

West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'



Equality Policy

Adopted: 19 May 2021

Reviewed: June 2024

West Park School

Equality Policy

Introduction

West Park School is committed to an Equality Policy which promotes equality for all staff, students and job applicants. The School is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting a culture of equality and diversity across all aspects of the School's work.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single legal framework designed to be more effective at tackling disadvantage and discrimination. It places legal responsibilities on the School and covers the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age - a person of a particular age or belonging to a particular age group;
- Race - a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins;
- Disability - a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
- Sex - a man or a woman;
- Sexual orientation - whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes;
- Gender reassignment – a person who has undergone the process of transitioning from one gender to another;
- Marriage and civil partnership – regardless of between a man and a woman or a same-sex couple;
- Pregnancy and maternity - being pregnant or expecting a baby and the period up to 26 weeks after giving birth, including breastfeeding;
- Religion and belief - religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief, which affect life choices or the way a person chooses to live.

We will eliminate discriminatory practices and customs which may threaten equality of opportunity. We will monitor our curriculum and pastoral role so as to broaden the perspectives of all pupils by helping them to understand the world in which they live.

Relevant legislation and guidance

The legal and local framework for this Equality Policy is as follows:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Equality Aims & Values

The School is committed to providing equal opportunities. All members of the School's community, including pupils, parents, employees, governors and visitors are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of protected characteristics.

The School aims to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act as: sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, maternity and pregnancy.
- Educate pupils and all members of the School community to understand others and value diversity in an inclusive and secure environment, preparing them for life in a diverse society.
- Enable each pupil to stay safe, be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and enjoy economic well-being and actively respond to reduce any actual, potential or claimed discrimination and disadvantage.
- Put in place reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, pupils and other members of the school community.
- Recognise people with protected characteristics and behave sensitively to their social needs.

Additional objectives for 2024-2028 are to:

- Embed strategic, whole-school approaches to flexible working, consider requests on a case by case basis.

Recruitment and Staffing

The School will ensure that the policy is made available to any agencies responsible for its recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunity policy. We will endeavour to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not unlawfully discriminate in making these decisions.

Job descriptions will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunity policy. Job requirements will also be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications and appointments will be made on suitability to meet the personnel

specifications.

We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.

Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job. We will not disqualify any applicant because s/he is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency. Staff training needs will be identified through the performance management process.

Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Staff responsible for appointments will receive training as necessary in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.

Religious Principles

The school respects and practices tolerance and understanding of the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils, parents and carers.

How the school will ensure equality for protected acts and characteristics

The school is committed to comply fully with the Equality Act 2010 and codes of practice in all areas of the schools activities and services as an employer and service provider.

Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms: direct, indirect, by association, by perception. It occurs when you treat someone less favourably than you treat (or would treat) another person because of a protected characteristics or as a result of them making a claim under the Equality Act 2010.

The school is committed to the following:

- Opposing all forms of discrimination.
- Supporting members of the school community who may want to make a claim against the school under the Equality Act 2010 by supplying information requested which is relevant to support their claim.

Harassment and victimisation

The school is committed to the following:

- Opposing all forms of harassment and victimisation to any member of the school community.
- Will act on reports of harassment and victimisation by following the school policies and procedures.
- Will provide support to victims of harassment and victimisation by following the schools policies and procedures.

Commitment to Equality

The school's commitment to equality includes:

- Ensure school policies and procedures promote equality for all.
- Provide support for those with protected characteristics through the pastoral care offered to pupils and employees.
- Opposing all forms of harassment and prejudice and being pro-active in tackling and eliminating discrimination.
- Promoting good relations between people from different groups within the School and the wider School community.
- Ensuring equality in staff recruitment and development, regardless of protected characteristic.
- A commitment to recognising the needs of different cultural backgrounds and responding to their needs.
- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons and encouraging participation by disabled people.
- Welcoming prospective, current and former pupils and employees, current parents and carers with disabilities into the school community.

- Taking into account differences by making reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the groups named above.
- Promoting equality of opportunity between both male and female employees and pupils.
- Promoting mutual respect and good relations between males and females.
- The elimination of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, whether physical or verbal.
- Ensuring equality in staff recruitment and development, regardless of gender and sexual identity, with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **the School's Governing Body** to ensure that:

- The School complies with all relevant equality legislation.
- This policy and related policies, strategies and procedures are implemented and carried out and reviewed regularly.
- It is involved in addressing any serious breaches of this policy.

It is the responsibility of **the Head** to:

- Work with the Governing Body to ensure that all relevant policies, strategies and procedures are implemented and carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff at the school are aware of the school's aims as set out in this policy and their responsibilities to act in accordance with this policy.
- Deal with any reported incidents of discrimination or harassment and delegate responsibility where appropriate to enable investigations to be carried out.

It is the responsibility of **all employees at the School** to:

- Be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of discrimination or harassment and deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur in an appropriate manner.
- Promote an inclusive learning environment both in and outside of the classroom.
- Support children within their class for whom English is an additional language.
- Attend relevant training to keep up to date with equality legislation and issues.

Extended Services

All our extended services adhere to this policy via service level agreements for each of our out of hours users.

We undertake responsibility for making contributors to extended services activities aware of the trust's commitment to equality of opportunity.

Complaints

Any person who believes that this policy has been breached by the School should make a complaint in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy, which can be accessed on the School's website.

Pupils who believe that they are a victim of discrimination or harassment should talk to a teacher or member of staff.

How will breaches of this policy be dealt with?

Any breach of this Equality policy will be treated seriously. Every complaint will be investigated and investigations will be carried out independently and objectively. Complaints will be resolved in accordance with the procedures and timescales set out in the School's Complaints Policy. The following principles will also apply:

- During the course of investigations, the accused should be informed of the complaint and have the opportunity to respond.
- Confidentiality should be maintained to the extent possible and the request of a witness to remain anonymous should be respected.
- A written record should be kept of the complaint and the subsequent investigations by the member of staff to whom the complaint was made and/or the member of staff carrying out the investigation.
- Both the complainant and the accused should be informed of the outcome of an investigation.

Monitoring and Review

The school will collect, examine and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy and make adjustments as appropriate.