, the Traveller Education Service and English as an additional language (EAL) Service.

We have established good links with our local and wider communities; we welcome them into our school. By listening to those within our community and to our partners, improve existing approaches.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and administrative staff) from discrimination. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination, recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators. 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.

Responding to prejudiced-based incidents

We recognise that prejudice-based harassment or bullying behaviours are driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, ageism or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

All prejudiced-based incidents are thoroughly investigated and causes identified; staff will adhere to and follow the procedures as outlined in the behaviour policy.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our students to better understand the diversity that exists in society.

We will record all prejudiced-based incidents and report these to the Local Authority. We and the Local Authority will use this information to identify trends and patterns, to provide appropriate responses to incidents.

Appendix A: Key legislation

Equality Act 2010

The Act protects students and staff from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics':

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

This relates to:

- prospective students
- students at the school
- in some limited circumstances, former students

The Act also contains positive action provisions which enable schools to take proportionate action to address disadvantage faced by particular students. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged student group. Further duties for schools will be implemented in April 2011 with the introduction of the Single Public Sector Equality Duty. Until this commences schools must continue with their existing duties in relation to race, disability and gender as set out below. There are exceptions to enable single-sex schools to admit only students of one sex and for schools with a religious character to enable them to have admissions criteria which give preference to members of their own religion. For more information: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-guidance-for-11>

Race - Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 General duties

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity
- To promote good relations between people of different racial groups

Specific duties

- To prepare a written race equalities statement
- To implement the statement • To monitor and evaluate the statement's impact

Disability - Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended the SEN framework set out in the Education Act 1996, and extended the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 to cover the provision of education. Since 2002, three sets of duties have combined to provide the statutory framework that underpins equality of opportunity for disabled students in accessing school education. The duties around discrimination, planning, SEN and promotion of equalities combine to provide the statutory framework underpinning equality of opportunity for disabled students. Funding is available to help schools comply with accessibility and planning.

General duties

- To promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people

- To eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- To eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- To encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Specific duties

- To prepare and publish a disability equality statement
- To involve disabled people in the development of a statement
- To implement the statement
- To report on the statement annually
- To review the statement every three years
- To develop an accessibility plan 12 February 2011

Equalities Report and Accessibility planning

Accessibility planning is a statutory duty and can be incorporated into the Disability Equality Statement. Schools must plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled children and young people to the school curriculum
- Improving access to the physical environment of schools, and
- Improving the delivery of written information to disabled children and young people The first plans were required to be in place by April 2003. Therefore as schools come to review their accessibility plans, they should consider building these actions into their Disability Equality Statement.

Community Cohesion – Education and Inspection Act 2006 General duty

- To promote community cohesion

Specific duties

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – helping children to learn to understand others, to value diversity while also promoting shared values
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level
- Engagement and extended services – to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations with different schools and communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Gender - Equality Act 2006 General duties

- To take action to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination between men and women
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women including transgender people.

Specific duties

- To publish a gender equalities statement with agreed gender equalities action
- To ensure equal pay by gender

- To gather and use information on how policies and practices affect gender equality
- To consult stakeholders and use that information to identify objectives
- To implement identified actions within three years and to report annually on the statement

The Equality Act 2006 (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The regulations make it unlawful for a school to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their sexual orientation:

- In the terms on which it offers to admit him or her as a student or to accept him or her as a member of staff
- By refusing to accept an application either to admit him or her as a student or as a member of staff
- In the way in which any member of the school community is afforded access to any benefit, facility or service
- By refusing access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding, suspending or dismissing him or her
- By subjecting him or her to any other detriment Discrimination is unlawful in civil law rather than being an offence.

Religion or belief The Equality Act 2006 Part 2: Discrimination on Grounds of Religion or Belief

The Act provides that schools (unless in relation to certain exempted areas which are expanded on in *Appendix D*) will not be allowed to admit or refuse to admit students on the basis of religion or belief; and must treat students equally, irrespective of their own or their parents' religion or belief or lack of it. Furthermore, the Act makes illegal either direct discrimination (by treating a person less favourably on the grounds of their religion or belief) or indirect discrimination through the application of a provision, criterion or practice which, although it is applied equally to everybody, puts people of a particular religion or belief at a disadvantage. These regulations apply to both adults and young people within the school community. To enable faith schools to continue to operate in accordance with their particular religious ethos, limited exceptions to the non-discrimination provisions have been introduced. There are also exemptions relating to the curriculum and collective worship.

Age - The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Regulations came into force on 1 October 2006 and provide protection for all age groups: young, old and middle-aged. They provide four key areas of protection: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Direct Age Discrimination:

This amounts to less favourable treatment on the grounds of an individual's age, which can be a person's actual or perceived age.

Indirect Age Discrimination:

The Regulations protect those who suffer from discrimination as a result of the application of a criteria, statement rule or practice, which although applied to all employees, has the effect of disadvantaging people of a particular age. An example here is the statement that an applicant must have 15 years' experience, which disadvantages younger people.

Harassment and Victimisation:

In addition to compliance with these regulations, schools can support their duty to promote community cohesion by ensuring that volunteers and visitors (including those invited to enrich the curriculum) are representative of all ages, including older people. They should ensure that all parents/carers and visitors are aware of and able to uphold the school's equal opportunities statement.

Appendix B: Consultation and review

The school looks to conduct a considered way of determining whether a statement, practice or project will affect all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a disproportionate impact on one or more particular groups.

Such reviews should help us ensure we are not unlawfully discriminating against certain individuals or groups and that we are promoting our positive duties on equality. It is a way to ensure we are meeting the diverse needs of all our students, staff and other key stakeholders and to help ensure that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life. It is a process of thinking that is included in the review of policies as part of the statement review cycle and is considered for all new policies and specific projects. It is not about more paperwork but is a common sense approach to thinking through how policies and actions will impact on race, disability, gender and other equality areas (positive, neutral or negative).

If the impact on different groups is not justifiable, the school will seek solutions to overcome this situation. We believe that involving the children, young people, staff and members of the community who may be affected by the statement, practice or project provides the best opportunity of identifying impact, exploring solutions and supporting implementation.