



# **Mercenfeld Primary School Equality Policy & Objectives**

## **2024-2026**

### **Introduction**

In the implementation of this Policy we emphasise an approach that builds on race, disability and gender considerations from the start and at every level of the school, at strategic, policy, management and classroom level. We need to be able to demonstrate what we have done and what we plan to do to improve opportunities and outcomes for pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school. This policy will be monitored and delivered through the governors' assurance role, School Improvement and the Self Evaluation processes.

We will ensure that every pupil irrespective of race, disability, gender, religion and belief or sexual orientation is able to achieve high standards and that strategies are in place to tackle under-achievement. We will ensure that every pupil has access to the necessary support required to enable them to achieve their highest potential. We will ensure that the school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair, effective and equitable.

Our intention is to ensure that the adults working or volunteering in the school include as much as possible a balanced gender mix, appropriate representation of diverse ethnic groups and disabled people. We believe that this will provide good role models for pupils from all backgrounds.

We will involve pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and all other stakeholders in the development of our Scheme. They need to be involved from the very start and their involvement will inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the Scheme. The aim is to ensure that we meet the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, and children and adults with disabilities.

### **Current School Context**

Mercenfeld Primary school is a larger than average primary situated in rural Leicestershire. The school is becoming more popular and beginning to fill. The school population is dominantly white British. 12 of the 17 ethnic groups are represented. The school has an increasing number of children with SEND and an above average number of children with an EHCP or Top Up Funding. Academic performance has been an issue in previous years but now is on an upward trajectory. Close monitoring, and additional support is beginning to ensure pupils are reaching their potential. We have not had any complaints or issues regarding bullying or behaviour related to equality issues, and the school is a harmonious community.

## **Race and Community Cohesion**

### **Race**

The School recognises that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic [BAME] people experience discrimination on the basis of colour, race, nationality, religion and ethnic origin. This discrimination manifests itself in all areas of their lives such as housing, employment, education and access to services. Racial harassment and violence is one of the most serious consequences of racism, damaging people emotionally and physically and limiting life choices and opportunities. The School will take all necessary measures to prevent and tackle racial harassment and assist BAME people to live in freedom from harassment and to feel safe as they enjoy and achieve throughout their education.

The School is committed to working for the equality of all ethnic groups and the Governing Body understands its accountability.

In line with the Single Public Sector Equality duty of the Equality Act 2010 in promoting racial equality we will:

1. Tackle unlawful discrimination by
  - Keeping accurate records of all ethnic and faith groups, their backgrounds and needs and how we respond to them;
  - Dealing with complaints of discrimination and harassment speedily according to Local Authority Guidance, *Guidelines for Challenging and Dealing with Racial Harassment in Schools* and notify complainants of the outcomes and action taken;
  - Encouraging dialogue between different racial groups on the appropriateness of our service offer;
  - Prevent racial discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups.
  
2. Support cohesion by
  - Promoting activities that celebrate our common experience as well as those that recognise diversity generally and foster understanding and respect for the culture and faith of all our learners and their families;
  - Encouraging learners and their families of all ethnic groups to participate fully in all aspects of school life;
  - Using our support for the voluntary and community sector to promote good race relations; Countering myths and misinformation that may undermine good community relations;
  
3. Work in partnership with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and groups to
  - Promote the active participation of minority communities in shaping the future of our school;
  - Ensure the school staff (both permanent and temporary), learners and their families as well as our partners and the wider community fully understand the principles of good race relations.
  - Expand access across all communities and in all areas of school activity.

## **Community Cohesion**

We understand our duty to Promote Community Cohesion as part of the response to the duties contained in the Single Public Sector Equality duty of the Equality Act 2010. Our school considers this to be a fundamental part of our role.

We understand that Community Cohesion is the process that should happen in all communities to ensure that different groups and individual people get on well together. It should also allow for new residents and existing residents to adapt to one another.

We will evidence our effectiveness for OFSTED, and all stakeholders by demonstrating:

- A widely shared sense of the contribution of different communities to a shared vision.
- A strong sense of individual rights and responsibilities within the school community.
- That all children and parents feel they are being treated fairly and have the same opportunities.
- That children trust the school to act fairly.
- We have strong and positive relationships.

## **Disability**

### **Disability**

The School's commitment to disabled learners, their families and staff's equality has four objectives:

We will promote equality for disabled people by:

- Removing barriers to accessibility, particularly in relation to education, employment and access to services, information and buildings;
- Encouraging good practice by our partners through our advisory capacity
- Upholding the Social Model and our guiding principles in our role in procurement and in our partnership duties.

We will tackle discrimination against disabled people by:

- Promoting positive images of disabled people
- Challenging patronising or discriminating attitudes
- Making the environment as safe as possible for and challenging antisocial or bullying behaviour against, or harassment of, disabled learners, staff and families.

We will support disabled learners to achieve their full potential by:

- Providing where possible, support, assistance and care to disabled learners to enable them to lead independent lives;
- Supporting the formation of groups, networks and services for disabled learners and disabled employees of the school and people who are disabled in the community;
- Supporting disabled learners, staff and carers according to their individual need.

We will work in partnership with disabled learners and their carers and staff by:

- Enabling disabled learners, their families and disabled staff active participation
- Involving disabled learners, their families and disabled staff in the changes and improvements we make;
- Consulting with disabled learners, their families and disabled staff on issues affecting them rather than with people acting on their behalf.

Our Scheme shows how we promote disability equality across all areas of the school, to disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and other school users.

When carrying out our functions, we will have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. Eliminate disability related harassment.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation of disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.
- Monitor staff and learners by disability.
- Have a Disability Equality Scheme.

We plan to increase access to education for disabled pupils by:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled learners can participate in the school curriculum.
- Increasing the inclusion of positive images of disabled people across the curriculum. Improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled learners can take advantage of education and associated services.
- Improving the delivery of information to disabled learners, to the standard of which is provided in writing for learners who are not disabled.

## **Gender**

The School is committed to combating sex discrimination and sexism and promoting the equality of women and men.

We recognise that society has stereotypes for both women and men, and both women and men can lose opportunities because of these stereotypes.

The School is aware that staff with caring and domestic responsibilities may need to work part-time or flexible working hours.

We will work in partnership with other agencies to eliminate sexual harassment, domestic violence and other hate crimes.

The School is also committed to ensuring the rights, under the Equality Act 2010, of transgender people (who have Gender Recognition Certificates).

We will give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex, including domestic violence, sexual violence, bullying and exploitation.
- Promote equality of opportunity between women and men in all of our functions.

## **Religion and Belief**

The School recognises that people can face discrimination because of attitudes in society towards the faith communities to which they belong. Faith-based hate crime has been a new phenomenon in recent years, developing a character that is distinct from race hate crime.

The School also recognises that a person's religious (or similar) beliefs may mean that they have different needs, demands and expectations, which require flexibility.

The School is committed to eliminating illegal discrimination and exclusion on the basis of religion or belief.

We will consider the actions outlined by the Equality Act 2010 and assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures have on promoting equality for people based on their religion, belief and non-belief.

## **Sexual Orientation**

The School is committed to combating discrimination faced by lesbians, gay men and bisexual (LGB) people. We want to ensure equality of opportunity for LGB people across services and employment. Also see Anti-Bullying policy

We will respect the rights of individuals to be open about their sexual orientation, tackle homophobia, challenge stereotyping and improve knowledge about LGB communities, both internally and to the community as a whole.

Our school recognises the need to protect learners from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to taking a proactive approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the school and will assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures on promoting sexual orientation equality as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

We will deal with complaints of discrimination and harassment speedily and notify complainants of the outcome and actions taken.

## **Age**

The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for younger and older people. We recognise that society has negative attitudes, stereotypes and myths about youth, ageing, younger and older people. These attitudes and beliefs can lead to both younger and older people being socially and economically disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised. We believe that younger and older people have the right to equality of opportunity and that they make a significant and valuable contribution to the community at large.

Age equality means securing the equal participation in society of people of every age, securing a balance between equal citizenship, equality of opportunity, equality of outcome and respect for difference

## **Anti-bullying and Discriminatory Policy Framework**

Our School states clearly that all forms of bullying and discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We have set out the measures that our school will take to address bullying and discriminatory incidents in our Anti-Bullying Policy. We record all incidents that are deemed to be racist or bullying in nature.

## **Employment Practices**

In our School we ensure that we observe the principles of equal opportunities in how we employ, develop and treat our staff.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

We are reviewing key policies, functions and procedures that have been assessed as relevant to meeting the duties set out under the Equality Act 2010.

The main system by which we will assess the impact of our current policies, functions or procedures will be through carrying out Equality Impact Assessment.

We need to understand whether our policies and services are meeting everyone's needs and that anyone who needs to can get access to them.

To do this we undertake Equality Impact Assessment to test how we are doing at the moment and what can be done. This is done by monitoring Raise Online, Governors visits and ongoing scrutiny of practice including participation rates, representation of various sub-groups and regular communication with the wider community. Each Governor visit will ask the question 'are there equalities issues?' and examine/question further to give the full Governing Body a report that will enable appropriate action to address any issue.

## **Equality Objectives**

- To ensure pupils from all groups achieve well across the curriculum.
- Including those pupils with SEND, those in receipt of the pupil premium.
- Those from minority ethnic backgrounds, EAL pupils and those who belong to a travelling community.
- To ensure high quality provision for SEND pupils through monitoring of their EHCP objectives and personalised curriculum.
- High parental satisfaction related to vulnerable groups, SEND and all cultures.
- Strong evidence of cultural coverage across the curriculum including the agreed RE syllabus (SACRE).

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Local Advisory Board accepts their responsibility to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment, as outlined in the scheme.

- They will ensure that our school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 specifically the Single Public Sector Equalities Duty (SPSED) and specific duties;
- Monitor the delivery of the Schools Equality Scheme;

- Ensure that all members of staff understand the importance of the Scheme and their role in delivering it.

## **Action**

Any necessary action for race, disability and gender issues and also for religion or belief and sexual orientation will be incorporated within the school development plan. At this point in time we regard our school as highly inclusive and excellent in promoting equalities. Working within the Healthy Schools Programme and International Schools Programme assists with ensuring equal opportunities and positive views of all sub-groups are maintained.

## **Reporting and reviewing the policy**

We will produce an annual report on progress and review and revise the Schools Equality Objectives every two years.

## **Publication**

The Schools Equality Policy and Objectives is published on our website and is available on request as hard copy.

## **Complaints**

If a member of the public feels that they have suffered harassment or been treated unfairly by the School because of their sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic group, regional or national origin, age, marital status, disability, political or religious belief, sexual orientation or class, they should report this without fail through the School's complaints procedure.

Complaints by staff will be dealt with by the Head Teacher if the complaint is against the Head Teacher it will be dealt by BEP's Director of Education as appropriate.

We take all external and internal complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour. Complaints about staff will be investigated thoroughly and dealt with under the appropriate procedures.

The Head Teacher and the Director of Education pledge to respond initially to any equality concern, or issue relating to this policy, within 24 hours of receipt.