

Cedar Hall School Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy 2023

1. Purpose of the Document

The overall objective of Cedar Hall School Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs in all its activities.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

Partners and contractors are also expected to abide by the policy.

2. Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Statement

We will not tolerate less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, and religion or belief.

Through our school ethos, curriculum and community links, we will work towards

- a common vision
- a sense of belonging for all
- similar life opportunities for all
- strong and positive relationships between different communities.

Through this Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy, Cedar Hall School seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any person through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, where the person lives, or, spent convictions.

Equality and Diversity is more than just meeting legal obligations, or targets. It's about making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. This means an ongoing commitment to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of children and young people in our school. We will make sure that our employment practices are fair and promote equality. We will actively value the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally and internationally. We will prepare children and young people for living in a diverse society with increasing global connections and controversial issues.

We will ensure that the principles of this policy are reflected in all our policies, practices, procedures and services and are part of everything we do.

Cedar Hall School is an innovative and forward looking all age (5-16) Essex LEA School, which provides education for pupils who primarily experience global moderate learning difficulties, but who may experience speech, language, emotional, behavioural or autistic spectrum secondary disabilities.

'Our School is a friendly, welcoming place where everyone is encouraged to do and achieve their best. We believe every pupil should be taught to have a go, try new things and look out for the welfare of others. We provide the opportunities for children to shine. Everybody is somebody at Cedar Hall'

3. Guiding Principles

These principles have been drawn from a specimen school policy for equalities prepared by the DCSF and we at Cedar Hall School fully endorse and accept them.

Principle 1: All pupils are of equal value

All learners and potential learners are of equal value and benefit equally from school policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 2: Relevant differences are recognised

Treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging

Policies and programmes promote

- positive attitudes and interactions
- mutual respect and good relations
- an absence of harassment or prejudice-related bullying between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in recruitment, professional development and promotion. Steps are taken to positively promote equality, especially where there is evidence of inequality.

Principle 5: Current inequalities and barriers are addressed and reduced

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of policies and programmes, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

Principle 6: Policy development involves widespread consultation and involvement

People affected by a policy or programme are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Such consultation is both direct and through representative organisations, and is based on principles of transparency and accountability. It involves those who in the past have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who continue to face barriers:

Principle 7: Society as a whole benefits

Policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life of people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

4. Equalities Legislation

Our commitment is reinforced through our legal duty both as an employer and service provider. The legal duties come from a range of relevant equality legislation and associated codes of practice. Through this policy we are committed to complying with the general and specific duties, as well as codes of practice.

Race

The Equality Act (2010) requires schools to take appropriate steps to promote race equality, eliminate unlawful race discrimination and promote good race relations. We have drawn up and will maintain an active Race Equality Scheme to meet these responsibilities.

Disability

The Equality Act (2010) places a positive duty on us to ensure that services provided by the school and its premises are accessible to disabled people, that we promote disability equality, eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote positive attitudes to encourage participation. In some situations this may mean treating disabled people more favourably. We have drawn up and will maintain an active Disability Equality Scheme to meet these responsibilities.

Gender

The Equality Act (2010) places a positive duty on us not to treat anyone unfairly because of their gender, this means to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between girls and boys, men and women. We need to ensure that the needs of both sexes and transgender people are taken into account in our services and employment. We have drawn up and will maintain an active Gender Equality Scheme to meet these responsibilities.

Sexual Orientation

All public bodies have responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Equality Act (2010) extends the provision to service delivery, making it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services and facilities. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

Religion and Belief

The school has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion and belief. The Equality Act (2010) extends the provision to service delivery, making it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services, facilities and public functions. This also includes lack of faith and people of no faith. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

Age

The school has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of age. The provisions apply to all age groups. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a responsibility on schools to promote community cohesion locally, nationally and globally. We will do this through promoting a common vision, a commitment to equality and social justice, respecting people's different backgrounds and promoting positive relationships in the school and local neighbourhood. We recognise that the biggest influence on educational outcomes is social class and that this can also strongly affect community cohesion. We have programmes to 'narrow the gap' and to draw people together from different social backgrounds.

Future legislation

We will also welcome the contribution of future equalities legislation to provide equal opportunities for everyone.

5. Implementation

We will ensure implementation through action in the following areas

Relationships and ethos – to foster behaviour based on rights, responsibilities and mutual respect between all members of the school community, to support pupils' personal development and well-being, to address all forms of prejudice related bullying.

Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and minimising variations in outcomes for different groups.

Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

Engagement and extended services – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different school communities locally, across the country and internationally.

6. Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact

This policy is supported by the school's disability and gender equality schemes and a race equality action plan.

The schemes and action plans run for three years but are reviewed and reported upon annually to the governing body.

The School Development Plan ensures that schemes and action plans form an essential part of the school's action on equality. It includes targets determined by the governing body for, inclusion and equality in the school, promoting a cohesive community and equality in the workforce. It also ensures other school policies address equality issues.

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by staff and governors to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessments is used to inform future planning and decision-making.

The Key Indicators are used to evaluate the effectiveness of our Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy.

The Headteacher provides monitoring reports for review by the Governing Body. These include: school population, workforce recruitment, retention and progression, special initiatives, progress against Key Indicators and targets and future plans. Normally this is in the Headteacher report to Governors.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All who are associated with Cedar Hall School have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

Our Governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation.
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed.
- Making sure that the school has up-to-date equality schemes and action plans.

Our Headteacher is responsible for:

- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents know about it.
- Making sure its procedures are followed.
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary.
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.

All our staff are responsible for:

- Proactively following this policy and any associated guidelines.
- Providing role models for pupils through their own actions.
- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents, and recognising and tackling other forms of bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances.
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities offered to them.

All our pupils are responsible for:

Treating others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment

Attending and engaging in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn

Telling staff about any prejudiced related incidents that occur.

All our parents are responsible for:

Supporting our school in its implementation of this policy

Following the school policy through their own behaviour

Ensuring their children attend and engage in the learning

Telling staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur.

Visitors and contractors are responsible for:

Knowing and following our equality policy.

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with a named member of staff and a named governor. Responsibilities include:

Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues.

Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents).

Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils (eg Black and minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers).

Monitoring exclusion.

8. Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head Teacher and Governing Body. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised to follow the School Complaints Procedure

Racial incidents will be recorded and reported to the Local Authority following the procedures and guidelines established by CYPS.

Other prejudice driven behaviour will be recorded and reported following the procedures and guidelines established by the Equalities Unit of DCC.

9. References to other documents, advice and guidance.

Guidance and advice will be actively sought and used through utilising the information provided by DCC Human Resources on employment and staffing procedures. This is available on the Schools' Extranet / Document Library / Human Resources / Equality and Diversity using guidance from DCSF, QCA, OfSTED

Review date: January 2025