



SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

Introduction

Courtlands School is aware that current legislation has made significant changes to many different aspects relating to equality. This policy endeavours to bring together action plans for Race, Gender and Disability equality, thus meeting the school's statutory duties in these areas. It also goes beyond these three streams and begins to consider how the school develops its approach to equalities and diversity for all our pupils, staff and their parents and carers. We are also committed to responding to all diversity related legislation and feel that a single equality policy is the best mechanism for achieving this.

The policy also highlights how the school has worked with and listened to the staff, pupils, parents and carers to inform development of action plans and the need and commitment required to ensure the policy is a success.

As well as delivering high quality services to its pupils, the school is also committed to being a good employer and as such this policy outlines how we meet our varied duties in terms of recruitment and employment practices.

The School

Courtlands School is a small and friendly place dedicated to supporting primary aged (4-11) children with moderate learning difficulties. Many of the children have additional difficulties ranging from behavioural issues to medical issues and developmental conditions. They come from a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds and from across the city. A small proportion of children are from ethnic minority groups.

National Context for Diversity

As well as delivering on its commitment to promote equality across all the six strands of diversity-age, disability, faith and belief, gender, race and sexual orientation, the school has a duty to comply with a large and complex suite of equality legislation. As such, the Single Equality Policy has been devised to ensure that all our policies and practices meet with all the legislative requirements including:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 - establishes a new strategic role for Local authorities, including duties to promote choice, diversity, high standards and the fulfilment of potential for every child and places a duty on school governing bodies to promote well-being and community cohesion, and to take the Children and Young People's Plan into consideration.

Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA) - give disabled people rights in a wide range of key areas such as employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and buying or renting land and property. They require public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, and organisations to take reasonable steps to tackle policies, practices and physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people who want to access their services.

Equality Act 2006 - establishes a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) from October 2007, and a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and

women (the 'gender duty'). It also makes discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions unlawful, and provides powers to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, including adoption. The Equality Act regulations came into force in April 2007.

Employment Equality - (Religion or Belief)/(Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 – outlaw discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion, belief or sexual orientation. It prevents both direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation on these grounds.

Civil Partnership Act 2004 - ensures same sex partners who register as civil partners will be treated the same as a married couple for a number of legal rights. These include pensions, recognition for immigration, equal treatment for tax purposes including inheritance tax and better protection from domestic violence. Civil partners are also exempt from testifying against each other in court as are married couples, as well as having next of kin rights, thus overcoming a number of previously experienced problems. Local authorities are obliged to provide civil partnership ceremonies as part of their register office functions where there are requested. A couple who have not registered their partnership but have lived together as if they were civil partners are to be treated as heterosexual unmarried couples living together as husband and wife.

Equalities Review - which was jointly sponsored by the Equality Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office:

Investigated the social, economic, cultural and other factors that limit or deny people the opportunity to make the best of their abilities:

- Provided an understanding of the long term and underlying causes of disadvantage that need to be addressed by public policy
- Made practical recommendations on key policy priorities for: the government and public sector; employers and trade unions; civic society and the voluntary sector.
- Informed both the modernisation of equality legislation, towards a single equality act; and the development of the new commission for equality and human rights.

Gender Recognition Act 2004 - allows transgender people (who are able to satisfy the necessary evidential requirements) to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate, which provides full legal recognition of their acquired gender. Following a successful application, the law regards the transsexual person as being of their acquired gender, and ensures they have all the rights and responsibilities appropriate to that gender.

Human Rights Act 1998 - The act applies directly to public authorities and incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals regardless of their nationality and citizenship. They are fundamental in maintaining a fair and civilised society.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 amended the 1976 Race Relations Act which was introduced to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin in the fields of employment, the provision of goods and services, education and public functions. It also set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The 2000 amendment to the act introduced onto public authorities the general duties to promote racial equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The Gender, Race and Disability Equality Duties

These duties impose broad obligations on public authorities, including schools, to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment;
- Have due regard to the promotion of equality and opportunity between persons and other persons;
- Promote positive attitudes;
- Encourage participation by minority and under-served groups in public life;
- Take steps to take account of people's specific needs even when this requires treating some individuals more favourably than others.
- Conduct impact assessments, and draw up relevant policies (and publicise them).

The three duties are broadly similar in their approach and aims, however in order to ensure the school is compliant with all, they are detailed below;

The Race Equality Duty

What is Race?

A race is a distinct group or population of people distinguished in some way from others most often in terms of physical characteristics but also language, history, ancestry and culture.

What is the Race Equality Duty?

The duty was detailed in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and includes both a general and specific duty.

The General Duty as set out in section 71(1) of the Act, requires a school in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between different racial groups.

The Specific Duties are set out in articles 2(3) and 2(4) of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 which states that school should develop a race equality policy which highlights:

- Those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which it has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act and its arrangements for:
 - assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
 - Monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
 - Publishing the results of its assessments, consultation and monitoring, providing public access to information
 - Training staff in connection with the duties

The Race Equality Policy must be reviewed every three years.

Explanation of the text to the left.

We make sure that we check that the changes we make have a positive effect. We check that the changes do not have any negative effects. We let people know how the changes have affected race relations.

What are the key issues for our school?

The school needs to be aware that our population includes a number of families from a wide range of countries, cultures and social backgrounds. We will meet the language, cultural and social needs of all pupils. We will celebrate cultural diversity in our school. Ensure that the school raises the awareness of all children to the diverse, multi cultural society we live in today.

What impact have we already had on race equality in our school?

Τη σχολησ ηασ ωορκεδ ηαρδ το ενσυρε τηατ ωε οφφερ αλλ χηηλδρεν αχχεσσ το ινφορματιον ανδ εξ περιενχεσ ρελατινγ το α μυλτι-χυλτυραλ σοχιετυ.

Ωε ηαπε περψ στρονγ λινκσ ωιτη α νυμβερ οφ σχηοολσ αχροσσ τηε ΕΥ τηρουγη ουρ ινπολπεμεντ ωιτη τηε Χομενιουσ προφεχτ. Ουρ χηηλδρεν τακε παρτ ιν εξχηανγε τριπσ το παρτνερ Ευροπεαν σχηοολσ ανδ χολλαβορατιον οφ διπερσιτυ ιν σχηοολ.

Ωε αρε ωορκινγ τοωαρδσ γαινινγ Ιντερνατιοναλ Σχηοολσ Αωαρδ ανδ βεχομινγ α ΥΝΙΧΕΦ □Ριγητσ Ρεσπεχτινγ Σχηοολ□. Ωε ηαπε αν Ιντερνατιοναλ Σχηοολσ Χο-ορδινατορ ανδ χηηλδρεν αρε ταυγητ λα νγυαγεσ ιν χυρριχυλυμ τιμε.

Αλλ πολιχιεσ ιν τηε σχηοολ νοω μακε ρεφερενχε το ουρ σινγλε εθυαλιτυ πολιχψ. Τηισ ηασ ραισεδ τ ηε αωαρενεσσ οφ αλλ.

The Disability Equality Duty

What is Disability?

People are affected by disability or health conditions in different ways. This can happen suddenly, as a result of accidents or strokes for example, or gradually as a result of conditions such as arthritis and multiple sclerosis. There is often no defining moment when a health issue becomes a disability, at least for the individual concerned. If a condition affects everyday activities, such as

- the ability to move around
- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- the ability to lift, carry or move ordinary objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory, or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- ability to recognise physical danger

and has lasted, or is likely to last, at least a year, then it is likely to be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act

There are two approaches to disability commonly used, the Medical Model and the Social Model.

Medical Model

The “medical model” is a traditional model of disability focused on the individual and their particular physical difficulties which prevents them from undertaking everyday activities which non-disabled people take for granted.

The range of social contact for the disabled person where the 'medical model' is applied is illustrated in the diagram overleaf.



Social Model

The "social model" focuses on the social environment and how it causes some people to be disabled. As a result if the organisation of society e.g. stairs to access buildings, lead to disability then it is these things which must be changed. The disabling forces at work where the 'social model' is applied can be seen below:



The School fully supports the Social Model definition of disability. As service providers we must ensure that we do not impose barriers on anyone accessing our services and that we consider the needs of the individual person and their capabilities rather than focusing on any impairment.

What is the Disability Equality Duty?

There are two duties which apply to schools

The **General Duty** requires the school to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

This general duty provides a framework for the school to carry out its functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. It requires us to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities.

The **Specific Duties** require the school to:

- Publish a Disability Equality Policy demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties.
- Involve disabled people in the development of the policy which outlines:
 - The way in which disabled people have been involved

- The school's methods for impact assessment
- Steps which the authority will take towards achieving the general duty
- The school's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, education and service delivery
- Deliver the policy within three years, unless it is unreasonable and impractical to do so

What are the key issues for our school?

The physical layout of the school makes it difficult for the school to meet the needs of the wider community. There is limited access to the school for people with physical disabilities.

We need to work towards the implementation of identified measures that will meet the need of stakeholders with sight and hearing problems.

Ensure that we work with the local authority to ensure that, within reason, we meet the needs of children and adults in the school, whatever their disability. This would include provision for the refurbishment of the building to enable full access for disabled people of relocation / rebuilding on a new site.

What impact have we already had on disability equality in our School?

Ασ α σχηοολ φορ χηιλδρεν ωηο ωουλδ βε χονσιδερεδ ασ ηαπινγ α δισαβιλιτυ, ωε πριδε ουρσελπεσ ον προπιδιγ αν εναβλιγ ενπιρονμεντ ωηερε χηιλδρεν ανδ αδυλτσ συφφερ νο δισαδπανταγε. Τηε σ χηοολ ρεγυλαρλψ ασσεσσεσ ινδιπιδυαλ νεεδ ανδ προπιδεσ α ρανγε οφ τηεραπιεσ □ συχη ασ ΟΤ, Σπ εεχη ανδ Λανγυαγε, Μυσιχ ανδ Αρτ, αδαπτεδ ωορκ στατιονσ ανδ χλεαρ σιγναγε φορ ζΙ/ΗΙ πεοπλε. Μ ανψ σταφφ ηαπε τραινινγ ιν Μακατον σιγν λανγυαγε ανδ ωε υσε ΠΕΧΣ ανδ ΤΕΕΑΧΗ τεχηνιθυεσ το συππορτ χομμυνιχατιον.

The Gender Equality Duty

What is Gender?

The term 'gender' refers to the social construction of female and male identity, rather than biological differences between men and women. It includes the ways in which those differences, whether real or perceived, have been valued, used and relied upon to classify women and men and to assign roles and expectations to them. The significance of this is that the lives and experiences of women and men, including their experience of accessing services, can be significantly different. Gender is not always fixed and the Gender Equality Duty urges public service providers to have due regard to the needs of transgender residents.

What is the Gender Equality Duty

The duty to promote Gender Equality was issued under the Equality Act 2006 which amended the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, in a similar vein to Race and Disability legislation; it contains both a general and specific duty:

The General Duty on all authorities is when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination between women and men
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The Specific Duties are as follows:

- to prepare and publish a gender equality policy, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives,
- in formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap,
- to gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services,
- to consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives,
- to assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality,
- to implement the actions set out in its policy within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impractical to do so,
- to report against the policy every year and review the policy at least every three years.

What are the key issues for our school?

To ensure that all literature in school refers to gender equality guidelines. Ensure that all appointments/ job descriptions make reference to the guidelines and that there is no discrimination evident.

All staff aware of the duty and ensure that there is no discrimination at any level in the school. This would be aware that there was no gender pay gap.

What impact have we already had on gender equality in our School?

Αλλ πολιτικεσ ανδ λιτερατυρε ιν τηε σχηοολ μακε ρεφερενχε το τηε γυιδελινεσ λαιδ ουτ ιν τηε δυτυ. ΠΣΗΕΕ τεαχηινγ ωιτηιν τηε σχηοολ ενσυρεσ τηατ χηιλδρεν αρε αωαρε οφ ισσυεσ ρελατινγ το γενδερ ανδ ωηατ ισ αχχεπταβλε ιν σοχηετυ.

Θοβ σπεχιφιχατιονσ ηαπε βεεν ρεπισεδ το ενσυρε τηατ τηερε ισ νο γενδερ βιασ.

Age, Faith & Belief and Sexual Orientation

“Strong and Prosperous Communities” the recent Local Government White Paper has recognised the importance of community cohesion and valuing all residents to improving quality of life. This is coupled with the ongoing Discrimination Law Review which is considering the introduction of a single public sector equality duty, thus creating a more streamlined equalities structure. Also, the ongoing equalities review has recently reported and identifies the core priorities for local authorities and their partners in terms of promoting equalities. This will enshrine all aspects of equalities into the work of public authorities. The school is already committed to improving its services and the quality of life for all Plymouth residents regardless of their race, gender or disability but also their age, faith and sexual orientation. As a result the Council is looking to develop strategies and action plans in these areas over the short to medium term. This will supplement the general commitment in this policy to introduce actions which wherever possible cut across all six diversity strands. Further information on age, faith and sexual orientation is given below.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 came into force on 1st October 2006. They apply to employment and vocational training, and prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, as well as harassment and victimisation on grounds of age. The regulations (which do not affect the age at which people can claim their state pension):

- ban age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training.
- ban unjustified retirement ages.
- remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights.

They also introduced:

- A right for employees to request working beyond retirement age and a duty on employers to consider that request.
- A new requirement for employers to give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that individuals can plan better for retirement, and be confident that "retirement" is not being used as cover for unfair dismissal.

The School is implementing these regulations through its Human Resources function and employment practices to ensure no current or potential employee experiences discrimination as a result of their age. We are also committed to ensuring that no members of the school community face any such discrimination in all aspects of their lives and has equal access to all the services provided by the School.

Faith & Belief

As a result of the Employment Equality (Religion or belief) Regulations (2003), it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on grounds of their religion or belief. These regulations prevent both the indirect and direct discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation of an individual and have been implemented throughout the school.

In the wider community, the school has tended to consider race and faith together. Work will continue within the school to further develop understanding of the issues and consideration given to how best to address any faith based discrimination identified. Also we will work to further develop our understanding of the issues surrounding belief. Appropriate actions for faith and belief will be developed through the implementation of this policy.

Sexual Orientation

Gay men, lesbians and bisexuals are protected at work by the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2003, which in a similar way as faith regulations, prevent discrimination and harassment at work as a result of sexual orientation. The school has implemented these regulations and works to ensure no discrimination takes place amongst its workforce. In the wider community the Government estimates that approximately 5% of the population are either gay men, lesbians or bisexuals although figures are not clear as no national census has requested data on sexual orientation.

The school is committed to creating a community where everyone has equal access to its services and feel accepted and valued. As such renewed efforts will be made to consult and involve gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the development of school services.

How We Have Developed the Policy

This policy has been developed collaboratively and is the result of consulting with pupils, staff and parents and carers.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments are a crucial mechanism for ensuring the embedding of equalities and diversity. Impact assessments will be carried out covering all 6 equality and diversity strands (race, religion, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation) and will identify both good practice as well as areas where our performance in ensuring diversity could be improved. In line with statutory requirements our equality impact assessment process will be applied to new policies as well as existing policies and functions on an agreed programme.

Roles and Responsibilities for Implementing the Single Equality Policy

The Head Teacher will:

- ensure that staff and parents are informed about the Single Equality Policy
- ensure that the policy is implemented effectively
- manage any day to day issues arising from the policy whether for pupils or for the school as an employee
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- liaise 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
- ensure that the SLT are kept up to date with any development affecting the policy/action plan arising from the policy
- provide appropriate support and monitoring for any pupils to whom the policy has direct relevance, with assistance from relevant agencies.

The Governing Body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Single Equality Policy

- establish that the action plans arising from the policy are part of the SIP
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- inform and consult with parents about the policy
- evaluate and review this policy every two years

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- have general responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy
- identify good quality resources and CPD opportunities to support the policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP

Parents/Carers will:

- have access to the policy
- be encouraged to support the policy
- have the opportunity to attend any relevant meetings/awareness raising sessions related to the policy
- have the right to be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child

School Staff will

- accept that this is a whole school issue and support the Single Equality Policy
- be aware of the Single Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- make known any queries or training requirements

Pupils will

- be made aware of any relevant part of the policy, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with any relevant part of the policy

This document has been completed, ensuring that all concerned with its production have taken into account current legislation relating to race, gender, age, ability and disability.

This will ensure that, where possible and within the limits of reasonable adjustment, we meet the needs of every child and adult linked to the life of the school.

The school equality policy is available on request or from the school website: www.courtlands.org.

Chair of Governors.....Date

Headteacher.....Date