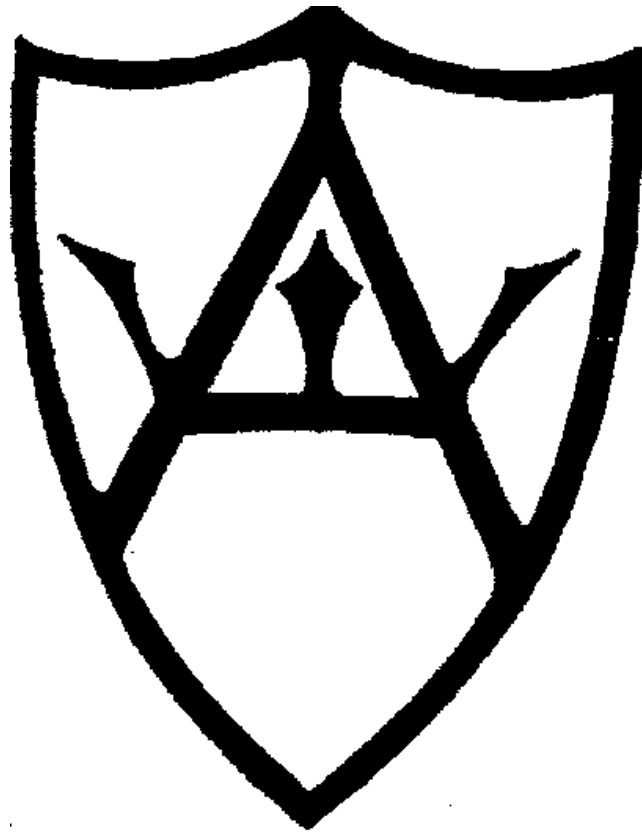


Alfriston School



Equalities Policy

Reviewed: Nov 2014
Approved by FGB: Dec 2014

The governors and headteacher of Alfriston School place the utmost priority on the principle that all those with a stake in the School community – pupils, staff, parents and carers, visitors, partner agencies and governors – shall be treated equally.

Just as the Equality Act 2010 has harmonised and streamlined all the previous relevant legislation, so the School has brought together all its previous relevant policies, schemes and action plans into this policy and the action plan that accompanies it.

This policy embraces and supersedes our policies on race and cultural diversity, gender equality and disability equality, and our equalities statement. It is inclusive of the whole school community.

Its overall aims are to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote equality of opportunity within our School and more widely;
- promote positive attitudes to differences, and good relationships between those with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

The guidelines which accompany the policy explain the legal context, and how the policy has been developed. They set out how our practices and policies have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between groups. They explain how we are promoting inclusive, participatory practice, meeting the needs of different groups, and ensuring that those in our community requiring extra support receive it – as well as promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The governors will ensure that this policy, guidelines and action plan are well publicised, for example on the School's website, and that copies of this policy and its associated documents are available from the School office.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every year.

This policy is linked to the Accessibility Policy and Plan.

GUIDELINES

1. BACKGROUND

The new Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines the legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to **protected characteristics**:

- age (for staff only)
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Act requires schools 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

These are known as the three equality aims in the **general equality duty**.

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about these three equality aims as part of the process of decision-making.

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;
- 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.

While the pupils of Alfriston School are predominately white British, the national demography presents a complex and ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation. Thus in our School it is important that all stakeholders are aware of the need and the duty to treat everyone equally – and where necessary to discriminate positively in favour of different groups in order to ensure equal opportunity.

2. HOW THIS POLICY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED

This Equality Policy brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans related to equality, including those that we had previously on race and cultural diversity, gender equality and disability equality, and our equalities statement. 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 physical boundaries, and within our local, national and global environments.

Our equality policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - whom we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development. It is designed to ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life.

- Our pupils

Pupils have been involved through SEAL and circle time discussions, worry boxes, pupil surveys and school council discussions.

- Our staff

Staff have been involved through staff meeting discussions, staff surveys and worry boxes and senior leadership team meetings.

- Our school governors

School governors have formed a sub-group to create this plan; they have read, amended and discussed the policy in committee, and it has been approved by the full governing body.

- Parents/carers

Parents are involved through parent surveys, informal discussion, parent meetings and the school website.

- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

In such a small school, personal contact between staff and stakeholders is a key feature.

Vulnerable groups have been included by individual discussion with those affected.

3. 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.

We actively seek opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- **shared humanity.** Our approach to equality is underpinned by identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- **valuing difference and diversity.** We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- **Interdependence, interaction and influence.** We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on, and inform each other
- **social cohesion** within our school, and within our local community
- **excellence.** We aim to inspire and recognise high, personal and collective achievement throughout our community, and to promote excellence wherever possible
- **personal and cultural identity.** We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- **fairness and social justice.** We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

Our equalities vision statement:

Alfriston School recognises that everyone is unique owing to varying needs and cultures. We aim to treat all differences positively, recognising that diversity creates a strong, flexible and creative school. Our belief is reflected in this Equalities Policy and action plan and in our vision to be “Fair, Friendly, Fulfilling and Fun”.

Alfriston Primary 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.

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.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of 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
- exam, test and assessment arrangements
- behaviour management approaches and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- transition arrangements
- 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 trips
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our headteacher 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 scheme
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the scheme
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy, so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available

- monitor the scheme and report to the Governing Body, at least annually, on the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team (SLT) is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy, or actions arising from it

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the action plans arising from the policy are part of the School Development Plan (SDP)
- support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the scheme
- evaluate and review this scheme every year in the light of the headteacher's report

Our SLT will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this 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 scheme as detailed in the SDP.

Our pupils will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to their 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

Our school staff will:

- 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.

Gathering information

We will use Equality Impact assessments (EQIAs) as a common sense measure to determine the **analysis** of the effects of a policy, practice or project i.e. how it will impact on all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). This will help us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. It is a way to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

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.

These include Raise Online, pupils and parent surveys, school council meetings and parent forums.

OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying, including those relating to racism, homophobia, disability and gender.

We also complete a Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF), which means we are constantly monitoring the make-up and needs of our staff and pupils and assessing how well we are meeting those needs.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through pupil voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously, for instance through worry boxes.

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.

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. Some of local partners include Seaford family cluster, CAMHS and SACRE.

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 (buying in services)

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in

services – 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.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff. We 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 have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties and the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development; for example, our new Inclusion Manager is making plans for all staff to have up to date training on ASD.

Responding to equality-related incidents

We recognise that prejudice-based harassment or 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, ageism or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour, for instance through our work in SEAL, circle time and anti-bullying.

We recognise that we, as individuals and as a 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 to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities of diversity, 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 incidents that are motivated by **racism** and report to the Local Authority as requested. We and the County Council 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 and communities.

Implementation, monitoring and review

These are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and overseen by our governors, who have agreed and published this policy and the action plan.

Using the engagement and analysis of the information as outlined above, we have developed a separate **action plan** that sets specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty.

It will be shared and discussed with all stake holder groups during the coming academic year and amended as appropriate.

We will report annually on the policy and the action plan, and analyse whether our policy has 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.