

The Jessie Younghusband School



Equality Policy

**Approved July 2013
Review July 2017**

1. Introduction

The Equality Duty forms a part of the Equality Act 2010. It replaces the three previous duties on race, disability and gender, bringing them together into a single duty. It also covers:

- Age (for school staff only)
- Sexual orientation
- Religion and belief
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment

This policy and the accompanying action plans set out how the governing body of JYS will promote equality of opportunity for members of its community.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to **have due regard to the need to**:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above i.e:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their

protected characteristics;

- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations **involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.**

Specific Duties

The Act also introduced specific duties, which are designed to help public authorities to meet their obligations under the Public sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED is set out on the face of the Act, while the specific duties are set out in secondary legislation.

The Specific Duties require schools to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish equality objectives every four years (one or more as is proportionate to the organisation)

This policy and the equality actions plans will be published on the school website.

2. Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for Jessie Younghusband School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between groups.

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation. At Jessie Younghusband School the vast majority of children are from the same ethnic group...

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes¹.

Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

At JYS we are committed to establishing equality for all pupils, their parents/guardians, staff and other users of the school. This is reflected in our school ethos and aims, which state:

The staff and children of Jessie Younghusband School believe that children learn best when all participants in their education work as partners. Therefore they believe that the School Aims apply to all governors of the school, staff at the school and all families who are part of the school.

The staff and governors of JYS believe that the school should:

- Provide a happy and safe environment where everyone is valued and respected;
- Seek to achieve good relationships with all those involved in the school community through mutual support and open and honest communication;
- Encourage everyone to aim high and try to achieve their full potential, whether in academic work, sport or play;
- Collectively create a stimulating environment which fosters excitement and enthusiasm for learning;
- Encourage active participation and involvement in our local community and appreciation of our place in the wider world.

Our vision statement about Equality

Jessie Younghusband School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

Such opportunities include the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- preparation for entry to the school

- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or Theatre in Education (TIE).
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

The Head teacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

The governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the head teacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years

The staff will:

- have responsibility for supporting each other in implementing this Policy
- support the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Head teacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP
- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Our pupils will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

Policy Development:

The development of this policy has involved the whole of our school community, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010

- Our pupils

The School Council discuss equality issues within part of their regular meeting agendas and have conducted surveys in response to consultation. Focus group discussions enable more vulnerable groups to be given the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and ideas. The PSHCE curriculum covers many related challenging issues and gives a class based forum for issues to be openly shared.

- Our staff

All staff were involved through staff meetings and additional opportunities to discuss any issues with teaching and non teaching staff governors.

- Our school governors

The governors were consulted through the Pupils and Curriculum Committee, and the main governing body meetings.

- Parents/carers

Parents and carers were informed of the consultation through the newsletter and responses were welcomed. The Friends Association also discussed within their formal meetings. Additional individual discussions were opened where specific concerns or comments were noted. Annual parent surveys give an overarching perspective about how well the school is meeting its aims, and annual report responses give all parents the opportunity to comment formally on their child's progress and access to all aspects of school life.

- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

Focus group and individual discussions were shared which involved members of these groups at an age appropriate level.

- Our partners in the community

Members of the community were involved through the community volunteers who work in the school, and the consultation was shared with the local residents association. The school has an involvement with the locally Community Neighbourhood Watch panel and it was shared at that meeting.

- Ongoing:

Continuing to use the systems noted above will enable the working party to access relevant and up to date information as well as informing the annual review of policy and associated report.

Using data and other information

School and pupil level data is tracked for all children and those from more vulnerable groups are highlighted.

Equality Impact assessments (EQIAs) provide a common sense measure to determine the effects of a policy, practice or project on different groups, and all policy reviews require that issues relating to equality issues are considered.

Recent Equality Impact Assessments indicate that the school has a strong commitment to equality and follows procedures and systems correctly. It remains a challenge that we ensure that this process is more than an exercise but that it is rigorous and gives the information needed to secure best practice.

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

- Formal reports respond to data from Raise on Line
- Incident reports are sent to WSCC in a timely fashion
- The head teacher behaviour logs provide a detailed picture of relevant incidents, such as those related to bullying, and track the school response to issues
- Formal reporting within staff meetings, such as the termly SEN meeting, ensure relevant information is shared with all concerned
- Health Care Plans are formally maintained

Overall these reports show that the school knows its pupils well, and monitors progress carefully. They show the commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils and the care taken by the staff to manage individual vulnerable children.

OfSTED inspectors report on equality issues during inspection. A post OfSTED issue from our inspection in 2010 related to community cohesion and we have addressed this with a clear action plan, including the development of a relationship between our children and children of an inner city school in Birmingham.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil/learner voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. Over the past three years we have accessed advice and information from many colleagues including:

- The behaviour management team
- Primary Mental Health workers
- Play therapist
- EAL team
- Family Support worker
- School nurse
- Hate reduction team
- Healthy Schools team
- Sussex Police
- Disability awareness groups
- A visit from a Paralympian
- LAC team
- Local church leaders

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Commissioned services

When purchasing goods or equipment we work to ensure that equality issues are given full regard.

When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

The school has adopted the West Sussex model policy for Equal Opportunity and Diversity and follows the West Sussex procedures highlighted within that policy.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Our staff team and members of our governing body have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

The school has a clear anti bullying policy which it follows, and reports are shared with the Curriculum and Pupils committee.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy is being prepared for publication in July 2013. It will be actively promoted and disseminated on the school website and through newsletter updates.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of the head teacher with the Equality Working Party. Together with the governors, this policy is agreed and published, setting our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups. This will be sustained by regular meetings of the working party and further on-going consultation.

3. Equality Objectives

Using the views of pupils, parents, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These objectives will form part of the School Improvement Plan and will be reviewed at least every 4 years.

4. Health and Safety, Occupational Health and Human resources

Jessie Younghusband School can access support and guidance from a variety of services available within the County.

Human Resources can support the school in managing and enabling staff and Governors with disabilities to undertake their duties and responsibilities. The School has a Human Resources Advisor who guides the school in meeting its legal responsibilities and in securing good personnel management.

Occupational health services are available to staff through a school referral. Occupational Health work with the health service to ensure that staff with disabilities are fully supported and enabled to complete their duties wherever possible. They offer advice on managing staff with disabilities and ensure that the needs of these staff are met whenever possible, whilst supporting the school in evaluating whether any adjustments or modifications are within an acceptable level for the day to day organisation of the school and the learning experiences of the pupils.

Health and Safety

West Sussex has a team of health and safety advisors who can be approached to support the school in ensuring that the health and safety needs of all involved are addressed. The health and safety advisors are primarily there to advise on issues surrounding the employees of the school, but have knowledge and experience that can be employed in supporting pupils with disabilities and other users of the school premises.

The School Nurse

The School Nurse is available to support the medical needs of pupils with disabilities.

HR Advice and Workplace Wellness formally known as Corecare

HR Management Advice is based at County Hall and offer advice to Head teachers on managing sickness absence and other workplace health related

issues, offer information and support to employees experiencing health difficulties, and works closely with the Occupational Health Service Provider.

Workplace Wellness is a free phone confidential, independent employee support and counselling service for employees who feel they may benefit from additional professional help (0800 7319472).

All the above support does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement Health and Safety regulations or replace the responsibilities required by the Equalities Act .