

# Stonehouse Park Infant School



Stonehouse Park  
Infant School

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*The BEST start for every child so every child can be the BEST they can be.*

## **Equality Policy**

**(This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policies in school)**

**Updated: February 2021**

**Ratified by Governors: March 2021**

**Review Date: January 2022**

## **Our Vision Statement**

**For every child to set out confidently on the adventure of learning: curious about the world, excited about their future, positive of their ability and caring towards other people.**

### **Our Aims:**

#### **Curious about the world**

- To promote awareness and understanding of other cultures.
- To develop the children's motivation, discovering their special interests and talents.
- To introduce children to a wide range of new experiences, ideas and activities.
- To encourage the children to ask questions about the world, talk about their ideas and express their opinions.

#### **Excited about their future**

- To make children excited about learning and eager to move on to the next stage of their learning.
- To help children to look beyond their immediate surroundings and their own personal circumstances.
- To shape a curriculum which will develop the knowledge and skills that children will need to meet the challenges of their future lives.
- To involve children in problem solving and develop their capacity to be active citizens

#### **Positive of their ability**

- To help children to reach the highest levels of achievement in all they do.
- To demonstrate to all children that they are able to learn and that they can succeed.
- To provide the highest quality of teaching for all children and to meet every child's individual needs.
- To develop children's awareness of their own learning and the value of resilience, perseverance and dedication.

#### **Caring of other people**

- To develop sensitivity to the feelings and concerns of other people.
- To demonstrate compassion, respect for others and develop a moral understanding.
- To learn how to co-operate and work with other people.

## **Introduction:**

This single policy replaces separate policies the school has on race, disability and gender to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster positive relations. It reflects the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and non-statutory guidance set out by the government in December 2011 and March 2012. Part One sets out the school's aims to promote equality of opportunity and comply with the act. Part two sets out the legal duties which are referred to in Part One. To view the school's current equality objectives, see above.

## **Part One:**

At Stonehouse Park Infant School we strive to ensure all children are able to take part as fully as possible in every part of school life by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising and celebrating their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

At Stonehouse Park Infant School we will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation) within the school community.

This means:

- We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet our children's needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled children, enabling them to take as full a part as possible in all of the activities in school. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for children, staff, parents, governors and all visitors to our school. We are also committed to ensuring staff with a disability have equality of opportunity.
- We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards children and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect through our whole school values. See Appendix 1.
- We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curriculum will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and reasonable action.
- We will regularly consider the ways in which our curriculum will support high standards of achievement, promote common values and help children understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- We will monitor the progress and achievement of all children. This will help us to ensure that every child are achieving their potential, that our school is inclusive in our practice, and trends are identified. Areas for concern will be acted upon promptly and appropriate action and intervention taken.
- We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure that all staff have equality of opportunity.
- We will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. By planning ahead, we will ensure that all children are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and school trips and we will monitor the uptake of these to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- We will seek the views of other professionals, outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources we will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.

- Bullying and prejudice related incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with promptly and effectively. Regular training will be given to existing and new staff to ensure they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice-related bullying.
- We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, we plan in activities and events across the curriculum to raise awareness of equality and diversity. These will develop community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- We will ensure consultation with all stakeholders in the development and review of this policy.
- We will seek the views of all stakeholders; children, parents, staff, governors, partnerships professionals, agencies and schools to ensure that our school environment is as safe and as accessible as possible to all school users. Our accessibility plan will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice through training and briefing sessions.
- We welcome a diverse range of candidates to and encourage those who are currently under-represented to join our staff team.
- When drawing up policies, we will carry out an equality impact assessment to ensure a policy does not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of children with protected characteristics. We will consider to what extent a new/revised policy, practice or plan meets the Public Sector Equality Duties (eliminates discrimination, advances equality and fosters good relations for all the protected characteristics) and recommend changes/mitigations where necessary.

## **Part Two.**

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

This legislation covers employment, the provision of services and public functions and education. Employers, in this case schools, are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they do not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

- Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education e.g. children are educated within age bands- 2-7, 4-11, 11-16 etc. but, it does apply to work.
- Disability- A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and longterm adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as the use of aids or medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
- Gender reassignment- A person (usually with gender dysphoria, who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment. 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with this. 'Gender Identity' 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' is not covered by the Act but the school will treat intersex children with the same degree of equality as children with gender dysphoria. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any school environment.
- Marriage and civil partnership- Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education but it does apply to work.

- Pregnancy and maternity-Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a women's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
- Race- A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- Religion and belief- Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belied discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum based activities, but children may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- Sex- a man or a woman.
- Sexual orientation-A person's sexual orientation towards the same (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian when very young, promotion of sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parents who are gay. Children may experience friends 'questioning' or 'coming out' when they are in secondary school or college. Schools with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against lesbian, gay or bisexual pupils.

It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the child is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a child because her/his parents are gay men or lesbians. It would be race discrimination to treat a white pupil less favourably because her mother has a black partner.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful):

- Direct discrimination- Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination- A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Harassment-Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. a visiting professional or contractor) in the employment context.
- Victimisation- Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.
- Discrimination arising from disability- Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work due to their medical conditions) and failure to make reasonable adjustments.
- Gender re-assignment discrimination- Not allowing reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave.
- Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination- Unfavourable treatment because of pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman because she is breastfeeding.
- Discrimination by association or perception- For example, discriminating against someone because they "look gay" or because they have a gay family member, discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Schools are permitted to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.

## Public Sector Duties (Applies to schools):

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage, meet people's needs, take account of disabilities, encourage participation in public life).
- Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding)

In practice, 'due regard' means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in schools must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking an action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.

## Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans (Schedule 10)

Schools are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, e.g. steps and lifts.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement Accessibility Plans, by allocating appropriate resources, which will increase disabled children's access to the curriculum, improve the physical environment and improve the presentation of information

This duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that schools owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular child is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled children. The school will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments that it may need to make, working with the relevant admissions authority as appropriate.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion.

Aspects of educational legislation have also promoted equal opportunities, e.g. local authorities having a duty to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools where that is in the best interest of the child.

The Department for Education has reinforced the need "to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs". At Stonehouse Park Infant School we have developed a clear ethos and whole school values which are embedded in all aspects of provision and woven through all that we do. Refer to Appendix.

## **Responsibilities:**

Governing Body:

- Ensure that the school complies with equality-related legislation.

- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the headteacher and all staff.
- Ensure all school policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Duty when making decisions.

#### Headteacher:

- Implement this policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work- for example ensuring applicants for a PE specialist post have the physical capability to carry out the duties. Schools should not require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire. Nor should they seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.
- Ensure that all staff and children are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

#### All Staff:

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

#### SENDCO:

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures and their responsibilities associated with this policy
- Ensure quality provision for all SEND children based on need.

#### Children:

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

#### Parents and Visitors:

- To be aware of and comply with the school's equality policy.
- To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour e.g. racist language, on school premises.

## Appendix:

### Definitions:

- **Equality:** This is more clearly defined as equality of opportunity and outcome, rather than equality of treatment. This means treating people fairly and according to their needs as some people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve an equal outcome.
- **Inclusive:** Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.
- **Diversity:** Recognising that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
- **Cohesion:** People from different backgrounds getting on well together. There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
- **Community:** From the school's perspective the term community has a number of meanings; 1. The school community, the children we serve, their families and our staff and governor team. 2. The community in which the school is located- the geographical community and the people who live and/or work in this area. 3. The community of Britain -all schools by definition are a part of it. 4. The global community.
- **Gender Dysphoria:** This is a recognised condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. Biological sex is assigned at birth. Gender identity is the gender that a person "identifies" with or feels themselves to be.

### Our School Values:

1. **I am Caring.** (empathetic, compassionate, loving)
2. **I am Honest.** (truthful, open, real)
3. **I am Peaceful.** (wise, patient, forgiving)
4. **I am Respectful.** (tolerant, open-minded)
5. **I am Responsible.** (committed, trustworthy)
6. **I am Courageous.** (brave, bold, fearless)

