



# Whitburn Church of England Academy

## Single Equality Policy

### Preface

The Academy Vision and Values can be found here:

<https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/about-us/academy-vision-and-values/>

This policy and its associated procedures are based on these key principles and values.

### Policy Status

This Policy draws together the existing Academy policies relating to Equality and Diversity including the Accessibility and Community cohesion schemes and Disability Accessibility plan. The Single Equality Policy replaces the exiting Equality and Diversity Policy and its annexes.

### Definition of Equality

Equality exists where there is a fair society in which everyone can participate and is given the opportunity to achieve. Equality is also about eliminating discrimination and promoting fair and equal treatment for all. This means that decisions about employment opportunities and educational inclusion should be free from unlawful discrimination, irrelevant barriers and accessible to all. Equality is about:

- Widening life chances, not restricting them;
- Fostering talents, not suppressing them;
- Ensuring no one is disadvantaged or discriminated against;
- Creating a safe, secure and effective working environment.

### Legislative Framework – The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the principal legislation underpinning the Whitburn Church of England Academy's Single Equality Policy. The Act covers education, employment and the provision of premises, facilities, goods and services. A consolidation of over 40 separate pieces of equality related legislation spanning 40 years, its stated aim is to 'harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality'.

The Act replaces existing equality legislation, and covers nine ‘protected characteristics’, which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Other groups who will benefit from this policy as they may suffer from discrimination are:

- Children from single parent families
- Children from estranged families
- Children in care (see Looked After Children Policy)
- Children and families in crisis
- Children who are Gifted and Talented (see ASN Policy)
- Pregnant school girls
- Transient and mobile students
- Students with EAL
- Young Carers
- Refugees and Asylum seekers
- Poor attenders
- Disaffected learners
- Students who misuse illegal substances
- Students with pronounced medical needs
- Students with mental health difficulties and those who self-harm
- Students who are home tutored

## **Unlawful behaviour under the Act - real examples**

### **Direct discrimination**

This is what normally comes to mind when you think about discrimination: intentionally treating someone less favourably due to a protected characteristic. For example, [refusing to make reasonable adjustments](#) for a pupil with special educational needs.

### **Indirect discrimination**

This is where a policy or practice, though applied equally to all pupils, has a disproportionate impact on a group of pupils sharing a protected characteristic. For example, a court found that a school's uniform policy that banned long hair was [discriminatory against Rastafarian boys](#).

### **Harassment**

The legal definition of harassment is:

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.

It's important to point out that under the legal definition, harassment only covers disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity. It is also unlawful to retaliate against someone for taking action under the Act.

The Equality Act introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This requires the Academy to have due regard to the need to:

- 1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by, or under the Act.
- 2) Advance Ensure equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- 3) Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- 4) Foster good relations between different groups.

The specific equality duty replaces previous public sector duties in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006. It requires the Academy to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty.

In fulfilling the legal obligations outlined above we are guided by seven principles.

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

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whichever their gender or chosen identified gender.

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity**

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate. They are differentiated as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background. They aim to overcome 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, those not identifying as Cisgender and those undergoing gender reassignment are recognised.

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

Whitburn Church of England Academy 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, women and men, those not identifying as Cisgender and an absence of sexual harassment

### **Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development**

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
- whichever their gender or gender identity

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

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, 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 and those not identifying as Cisgender .

### **Principle 6: We consult 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. We involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys and those not identifying as Cisgender.

## **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
- both women and men, girls and boys and those not identifying as Cisgender.

## **Action Plans**

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference. Our Academy Development Plan sets out the specific actions we shall undertake to implement the principles outlined above.

## **Implementation and Responsibilities**

All staff and Directors are provided with Whitburn Church of England Academy policies and receive updated policies electronically when they are reviewed or changed. New staff and Directors receive policies and training as part of induction. Further training is delivered as required.

Everyone has a responsibility to support and foster the aims of this policy by:

- adhering to the Academy's Single Equality Policy and incorporating the aims and values of the Policy into all areas of life at the Academy;
- ensuring their conduct towards others is at all times free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- appropriately challenging instances of discrimination, or draw it to the attention of the senior staff;

## **The Curriculum**

Each curriculum subject or area is kept under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principles outlined above. This includes ensuring that:

- Students have equal access to the curriculum programmes of study (unless disapplied) throughout each Key Stage, and non-compulsory courses, according to aptitude and ability (*See Whitburn Church of England Academy Curriculum Policy*)
- Whitburn Church of England Academy is committed to full educational inclusion (*See Whitburn Church of England Academy SEN and D Policy*);
- Annual analysis of attainment, behaviour and other student data will be undertaken by sex, gender identity, ethnic background and ability and presented to Directors annually;

## **Ethos and Organisation**

The principles outlined above apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- learners' progress, attainment and assessment
- learners' 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
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

*(See Whitburn Church of England Academy Admissions Policy, Attendance Policy, Sex and Relationship Education Policy, Anti Bullying and Behaviour Management Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy)*

## **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 under which this policy is formed

- 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 Islam phobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism, gender identity and homophobia.

Incidents of prejudice and prejudice related bullying will be addressed in accordance with existing policies and procedures. *(See Whitburn Church of England Academy Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Management Policy, Incidents of a Racist Nature – Reporting Procedure – Appendix A, Disciplinary Policy and Exclusion Policy)*

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they were 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 strategies are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The Principal 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. A senior member of staff has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support students in their class for whom English is an additional language
- 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 Directors and, as appropriate, to all students and parents.

### **Religious Observance**

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

*(See Whitburn Church of England Academy Collective Worship Policy)*

### **Staff Recruitment, Retention, Development and Training**

We are committed to recruiting, retaining and developing diverse workforce by:

- Welcoming applications from all sections of the community
- Using and accepting different formats such as large print for the recruitment process
- Making adjustments within the recruitment and selection process where reasonable to accommodate specific needs
- Ensuring all employees have equal chances of training, career development and promotion.
- Ensuring all recruits to the Academy will be offered induction training which will include a reference the Single Equality policy;

We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

*(See Whitburn Church of England Academy Safer Recruitment Policy, Appraisal Policy, Performance Management Policy)*

### **Equality Objectives 2025/26**

Directors have agreed on the following equality objectives:

1. To ensure that all Directors, and staff are aware of current legislation surrounding equality and diversity, and understand their individual and collective responsibilities
2. To promote cultural understanding and tolerance of different religious beliefs and ethnic groups

3. To promote mental health awareness and develop appropriate support strategies
4. Commit to closing gaps in attainment and achievement especially for:
  - a. students eligible for Pupil Premium
  - b. students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
  - c. looked after children
  - d. students from minority ethnic groups.
5. Commit to improving accessibility in all school sites for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities, including access to specialist teaching areas
6. Closely monitor and record incidents involving the use of homophobic, sexist, and/or racist language by students
7. To regularly review and refine the taught curriculum so that it supports our drive to support equality and diversity

### **Breaches of the Policy**

Employees who feel that they have experienced discrimination can pursue the matter through the formal grievance procedure but should first contact their line manager or SMT for information, advice and guidance.

Students who feel that they have experienced discrimination can pursue the matter through the formal grievance procedure but should first contact either their form tutor or their Head of Learning.

All reported complaints and breaches of the policy will be investigated and managed in line with Academy policy procedures, and where found, disciplinary proceedings may take effect.

*(See Whitburn Church of England Academy Disciplinary Policy)*

### **Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

- This Single Equality Policy has been developed in line with Whitburn Church of England Academy Principles.
- The Academy Governing Body will review relevant associated policies e.g. the Accessibility Action Plan to ensure they remain compliant with Equality and Diversity legislation.
- Monitoring the implementation and associated codes of practice is the responsibility of Directors and Staff of Whitburn Church of England Academy.



## **Summary of Legislative Requirements**

Whitburn Church of England Academy has developed this Single Equality Policy to help us to meet our duties under the:

Race Relations Act as amended 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Equality Act 2006, Equality Act 2010, Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006.

A statutory duty has been placed on all school governing bodies to counteract the effects of institutional discrimination on the grounds of race, disability and gender. It applies to all aspects of the school community and relates equally to children and adults. The Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 requires the governing bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion under a new duty which came into force in England from 1 September 2007. The duty identifies teaching, learning and the curriculum; equality and excellence and engagement and extended services as the three main areas where schools can contribute to community cohesion.

By placing an equality perspective in our policies and practices, we recognise that we are not thinking about people as a homogenous group but as distinct groups with differing needs, characteristics and behaviours.

The legal duties on race, disability and gender equality enables us to identify and tackle discrimination, to prevent harassment and to ensure equality of opportunity by taking a proactive approach to address key issues facing schools, for example around the achievement of boys from some backgrounds, achievement of disabled students and the greater levels of exclusions of boys.

Our Equality Policy sets out the overarching principles of our approach to meeting the general and specific requirements of the three public duties and in creating an inclusive whole school environment as well as meeting the duty to promote community cohesion on school governing bodies.

## **The Legal Background**

The main statutory provisions covering discrimination are the following:

- **Equal Pay Act 1970**
- **Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986**
- **Race Relations Act 1976**
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
- **DDA 1995 Part 4 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001)**
- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001**

- **Race Relations Act 1976 (General Statutory Duty: Code of Practice) Regulations 2000**
- **Also relevant are:**
- **Employment Rights Act 1990**
- **Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Employment Relations Act 1999**
- **Equality Act (2010)**
- **Code of Practice for Schools published by the Disability Rights Commission (2002).**
- **Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000**
- **The Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality**

| Single Equality Policy |   |         |                                |
|------------------------|---|---------|--------------------------------|
| Linked to              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Absence Management Policy</li><li>• Academy Uniform</li><li>• Admissions Policy</li><li>• Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Management Policy</li><li>• Appraisal Policy</li><li>• Collective Worship Policy</li><li>• Disciplinary Policy</li><li>• Exclusion Policy</li><li>• Ethos Statement</li><li>• Performance Management Policy</li><li>• Safer Recruitment Policy</li><li>• Sex and Relationship Education Policy</li><li>• Special Educational Needs Policy</li><li>• Staff Dress Code and Code of Conduct Policy</li><li>• Community Cohesion Statement</li><li>• Leave Policy</li></ul> |         |                                |
|                        |   |         |                                |
|                        | Creation Date   | Version | Status                         |
|                        | 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2014  | 1.0     | Approved by the Governing Body |
|                        | Revision Date   |         |                                |
|                        | 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2016   | 2.0     | Approved by the Governing Body |
|                        | 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2020   | 3.0     | Approved by the Governing Body |
|                        | 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2023  | 4.0     | Approved by the Governing Body |
|                        | 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2025  | 5.0     | Approved by the Governing Body |
|                        |   |         |                                |