

Equal Opportunity Policy

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Document information

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Owner	Human Resources - Schools		
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Purpose	The main reason for adopting an Equal Opportunities Policy is to identify, prevent and redress unfair discrimination against disadvantaged groups. The Equal Opportunities Policy will assist the Governing Body to address legal, managerial and social issues from the basis of a statement of commitment to equality supported by a more detailed policy and procedures for implementation.		

Document accessibility

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Walsall Council

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The School takes its responsibility with regard to equality and diversity very seriously. The school will:

- treat people fairly, justly and with respect in both education and employment
- find ways to support those who are disadvantaged or excluded
- promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

1.2 Equal Opportunities in a school situation, means ensuring that every individual has equal access to an education or to career development in education. Where equality guidelines principles are not adhered to, unlawful discrimination may arise.

1.3 The School believes that, within education, equality is fundamentally about providing exemplary education, and ensuring that the needs of pupils, parents, staff, governors and the community are identified and met where at all possible. We aim to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different groups.

1.4 This policy outlines how our school ensures that equality is being promoted, what provision is available and what action is to be taken.

1.5 This policy and procedure document may be applied to employees working in Academies in the following circumstances:

Where a school has become an Academy having previously adopted this policy and procedure.

Where an Academy has decided to adopt this policy and procedure following appropriate consultation. (For those Academies that pay in to the Walsall Council facilities agreement, consultation with unions will have already been undertaken. For all other Academies, local consultation with employees and their representatives will need to take place).

All references to “the school” should therefore be taken to refer to the Academy and references to “the Headteacher” should be taken to refer to the Principal of the Academy or other designated Head of the Academy.

2 Principles

2.1 This policy has been developed to set out the aims and objectives of the School’s approach to equalities and the overall commitment to valuing equality, diversity and human rights. It sets out the expectations on our employees and Governors in the School’s objective to promote equal opportunities.

2.2 The School has adopted a zero tolerance approach to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief (or no religion or belief), sexual orientation, class or social background, political belief or Trade Union affiliation. This protocol is in place to provide fairness for all involved in the School’s employment and education

provision. All employees, whether part time, full time, temporary or volunteer, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and workers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the School.

- 2.3 The School is committed to meeting the needs and expectations of people who use its services. This means fair access for all, ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. All users will positively benefit from our education services. Information to users about services will be provided in accessible formats, based on their particular need as far as reasonable and within resources available.

3. Legislative Framework

- 3.1 This policy has been developed within the framework of existing legislation and relevant Codes of Practice. The main legal provisions are contained within the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

- 3.2 The Equality Act 2010 has merged previous equality legislation into one Act of Parliament, with some areas being strengthened and others being more a consolidation of previous requirements. The Act covers the main equality duties together with additional requirements for public sector authorities.

- 3.3 The School recognises the following as ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Πρεγνανχησ ανδ Ματερνιτησ
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation

- 3.4 The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out those rights in the UK which are protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. Human rights are based on the core principles that are relevant to day to day life, and protect freedom to control one’s own life and fulfill one’s potential through: being safe and protected from harm, being treated fairly and with dignity, living the life you choose, and taking an active part in the community and wider society.

4. Leadership on Equality and Diversity

- 4.1 The Governing Body and the Headteacher have responsibility for developing a culture that promotes equality and values diversity, they also ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation and will challenge any prejudice, discriminatory behaviour and attitudes.
- 4.2 The Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The School requires that its employees and volunteers have appropriate training and possess competencies to fulfill the principles of this protocol. The training and competence levels will depend on the role of the employee or volunteer. Some roles will require specific training, competencies and conduct, Induction and training are available for employees and volunteers to acquire appropriate levels of competence.

5.2 Managers and supervisors

Head teachers and managers have responsibility for embedding equality objectives in plans and strategies. School leadership is responsible for ensuring that fair employment decisions are made including:

- promoting a representative workforce, for example; fair recruitment, career development, pay, training, promotion and welfare of staff to ensure that the School's workforce, as far as reasonable, reflects the make up of the local population.
- ensuring staff are competent in equality and diversity, through regular one-to-one meetings, supervision and appraisals.
- challenging unfairness, and acting promptly and fairly in any instances of actual or alleged discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, in areas for which they are responsible;
- consulting employees from all protected characteristics on key employment related decisions, such as restructures or changes to work practices.
- supporting staff with disabilities, as far as reasonable, by putting in place reasonable adjustments, to overcome barriers they may experience during their employment with the School.

5.3 Employees and Volunteers

All school employees and volunteers have a duty to demonstrate the principles and values of this protocol in their interactions and relationships with colleagues and customers. This includes, but is not limited to:

- acting in ways that are in accordance with equality legislation, policies, protocols and good practices
- treating everyone they come into contact with, with dignity and respect
- ensuring that they do not discriminate or induce others to practice discrimination, harassment or victimisation;

- recognising and reporting behaviour that undermines equality and diversity.

6. Monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Policy

Effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Head teacher or nominated equal opportunities governor as part of the School standard workforce analysis. Disproportionate or negative outcomes will be monitored and actions will be put in place by the Governing Body.

7. Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy

Breaches of the equalities policy may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct under the School's Disciplinary policy. Schools are strongly advised to seek assistance from Human Resources in such cases.