



# Equal Opportunities Policy

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## **Policy Statement**

Equal Opportunities at school is about ensuring that all children and adults have equality of opportunity in terms of access and outcome throughout all aspects of school like and that their life chances for the present and future are not impeded or distorted by anything that happens during their participation in the process of education, but are in fact widened to allow them to achieve the whole scope of their potential. It is important to note that equal access does not necessarily lead to equality of outcome.

Equal opportunity recognises and celebrates our similarities and our diversity as individuals and groups. It recognises that all individuals have an intrinsic right to be nurtured in such a way as they are able to reach their full potential

At Elmwood School we recognise our responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also so that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. We understand the importance of providing a challenging and enjoyable program of learning and development and we undertake to make reasonable adjustments to enable all to participate in our program of learning, where all are valued and supported.

Elmwood School is totally committed to avoiding all forms of discrimination as set out in the UK Equality Act (2010). This applies to all pupils, parents and staff members and includes inappropriate discrimination on the grounds of: gender; age; religion or belief; physical ability or disability; learning ability, other special educational needs or academic or sporting ability; race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, family, cultural or linguistic background); marital status and civil partnership; sex; sexual orientation; trade union membership; part-time and fixed-term working; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity. These factors are taken into account in the care of our community members so that care is sensitive to different needs.

We seek to ensure that the individual needs of our pupils, all of whom have special education needs, are met and pupils are included, valued and supported, and that reasonable adjustments are made for them. We undertake to work with the school community, with parents and with other relevant agencies to ensure that any form of discriminatory behaviour is treated seriously and action is taken to prevent any repetition. This policy statement and the effectiveness of our inclusive practices at Elmwood School are reviewed annually by Governors.

The Headteacher's responsibility is to ensure that 'arrangements are in place for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices that promote and value diversity and difference; how inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged; and how the provision will encourage children to value and respect others'.

The implementation is the responsibility of the whole community including staff, pupils, parents and Governors.

This policy statement should be read in conjunction with school's policies on Mental Health, Anti-bullying, Admissions, and the PSHEe schemes of work, SMSC development of pupils. Staff are also covered by Elmwood School's Equal Opportunities Procedures, found later in this document.

### **Policy Aims**

The aims of this policy and the School's ethos as a whole are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the School community
- Comply with the School's equality obligations contained in The Equality Act 2010
- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
- Provide a learning environment and curriculum where all individuals feel valued and feel they have a sense of belonging
- Celebrate and value diversity at school and in society as a whole
- Prepare pupils for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and global community
- Include and value the contribution of all families and our wider community to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Provide and promote positive information about the diversity of UK society
- Actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of the School community learn from these experiences
- Embed equality and inclusion throughout staff development, our curriculum and co-curricular provision

To achieve our aims we will:

- Involve, where reasonably practicable, all members of the School community in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures
- Publish and share school policies to the whole School community
- Collect and analyse data (such as admissions and recruitment data, examination results, engagement in school and community initiatives, pastoral records) to monitor any potential disadvantage amongst the pupil or staff body and to ensure processes are bias-free
- Promote openness at all stages of engagement of the admissions and recruitment processes, recognising that early awareness of need leads to better provision and arrangements
- Help to overcome any potential barriers to learning by providing for pupils' diverse needs and learning styles including any learning or pastoral support needs and/or disabilities a pupil may have
- Offer a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that provides equal opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of difference, to maximise their potential and thrive.
- Ensure the wider school curriculum promotes and celebrates equality and diversity, remaining aware of a hidden curriculum and agenda and subjects that may suggest unconscious gender bias
- Operate a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour
- Become an equality champion and community leader in promoting equality and cohesion, challenging discrimination and celebrating diversity
- Actively challenge stereotyping, bias and discrimination within all aspects of school life and literature, ensuring we learn from these experiences
- Work in partnership with staff, families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and help tackle discrimination, recognising that inclusion cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community

## The School Values

We recognise that the overall values and climate of the school contributes to what our children learn from us in school; that children pick up on the values and expectation we promote. Consequently we use our school values as a means to promote equality and self-worth. We will endeavour to create and maintain a school ethos which is welcoming, reflective of the diverse multicultural society around us, fosters a sense of well-being, confidence and security; that affirms individual identity and demonstrates respect for each other; that ensures time and space for each individual; that challenges and expands horizons and encourages confidence, independence, co-operation and participation.

In order to achieve this, we will:-

- Always challenge in an open and frank manner, behaviour and language which threaten the promotion of equal opportunities and take time to discuss with children the negative and damaging effect it has.
- Take the opportunity to use display space and assembly time to promote issues of equality, and self-esteem.
- Implement praise, reward, criticism and punishment with due consideration for equality. Equal opportunity demands a right to an equal response and outcome to a situation whether the child is a boy or a girl.
- Encourage a climate of openness where children feel safe and confident to raise issues of concern to them, bullying, racism, e – safety, taunting etc., and where the school can place a positive influence on discussion and events.
- Be sensitive to the needs of all individuals; recognizing each in his or her own right, and without placing labels on individuals or groups of children. This includes a commitment to offer time to each individual and ensure that individual or group needs are met.
- Be aware of the power of language as a tool which can promote equality or perpetuate inequality.
- Children, too, need to be made aware of their language use and its implications. In addition they also need to be made aware of their part in promoting positive relationships and the ethos of the school.
- Encourage high aspirations and a skill set for a global citizenship by offering a range of opportunities and experiences to broaden and raise personal expectations as much as possible. What the child brings from home is important. In promoting equality of opportunity we may be asking children to explore some of these values, attitudes and behaviours. We need to be sensitive so as not to damage self – esteem.

## **The Legal Framework**

Discrimination can take the following forms, including:

- Direct Discrimination - This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their (or a family member's) actual or perceived protected characteristic.
- Indirect Discrimination - This occurs by applying a provision, criterion or practice, which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Victimization - This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.
- Harassment – This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose OR effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- Disability Discrimination - This includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- Discrimination by association – This includes treating a person less favourably because they are linked or associated with a protected characteristic.

## **Procedure for Pupils**

Elmwood School seeks to implement this policy statement effectively through the following actions:

- Provision of our policy statement for equal opportunities to all pupils, staff and parents, including those of prospective pupils.
- Working with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, therapists, family/pupil medical practitioners, and mental health agencies (CAMHS) to support the endeavor of the school in serving the needs of all pupils, parents and staff.
- Discussing, where appropriate, equal opportunities and the special needs of individuals at staff meetings

- Delivering the message of equal opportunities within PSHE, the wider curriculum and through the extra-curricular programme.
- Dedicating whole school assemblies, and tutor time and 'reflection time' to the importance of kindness, care and unconditional respect for members of the school and the wider community, and on promoting and valuing diversity and differences.
- Meeting the individual needs of pupils, as detailed within Education Health and Care Plans, parents and by the pupil's previous setting, through teacher, assistant and outside agencies working together with the pupil and the pupil's parents or carers.
- Monitoring the needs of all pupils as they progress through the school, through discussion at meetings, and written information circulated confidentially, relating to specific support for learning or emotional, social, mental, physical or other difficulties.
- Discussing, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating at staff meetings and leadership meetings, the effectiveness of inclusive practices which enable all pupils, parents and staff to access and enjoy school life.
- Ensuring that the Personal, Social, Health and Economic education programme and Theme lessons includes discussion of Equal Opportunities.
- Ensuring school documents demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities and avoid inappropriate discrimination of all forms. Making appropriate provision or exemption, where feasible and desirable, for pupils with special dietary, dress or religious observance requirements or needs because of religious or cultural backgrounds
- Delivering the PSHEe program through whole school assemblies, in reflection time and tutor time and within the curriculum. The Core Curriculum Schemes embrace other cultures. The Science program celebrates physical differences in the human race. Drama provides a weekly opportunity to promote and value diversity and differences. The languages within the extra-curricular programme as well as those within the curriculum promote global citizenship.

### **Pastoral Care**

The school's pastoral care system promotes respect and understanding of ourselves and others, acknowledging that our community is strengthened by diversity. Wellbeing, social cohesion and academic resilience underpin the sense of belonging and acceptance our pupils need to overcome challenges effectively and develop a strong sense of self. Tutors should aim to:

- Acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact of diversity within year groups, tutor groups.
- Deliver tutor time activities stressing the school's shared values of inclusion, tolerance, kindness, care and unconditional respect for members of the school and wider community.

- Actively challenge and report bias and stereotyping during tutor time and pupil interaction outside the classroom.
- Encourage pupils to celebrate their unique contribution to the school through pupil voice, leadership roles and participation in initiatives that shape the future of the school, such as School Council.
- Understand the impact of discrimination on pupil wellbeing and mental health, remaining alert to our own bias and the impact of power dynamics between dominant and minority groups. This includes having an awareness of how intersectionality (understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine) can create different modes of discrimination and privilege

### **Procedure for Members of Staff**

To ensure the elimination and prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.

#### 1. Sex Discrimination

Unless the job is covered by a statutory exception we will not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex, gender assignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status or civil partnership.

- In the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job
- In any terms of employment, including pay
- By refusing or omitting to offer a person employment
- In the way we afford access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training
- In the manner in which employment is offered or in affording access to any benefits, facilities or services
- By victimising an individual for a complaint made in good faith about sex, gender assignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy discrimination or for giving evidence about such a complaint
- In connection with redundancy or termination of employment however caused or by treating an employee unfavorably in any other way

#### 2. Race Discrimination

Our equal opportunity policy statement aims to ensure that:

- No job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on racial grounds.
- No applicant or employee is placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately adverse effect on his/her racial group and which cannot be shown to be justifiable on other than racial grounds.



- Where appropriate and where permissible under the Race Relations Act employees of an under-represented racial group are given training and encouragement to achieve equal opportunity within the organisation.

We will not:

- Discriminate in recruitment, promotion, transfer or training, nor in the arrangements made for recruitment and in the ways of affording access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training
- Discriminate on racial grounds in connection with dismissal, redundancy or any other termination of employment or other detriment to an employee
- Discriminate on racial grounds in appraisals of employee performance or in the operation of grievance disputes and disciplinary procedures
- Discriminate on racial grounds in affording terms of employment and providing benefits, facilities and services for employees
- Victimise individuals who have made allegations or complaints of racial discrimination or provided information about such discrimination

### 3. Disability Discrimination

In connection with dealings in relation to persons with a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 we will:

- Not discriminate against disabled people or those who have been disabled
- Make any reasonable adjustments of our employment arrangements or premises which place disabled people at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled people
- Not treat a disabled employee or disabled job applicant less favourably for a reason relating to the disability than others to whom that reason does not apply unless the reason is material to the particular circumstances and substantial
- Not knowingly help another to unlawfully discriminate against a disabled employee
- Not discriminate against a disabled person in the arrangements made for determining who should be offered employment or by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering, employment
- Not discriminate against a disabled person whom we employ in terms of the employment we offer him/her; in the opportunities, which we afford him/her for promotion, a transfer, training or receiving any other benefit; by refusing to afford him/her or deliberately not affording him/her any such opportunity; by dismissing him/her or subjecting him/her to any other detriment
- Not discriminate against an employee who becomes disabled or has a disability that worsens

### 4. Religion

Unless the job is covered by a statutory exception we will not discriminate directly or indirectly on religious grounds.

- In the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job
- In any terms of employment, including pay
- By refusing or omitting to offer a person employment
- In the way we afford access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training
- In the manner in which employment is offered or in affording access to any benefits, facilities or services
- By victimising an individual for a complaint made in good faith about discrimination on religious grounds or for giving evidence about such a complaint
- In connection with redundancy or termination of employment however caused or by treating an employee unfavourably in any other way

## 5. Age Discrimination

In connection with any dealing in relation to age as described in the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations which come into effect on the 1st October 2006, we will not discriminate:

- In the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job
- In any terms of employment, including pay
- By refusing or omitting to offer a person employment
- In the way we afford access to opportunities for promotion, transfer or training
- By victimising an individual for a complaint made in good faith about discrimination on the grounds of age or for giving evidence about such a complaint
- In connection with redundancy or termination of employment however caused.
- To operate a common contractual retirement age for all staff

## UK Equality Act (2010)