



Accessibility and Equality Policy

Approved by: Trust Board

Date of Review: June 2017

Next Review Date: June 2020

Purpose

At Belleville Primary School we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity in respect of our pupils, staff, parents and carers. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

We are also committed to identifying and dealing pro-actively with institutional barriers to equality. As well as dealing effectively with equality related issues as they arise, we will also work to challenge bullying and stereotyping and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

Principles

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects the following characteristics, known as “protected characteristics”:

- Gender, maternity and pregnancy
- Race, ethnicity or nationality
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Religion and belief
- Sexuality
- Age
- Marital status

POLICY

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Medical Needs Policy.

The school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed and to reach their potential for personal achievement. To do this we will

1. Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
2. Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and identify, investigate and where appropriate, put resource into remedying gaps
3. Ensure equality of access for all pupils
4. Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society



5. Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability without stereotyping
6. Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour, bullying or prejudice
7. Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
8. Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions policy is can be found on the school website. This is written following best practice guidance from equality legislation based in the Equality Act 2010.

Exclusions will always be based on the behaviour policy. We will annually review whether one or more groups with a particular characteristic is overrepresented and if so, this will be investigated to ensure against conscious or unconscious discrimination.

Staff

We will always comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 when appointing staff.

Recruitment methods will ensure that appointments are based on merit and ability. For instance, we will use a shortlisting procedure which rates candidates against the competencies of the job and those addressed in their applications.

We will annually monitor appointments and promotions to ensure that no groups with a particular protected characteristic appear to be disadvantaged through conscious or unconscious prejudice or discrimination. Where particular groups appear to be underrepresented in comparison with the local community, we will investigate why, and may take steps to attract applicants from particular groups, subject always to the requirements from the Equality Act.

Bullying and harassment of staff on any grounds whatsoever will not be tolerated and the disciplinary procedure will be instigated wherever an initial investigation decides that there is a case to answer.

It is usually unlawful to ask applicants about their health prior to appointment, so health questionnaires will not be issued to applicants and any health related questions will be only those that are targeted, necessary and related to the job.

Equality and the law

The duties that the school has are as follows:

1. Public Sector Equality Duty

This requires the school to take positive steps to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between those with protected characteristics and those who do not share it; and to foster good relations.

With the PSED, as with the previous general duties, schools are subject to the need to have due regard to the three elements outlined above. What having “due regard” means in practice has been defined in case law and means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty. For schools this means:

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

The school is required to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED and must also prepare and publish equality objectives.

2. *Accessibility Plan*

The Equality Act 2010 requires the school to have an Equality and Accessibility Plan which must show how the school is:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improving the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities.

(see Appendix 1)

3. *Equality Act non-discrimination provisions and duty to provide auxiliary aids*

In respect of students and staff, the school may not treat a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or apply a policy or practice which has a discriminatory effect and is not justified. In addition, harassment based on protected characteristics is unlawful, as is victimisation (that is, unfavourable treatment) of those who complain about discrimination or breaches of the Act.

Finally, the school must make reasonable adjustments to policies, criteria and practices for disabled students and staff, so that barriers to access to the school (or workplace) are tackled. Auxiliary aids (that is, specialist equipment) must be provided where it is reasonable for the school to do so in light of factors such as cost and practicability.

Reporting incidents of discrimination or potential equality issues and how to raise an issue

Equality related complaints regarding teaching or other staff will be dealt with.

Parents who wish to complain to the school regarding an equality related incident should follow the complaints procedure in the complaints policy contact the Head Teacher by email or telephone or by appointment with details of the complaint. Complaints or concerns from staff or about staff need to follow the whistleblowing or safeguarding procedures as detailed in the Safeguarding policy.

Equality related incidents between students will be dealt with as follows:

1. Incident reported;
2. Incident investigated – Head Teacher responsible for delegation of investigation to appropriately senior or trained staff member;
3. Once investigation complete, investigator to consult with Head Teacher, and once agreement reached on outcomes, meet with alleged victim and family and alleged perpetrator and family setting out findings and proposed action in relation to individuals;
4. Take into account any further information as a result of the meetings;
5. Action taken within year group /school if necessary;
6. Incident form to be completed and filed.

Complaints: If a parent or member of staff has a complaint about an accessibility or equality matter, s/he should follow the school's Complaints Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. The equality objectives and accessibility plan will be reviewed annually.

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Head Teacher

Dated:

