

South Petherton Junior School Policy Statement for Equality

Legal Framework

South Petherton Junior School welcomes its general duties under the 2010 Equality Act and the 2011 Equality Duty to:

- **eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**, and any other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Equality Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The new Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties – for race, disability and gender – and covers the following protected characteristics: age (for adults only), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (just with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), pregnancy and maternity, 'race' (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, religion or belief (this includes lack of belief), sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

We also welcome our Specific Duties under the Equality Act to:

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the general duties (annually); and,
- Prepare and publish one or more equality objectives (at intervals of not greater than four years). These objectives must be specific and measurable and must be published in a manner that is accessible to the public.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our School Context

South Petherton Junior School is a small rural school covering Key Stage 2 (Year 3 to Year 6). It currently has 133 children on roll (Summer 2021). The greatest proportion of the school's pupils are in the ward of South Petherton (83%) and the remainder in the villages of Bower Hinton, Martock, Seavington, Compton Durville, Castle Cary, East Lambrook, Kingsbury Episcopi, Merriott, Ilminster and Yeovil.

Most of the pupils are White British (90%) and the number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is 2%. The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) is 12%. The number of children receiving Free School Meals is 21%.

Our Overall Aims

We aim to :

- promote equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice
- involve people from different groups in the development and review of our equality work
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination
- eliminate harassment and bullying
- ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups

- narrow the attainment gap in outcomes for children and young people
- improve other outcomes where we identify inequality
- take positive action to meet needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment
- increase participation of under-represented groups in activities and public life
- promote positive attitudes and good relations between people from different groups and support community cohesion

Guiding Principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners, parents/carers, governors and staff are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, and our governors and staff, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whether or not they are pregnant or mothers
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual orientation

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and of the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made and needs met
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised, and specific needs met
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised and met
- religion, belief or faith background, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- pregnancy and motherhood, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- sexual orientation, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met

We also understand that people have complex, multiple identities. No-one is just one thing and people have many affiliations and loyalties. We know that although social class is not explicitly mentioned in the Equality Act, we need to consider and address inequalities of income and social class as part of our work to address other inequalities.

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

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes 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, and women and men, fair treatment for those who are pregnant or mothers, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment

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

We ensure that policies and procedures should 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
- whatever their age

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

We use a social model of disadvantage, understanding that disadvantage is often caused by the structures, systems, attitudes and opinions of society as a whole, not by the people that suffer the disadvantage. Therefore, 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
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We recognise that there are risks that consultation processes do not always access the views of some disadvantaged groups. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds

- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or mothers and others
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information (as appropriate) about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

We also publish other information needed to show how we are meeting our duties to eliminate discrimination/harassment/victimisation, advance equality and promote good relations between different groups.

Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement through which we have involved people from different groups (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. Accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

The Curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles set out above.

Ethos and Organisation

We ensure the principles listed in principle 7 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- involvement in extra-curricular activities
- working in partnership with parents and carers

- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in the opening paragraphs:

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

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We report annually to the Governing Body about the numbers, types and seriousness of racial incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

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.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the nine principles above
- support pupils in their class who have particular needs arising from disability, Special Educational Needs, or for whom English is an additional language or who are Travellers
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and Resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious Observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams, to ensure that we are able to meet our obligations under the Equality Act.

Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative data and qualitative evidence relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data on achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, and gender.

Meeting our specific duties under the 2010 Equality Act

We publish information annually through our school communication to parents to show that we have complied with our general duties under the Act.

We set equality objectives and review annually our progress towards them. For the period from **March 2021 to March 2024** our equality objectives are:

- 1) To analyse school data in order to better understand the gap between boys' and girls' English attainment and report to Governors by July 2022 and track in subsequent years.
- 2) To reduce the incidence of prejudice-related teasing, in relation to racism, homophobia, sexism and hostile attitudes and behaviour towards people who are disabled.

Appendix 1

EQUALITY STATEMENT FOR PUPILS

Our school is committed to equality. We try to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and has equality of opportunity. We also work to develop good relations between people from different groups. We recognise that in wider society, people are not always treated fairly, for example because of their: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy or maternity; ethnicity, colour or national origin; religion or belief; or, sexual orientation.

We try to make sure that our school is a safe and secure place for everyone. We do not put up with unfair treatment or bullying of any kind.

We recognise that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all the same. When people face particular difficulties they need extra support to help them achieve success and we try to do this for people in our school community.

We also try to make sure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking to pupils and parents/carers, and through our School Council.

Britain as a country is very committed to making society a fair place and the Government asks all schools to help with this. We are asked to set equality objectives and to make sure we review our progress every year and let people know how we are getting on. Our school has several equality objectives.

If you would like to know more about what our school is doing to create greater equality you can talk to your teacher or Mrs Walker.

Appendix 2

EQUALITY STATEMENT FOR PARENTS/COMMUNITY

South Petherton Junior School welcomes our duties under the 2010 Equality Act to:

- **eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation**, and any other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Equality Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

in relation to age (for adults only), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (just with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), pregnancy and maternity, 'race' (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, religion or belief (this includes lack of belief), sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

In fulfilling these duties we are guided by nine principles:

1. All our learners, parents/carers, governors and staff are of equal value;
2. We recognise and respect difference and understand that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same, as different people have different needs;
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging;
4. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development;
5. We actively work to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist;
6. We consult and involve widely to ensure that those who are affected by our policies and activities are involved in the design of our work;
7. We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and participation in public life;

8. As required by the Act, we base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us – we maintain and publish information to show how we are meeting our duties and about our progress towards greater equality; and,
9. As required by the Act, we publish equality objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and the engagement with people from different groups, also taking into account national and local priorities and issues.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. Therefore we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan setting out how we shall pursue our objectives. We keep these under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

We ensure the nine principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles. We also have a full Equality policy – please ask for a copy if you would like to see it.

Therefore, we would like to share the following Information with all parents to demonstrate that we have due regard to the need to promote equality, as required by the 2010 Equality Act

Our Objectives for the period from March 2021 to March 2024 are:

- 1) To analyse school data in order to better understand the gap between boys' and girls' English attainment and report to Governors by July 2022 and track in subsequent years.
- 2) To reduce the incidence of prejudice-related teasing, in relation to racism, homophobia, sexism and hostile attitudes and behaviour towards people who are disabled.