Birches Green Infant School
Single Equality Policy

Introduction

This policy reflects the Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces all previous school policies on Disability, Ethnicity (i.e., Race) and Gender. Through this policy Birches Green Infant School will fulfil its public duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in connection with disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual identity, and where appropriate, age (applicable to employees only). The guiding principles in this policy refer to all individuals and therefore are equally applicable to pupils, staff, governors and visitors to Birches Green Infant School.

Legal framework

Duties as identified in the Equality Act 2010 and its schedules. There are nine equality strands (known as Protected Characteristics):

- disability;
- ethnicity (including Gypsy and Traveller groups);
- gender;
- gender identity and transgender;
- faith, religion and belief;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- sexual orientation (homophobia);
- pregnancy and maternity;
- age.

This policy also recognises the four types of unlawful behaviour as identified by the act, in relation to the above strands:

- direct discrimination - when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- indirect discrimination - when a provision, criterion or practice is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.
- harassment - an unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.
- Victimisation – when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act.

It should be noted that all schools have a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duties, and failure to do so could result in legal action against the school’s Governing Body. Employees of the school acting on behalf of the Governing Body are also liable for their own discriminatory actions.

1. Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations and establishing our school ethos, we are guided by 8 principles:

**Principle 1: All learners are of equal value**

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, are of equal value:
• whether or not they are disabled,
• whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status,
• whatever their gender or gender identity,
• whatever their sexual identity.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:
• disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made;
• ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
• gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognised;
• sexual identity.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

Policies, procedure and activities promote:
• positive attitudes and actions towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people;
• positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents;
• mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that employment policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and to ensure they benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development:
• whether or not they are disabled;
• whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status;
• whatever their gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:
• disabled and non-disabled;
• people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
• girls and boys, women and men;
• homosexual people as well as heterosexual.
**Principle 6:  We consult and involve widely**

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones. Consultation involves:

- disabled and non-disabled;
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men;
- homosexual people as well as heterosexual.

**Principle 7:  We address prejudice and prejudice related bullying**

We openly challenge all types of discriminatory behaviour and oppose all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties listed above:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed against religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- prejudice reflecting sexism or homophobia.

**Principle 8:  Society as a whole should benefit**

Through the school ethos and values our policies and activities will contribute to society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled and non-disabled;
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- girls and boys, women and men;
- homosexual people as well as heterosexual

**Curriculum**

We will provide a curriculum which provides all of our pupils with the opportunities to succeed through:-

- preparing pupils for life in a diverse society
- the explicit teaching of values
- the opportunity to explore issues related to identity and equality
- promoting attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity, and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language wherever it occurs
- the use of images and materials which positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles

When it is reviewed, each curriculum subject or area co-ordinator will ensure that teaching and learning reflects our Guiding Principles as set out above
Roles and Responsibilities

Staff and Governors

1. The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

2. The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

3. The Senior Leadership Team has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of this policy. This includes things such as:-
   - provide and analyse quantitative and qualitative data that supports better understanding of equality groups and any issues that may arise, e.g., attendance, bullying, exclusion;
   - undertake or support Equality Impact Assessment (Equality Analysis) processes;

4. All staff are expected to:
   - adhere to this policy;
   - promote equality and inclusion in their classrooms, amongst colleagues and with visitors to the school;
   - deal with any prejudice related incidents that may occur;
   - plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect our Guiding Principles;
   - attend appropriate training that enables Birches Green Infant School to keep up-to-date with equality issues.

5. All staff and Governors will exercise their Safeguarding responsibilities in relation to equality matters and ensure that any bullying or challenging of Human Rights is addressed immediately.

6. Birches Green Infant School is opposed to all forms of prejudice that could act as a barrier to achieving our legal duties and a cohesive community. These include:
   - disability;
   - special educational needs;
   - racism and xenophobia;
   - gender and transgender;
   - religious groups and communities;
   - Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
   - sexism and homophobia.

This policy should be read in conjunction with related policies:
   - Accessibility Plan

January 2016
R. Hughes

The policy was agreed by staff on ___________________________

The policy was agreed by Governors on ________________________

This Policy will be reviewed annually.