Barrs Court School

‘Together we empower and believe to thrive and achieve’

Equality and Diversity Policy

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<tr>
<td>Date of Recent Review and Ratification</td>
<td>March 2018 v1.2</td>
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| Date Produced | November 2007       |
| Date of Last Update | March 2016 v1.1 |
| Next Review Date | March 2020       |
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1. Introduction

1.1 Barrs Court Academy Trust’s overarching mission statement is that;

‘Together we empower and believe to thrive and achieve’

Vision

1.2 Barrs Court Trust values the individuality of all of our pupils. We are committed to giving every pupil the opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils’ varied experiences, abilities and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children and young people.

1.3 We will create and facilitate a centre of excellence in which the educational and therapeutic needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can be addressed effectively and within a learning environment that is safe, relevant, inclusive and purposefully creative and enjoyable. All contributions and achievements will be recognised and celebrated.

1.4 The high quality curriculum will be broad, creative and appropriate with access to the curriculum driven by individual pupil need. Barrs Court School will treat each of its pupils with respect and ensure that their rights, needs, aspirations and personal preferences remain central to the school’s organisation and they are empowered to benefit from a meaningful, contributing and rewarding adulthood. Our expertise will be shared to promote awareness, social integration and tolerance within the wider community and promote the best outcomes for all young people and adults with SEND in Herefordshire.

Our Statement of Purpose

1.5 Together we;

- Nurture mutual respect, honesty and trust for our surroundings and community.
- Offer and promote a personalised learning pathway that is both challenging and inspirational, delivered within a positive learning environment that is supportive and caring, encouraging one another to make healthy choices for ourselves.
- Communicate effectively and in partnership, taking into account the voice of the pupil.
- Build resilience and overcome barriers, empowering pupils to achieve personal fulfilment and we recognise and celebrate the talents, achievements and contribution of all our pupils.
- Inspire pupils to develop their independence and take risks so that they experience what the world has to offer and are stimulated to actively contribute to society.

1.6 We believe that equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is underpinned by a set of common values, e.g., each member of the school community agrees that collectively and individually we will:
• Acknowledge and value diversity;
• Actively promote a sense of respect towards the needs and feelings others;
• Comply with current equal opportunities legislation;
• Have zero tolerance of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination;
• Challenge attitudes that are based on stereotypes;
• Have a commitment to inclusive education in its broadest sense that will enable and support all pupils to achieve their full potential;
• Sustain a commitment to the positive development of all staff and governors;
• Ensure that all members of the school community and others engaged in school business will be accountable for complying with this policy.

1.7 This Equality Policy extends to adults: staff, parents and carers.

2. Objectives

2.1 The objectives of this Equal Opportunities Policy are to:
• Develop an ethos which respects and values all people;
• Actively promote equality of opportunity;
• Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society;
• Promote good relations amongst people within the school community and beyond;
• Eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour;
• Deliver equal opportunities through our school’s various policies, procedures and practices;
• Do our utmost, within available resources, to remove barriers which could limit or discourage access to the school’s range of activities;
• Take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by stereotyping and cultural expectations;
• Monitor the implementation of equal opportunities and implement school improvement strategies in the area of equal opportunities.

3. Legal Framework and Definitions of Discrimination

3.1 The school recognises that it has a legal obligation under the disability discrimination act to meet the needs of people with disabilities even if it requires giving them more favourable treatment.

3.2 This policy is in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all previous legislation in relation to equal opportunities. In line with that legislation, it seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with ‘protected characteristics’, in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

3.3 Barrs Court School is committed to actively promoting equal entitlement in every sphere of its activities and to eradicating all forms of discrimination. The school recognises that it has a duty to ensure that all groups of pupils and staff within the school prosper including:
• Boys and girls, men and women
• All minority ethnic groups
- Pupils and families or staff with different religions or beliefs
- Pupils, staff and others with special educational needs
- Pupils, staff and others with a range of disabilities
- Children who are looked after and their carers
- Children and staff who are gay or lesbian
- Pupils or staff undergoing gender reassignment
- Pupils or staff who are pregnant or have recently given birth

3.4 Equality ensures that people are treated fairly, and makes it easier for people to live and work together. Alongside this Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011 stipulates how public organisations, such as schools, can promote equality, and their statutory responsibilities to ensure it takes all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

3.5 Equality of opportunity will only be realised in practice when the school is able to prevent any individual or groups of pupils/people being unfairly discriminated against. For the benefit of this policy, discrimination is defined as:

**Direct discrimination:** Where an individual or group receives less favourable treatment because of their identifying characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination:** Applying unjustifiable requirements and conditions which have a disproportionate impact on an individual or a particular group.

### Racial equality

3.6 At Barrs Court School we will:
- Strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
- Seek to educate pupils in a manner which promotes community cohesion in a multicultural society.

3.7 We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures.

3.8 We endeavour to make our school and its environment welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

### Disability non-discrimination

3.9 A number of pupils at Barrs School have medical, sensory or physical disabilities, in addition to their learning needs. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children and young people and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these pupils are not disadvantaged compared with non-disabled children. The school is committed to providing an environment that allows physical/sensory disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning. Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with physical/sensory disabilities. For example, they may modify teaching materials or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.
Gender equality

3.10 We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of pupils making the best progress possible in our school. We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of both boys and girls. These may include:

- Ensuring that early literacy skills are promoted in all activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- Ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- Removing gender bias from our resources
- Ensure that learning opportunities consider all learning styles including kinaesthetic, visual, auditory
- Making sure that our school environment promotes positive role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- Minimising stereotyping;
- Providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- Valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate both girls and boys.

3.11 If our analysis of pupils’ attainment data indicates areas where girls achieve less well than boys – or vice versa - we will take measures to address this discrepancy.

3.12 These may include:

- Ensuring that individuals do not dominate certain lessons, for example by answering the teacher’s questions more readily;
- Ensuring that all learning activities are relevant to real life situations and problems;
- Beginning lessons by clarifying the learning intentions, and giving the ‘big picture’;
- Minimising female and male stereotyping;
- Using praise and celebration of girls’ and boys’ achievements in those areas where they may traditionally achieve less well than the opposite gender.

3.13 We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to the relative achievement of boys and girls. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group does not do so at the expense of the other.

4. Implementation

4.1 The school will keep the access needs of the school under review with regard to equality provision and plan for improvements for pupils within the following strands:

- The physical environment
- The curriculum
- The delivery of information

4.2 Barrs Court School senior leadership team will ensure that the site the school occupies has accommodation designed and adapted to ensure access to all areas appropriate for pupils and staff to enter. Furniture, fixtures & fittings in the school are appropriate to the needs of pupils and altered
if necessary depending on cohort need. Future developments on school sites will be constructed and developed with accessibility in mind.

4.3 Barrs Court School provides a range of special equipment for the pupils such as hoists, adapted classrooms, communication aids (including Picture Exchange Communication System and iPads for pupils with impaired communication) and suitable play equipment which can be accessed by all pupils. The schools will be well resourced and accessible to all with well-trained staff (including a range of therapists) and equipment.

The Curriculum

4.4 Barrs Court School aims to offer broad and balanced curriculums in their schools, to ensure that the physical environment is accessible and that written information is available to all pupils. The curriculum is often modified to suit individual pupil need with a high degree of individualisation and differentiation being part of curriculum delivery depending on pupil need. The school curriculum is developed to ensure a high level of accessibility for all pupils, and positive opportunities for individualisation of curriculum delivery adapted to current cohorts of learners. This includes:

- An audit of the curriculum, re-write/amend schemes of work to ensure equal opportunities offered to all pupils.
- Review of curriculum delivery - pupil groupings / timetabling to ensure equal access for all pupils.
- Staff training in use of new technology in school or techniques: eg. access for pupils with hearing impairments.
- Assessment and application of appropriate access arrangements to ensure all pupils are able to achieve to their best ability.

4.5 PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) – is delivered to all pupils as discrete lessons, during assemblies and across the curriculum formally and informally. A large part of this curriculum area promotes empathy and understanding between pupils and tackles bullying. A high priority is placed on inculcating preventative strategies with regard to equalities issues in pupils as a high priority.

4.6 Residential trips and off-site activities are planned with due regard to the individual needs of the pupils involved and are risk assessed for suitability – a child would never be disadvantaged by being left behind at school or left out of a particular activity because it was deemed unsuitable.

The delivery of information

4.7 Barrs Court School ensures information provided to pupils and parents is in their preferred format e.g. Symbols, translations into other languages. Every effort is made to ensure effective communication between school and the school community is accessible to all. Formal information opportunities are available on a one-to-one basis through individual progress meetings, parents’ evenings etc. There is no one route of contact to the school. Information can be exchanged on a daily basis through home-school link books, telephone calls, email, letter as the school believes the free exchange of information is vital.
4.8 Information regarding attainment and progress of Barrs Court pupils will be published on the school website, along with details of the spend and impact of initiatives such as Pupil Premium and Year 7 Catch up funding. These initiatives are relevant to equalities as they focus on many of the protected groups named in this policy.

4.9 No pupil will ever be refused admission on grounds of disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religious, culture or ethnicity. The school will ensure that no pupil misses out on an educational opportunity due to financial constraints. Staff appointments will be conducted in accordance with employment law to ensure compliance with equality of opportunity.

4.10 Teaching and learning opportunities will include topics, activities and reference to:

- The achievements and attributes of a diverse range of people from widely differing backgrounds;
- Accurately reflect the population of the UK today in preference to tokenistic or racial stereotypes;
- Use dialect, accents and language appropriately (i.e., not to ridicule any particular group);
- Use a range of literature drawn from different traditions and/or incorporate stories or poems actually written by children from different cultures

4.11 The rights of all pupils to access a broad, balanced and suitably differentiated curriculum will be promoted at all times.

4.12 The school performs an analysis of the achievements of all pupils on an annual basis, reflecting on both their Individual Education Plan data and that associated with the P-Levels. The relative rates of pupil progress will be analysed to identify any unexplained differences in the rates of progression achieved by different groups of pupils and any inequalities will be addressed. This is considered from a number of points of view, including gender, the nature of the pupil’s disability, whether the pupil is ‘Looked After’, ethnicity and whether they are entitled to free school dinners. Other possible identifying characteristics are analysed when the school feels that there is cause to do so. However because of the nature of the pupil’s learning disabilities, other potential limiting factors would in most cases be a secondary factor to the disability itself.

4.13 Based on the school’s latest complete development cycle, there were no identifiable trends in attainment or achievement that were not primarily related to the nature of the pupil’s learning disability as opposed to membership of a potentially vulnerable group.

4.14 The relative rates of absenteeism, incidents and commendations will be analysed to identify any unexplained differences of frequency experienced by different groups of pupils, and any inequalities will be addressed. Teaching materials and school publications will be monitored to ensure the content is representative of a diverse community. All allegations of inequality will be reported via the school incident book and investigated by the Headteacher, or an authorised deputy, who will report directly to the Governing Body and Local Authority as necessary.

4.15 The school recognises that new Positive Action provisions in the Equalities Act 2010 allow us to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils and staff with particular protected characteristics. If we decide to use these we will ensure that it is a proportionate response to achieve the relevant aim.
4.16 Barrs Court School's commitment to equal opportunities is expressed throughout its policies, in materials for job applications and in staff job descriptions. As an employer, Barrs Court School has a commitment to equality encompassing direct and indirect discrimination and will make every effort to be proactive in its approach on behalf of the school community. Barrs Court School has a specific Equalities Policy with regard to Recruitment of staff, detailing our procedures.

4.17 All systems and policies are designed to ensure that there is no bias against any minority group and if any bias is discovered we have a commitment to redressing it. It is our intention that everyone is treated equitably and with respect and we regularly examine procedures and practices to ensure that they are working.

4.18 Barrs Court School provides a safe and secure environment for all staff and pupils and will take action against all forms of discrimination and harassment. Harassment of staff or pupils, whether physical or verbal, by members of the public or colleagues is unacceptable.

4.19 Complaints will be dealt with promptly and will be monitored against all areas covered by legislation. We aim for openness and transparency. The process will be monitored against all areas covered by legislation. We will encourage the use of external agencies to support the complaints procedure where required.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Body is the responsible body with regard to equalities surrounding Barrs Court School's community and for making sure the school follows all of its equality and diversity policies and codes, and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality. They ensure there is no discrimination, harassment or victimization for a pupil or potential pupil in relation to;

- Admissions
- The way it provides education for pupils
- The way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

5.2 The responsible body is also liable for actions taken by all employees unless it can show it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the individual from doing the discriminatory action or from doing anything of that kind.

5.3 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high-profile lead on equality and diversity;
- Promoting equal opportunities inside and outside the school;
- Ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with all equality legislation;
- Ensuring that the school implements its equality and diversity policies and codes of practice

5.4 Staff members are responsible for:

- Promoting equality and diversity and avoiding unfair discrimination;
• Making sure they know what their responsibilities are and participating in support and training as necessary in order to carry them out;
• Challenging any incidents of unfair discrimination, or racial, sexual or other stereotyping, perpetrated by pupils or other staff;
• Following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying;

5.5 The Equality Act 2010 deals with the way in which schools treat their pupils and prospective pupils; the relationship between one pupil and another is not within its scope. However, this policy does require that issues between pupils that fall under one of the named areas above, such as homophobic bullying is taken seriously and treated equally as other concerns.

6. Monitoring and Review
6.1 It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:
• Monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
• Monitor the progress of boys and/or girls, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
• Monitor the progress of pupils from vulnerable groups – including specific SEN cohorts – and compare it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
• Monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
• Require the Headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
• Take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
• Monitor the school’s Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

6.2 Schools must demonstrate their compliance with the general duty with regard to equalities. There is no longer a requirement for a specific action plan, so school may demonstrate this through incorporation of appropriate equalities objectives into the individual school development plan. These will then be monitored and implemented and progress can be tracked in line with Governing Body processes. Schools have to update the published information at least annually.
6.3 The policy will be reviewed every three years, unless circumstances dictate that it should be reviewed sooner. The policy will be reviewed and revised by the Headteacher and approved by the Full Governing Body.

Signed:

Mrs. Julie Cohn (Chair of Governors)

Lisa Appleton (Headteacher)

March 2018
Date for review: March 2021