



'Let your light shine'

Matthew 5:16

Bilbrook CE Middle School

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2022-2023

Signed by:			
T Wright	Headteacher	Date:	19 th June 2023
J Shulman	Chair of governors	Date:	June 2024

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Statement of intent

Billbrook CE Middle School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all stakeholders. We aim to create a learning/working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We are committed to supporting all stakeholders to be their authentic selves in school without judgement and ensuring that diverse communities are celebrated.

We do not discriminate against pupils or staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics), amended in line with the Equality Act 2010. More detail on each of the protected characteristics can be found in [Appendix A](#).

We provide everybody with a secure and creative environment to achieve their full potential, by offering a broad range of engaging and challenging opportunities.

Our whole school community will understand, develop and show mutual trust, confidence in each other, and ensure that all stake holders feel listened to and valued.

We are also mindful of intersecting identities within our school environment and will work with our communities to better understand the experience of multiple minority identities for individuals.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat pupils, parents, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including Pupils, members of the SLT, teachers, TAs, learning mentors, support staff, trainees, home workers, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers, and agency staff (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy).

Introduction

It is not always possible for children with certain protected characteristics to achieve exactly the same educational outcomes as children who do not have those protected characteristics. For example, outcomes will differ between children with severe learning disabilities and those without.

We know that educational outcomes nationally are different for some groups with protected characteristics, and that certain groups are disproportionately represented in particular types of education setting.

Our aim is to raise standards in education, helping to advance equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics, as well as those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Overall Aims of the Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

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

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy
- Support Staff Performance Management Policy

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

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

2. Principles underlying this policy

In accordance with this policy, the school commits to:

- Creating a school free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Promoting dignity and respect for all stakeholders.
- Training teachers, managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of the school's relationship with pupils, staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

Instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be dealt with as misconduct, in line with the school's Grievance Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

3. Roles and responsibilities / Our Approach

The governing board is responsible for:

- The effective operation of this policy.
- Ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- Monitoring the composition of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- Monitoring how the composition of the workforce encourages equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and meets the aims and commitments set out in this policy.
- Assessing how this policy, and any supporting action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The SLT is responsible for:

- Setting an appropriate standard of behaviour and leading by example.
- Ensuring that those they manage adhere to this policy and promote the school's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.
- Taking appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities, in line with the school's Flexible Working Policy.
- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff.
- Ensuring staff are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Making staff progression decisions based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures where necessary to ensure fairness.
- Updating employment practices and procedures, and this policy, to take account of changes in the law.

The head of HR is responsible for:

- The day-to-day operational responsibility of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy regularly.
- Organising equal opportunities training, including for those involved in management and recruitment.
- Answering questions about the content or application of this policy.
- Ensuring Job Descriptions have had an equality risk assessment through the local authority.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Participating in appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection good practice.

All staff are responsible for:

- Conducting themselves to help the school provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Understanding that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors and the public.
- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the school's work activities.

4. Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in [Appendix A](#). For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

5. Recruitment and selection

The school will aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. The school's recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the job and not disproportionate. The shortlisting of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. The school will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with the head of HR's approval, such as:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

The school is required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents, e.g. a passport, before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, the school will monitor applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information will be voluntary and will not adversely affect an applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before the shortlisting process, and will be kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps the school take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

6. Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff appraisals, in line with the school's Teacher Appraisal Policy and Support Staff Performance Management Policy. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The school will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff.

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 needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

The school's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they equal opportunities for all.

7. Termination of employment

The school will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

The school will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action, in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

8. Disability discrimination

The school encourages staff who are disabled or become disabled to inform the headteacher or their line manager about their condition so that the school can support them as appropriate.

Staff experiencing difficulties at work because of their disability (physical or otherwise) may wish to contact their line manager or the head of HR to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Their line manager or the head of HR may wish to consult with the staff member and a medical adviser about possible adjustments.

The governing board will monitor the physical environment of the school premises to consider whether certain features place physically disabled staff, job applicants, service users, or other stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, the school will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

9. Part-time, zero hours, and fixed-term employees and agency workers

The school monitors the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. The school will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Flexible Working Policy.

The school monitors its use of zero hours and fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The school will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

10. Breaches of this policy

If a member of staff believes that they may have been discriminated against, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the school's Grievance Policy. If they believe that they may have been subject to harassment, they are encouraged to raise the matter with their line manager and/or the head of HR.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The school takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

11. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the head of HR in conjunction with the governing board. The next scheduled review for this policy is June 2024.

The school will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives. As part of this process, the school will monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of staff. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the head of HR.

12. Senior Leaders

- Will have responsibility for supporting other staff and implementing the policy
- Provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- With the headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.
- Assist in implementing reviews of this policy.

13. Parents/Carers

- Be given accessible opportunities to become involved in development of the policy through parents' forums and other engagement activity.
- Have access to the policy through different communication means.
- Be actively encouraged to support the policy.
- Be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child.

14. Pupils

- Be involved in further development of the policy through the PSHE curriculum and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age ability.
- Be expected in accordance with the policy.
- To be encouraged to actively support the policy.

15. Equality Objectives

Analysis of the information as outlined above means we set ourselves specific and, measurable objectives that will help us to achieve our aims of the general equality duty. This will be reviewed every year.

Public Sector Equality Duty Statements

- 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
- Remove or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

16. Aims

- To increase pupil, staff and governor awareness of legal duties around equality and what this looks like within the work context.
- To ensure changes to the use of support staff are well considered and managed to ensure good outcomes for children with SEND or vulnerable to underachievement.
- To ensure all recruitment strategies encourage applications from those who reflect the diversity of our area, across all protected characteristics.
- To ensure the school community studies text that reflect their own identities, experiences and motivations and also provide insight into the identities, experiences and motivations of others. This will move students towards more nuanced perceptions of the world around.
- To ensure training is undertaken with all stakeholders to ensure understanding of protected characteristics.
- To ensure the school has a safe space that is accessible at all times during the school day.
- Children are explicitly taught about protected characteristics in our PSHE/Citizenship curriculum, in the respectful relationships thread.
- We use Votes for Schools, to support discussion on diversity, disabilities, gender stereotyping and discrimination.
- We ensure that pupils see that protected characteristics of gender are celebrated across the curriculum.
- To ensure all staff members are treated with respect, dignity and have a say in school development.
- To ensure all staff have clear communication if they raise concerns.

Protected Characteristics

- The Equality Duty covers; age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

The definitions used in this appendix are based on the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which is available [here](#).

Age: The Act protects people of all ages; however, differential treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

Disability: The Act protects people who are disabled; the Act defines this as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender identity and/or reassignment: The Act protects transgender people. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected, so a person who does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered by these protections.

Marriage and civil partnership: The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity: The Act protects people against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which they are entitled.

Race: The Act protects people of all races; the Act's definition of race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief: The Act protects people of any religion, including specific denominations or sects, as well as a lack of religion, i.e. employees or jobseekers who do not follow a certain religion or do not follow any religion are protected. The Act protects people of any belief; this is defined as any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of such belief, that is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sex: The Act protects men and women.

Sexual orientation: The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual staff.