



Aylesford School

COURAGE
CONFIDENCE
CHARACTER

Equality Policy

Ratified/Reviewed	To be reviewed
July 2021	July 2022

Equality Policy

Aylesford School strongly promotes equality of opportunity under all circumstances and in all contexts. We actively seek to ensure that all members of our community and all visitors to the school are treated equally.

This includes actively ensuring that discrimination or inequality of any kind does not occur on the basis of the following:

- Race
- Nationality
- Gender (including transgender).
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Age
- Mental Health
- Marital Status

Discrimination and inequality can be experienced in the following ways, not exclusively:

- Inappropriate or offensive language and terminology.
- Cultural misrepresentation
- Violence/ physical harm.
- Bullying
- Online Abuse
- Disadvantage in all aspects of progress, care and opportunity.

When inequality or discrimination is seen or reported the school will strongly challenge and will work to resolve the issue. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fully and without prejudice.

The school will promote and teach the recognised British values of tolerance and respect throughout our school community.

The school will monitor, evaluate and develop strategy in response to all incidents of discrimination or inequality.

The school community and its leaders will maintain a current awareness of how discrimination and prejudice is experienced and will adjust its approach appropriately.

Introduction

Aylesford School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles

1. All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

2. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.

5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development

6. We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all students can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

7. We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most

vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

Links to other policies and documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in the school prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

There are also references in the behaviour, admissions, SEN and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of meetings involving governors, the whole staff, and the senior leadership team and school council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our students and the way we provide access for students to facilities and services.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for students with disabilities – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of students without disabilities and stop children with disabilities being placed at a disadvantage compared to their peers without disabilities.

The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school. We make a record of each specific equality consideration and this is available for review if required.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The school Policy on Behaviour – Character Strengths, Consequences and Exclusions - takes full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for students with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia,
- prejudices around Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our student admissions meetings. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age- appropriate literacy and number skills.

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups

We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future students – we will, for example, be sufficiently prepared if a Visually Impaired, Hearing impaired or Gypsy Roma Traveller student joins our school.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any student's achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able".

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all students.

We provide support to students at risk of underachieving.

We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- people with disabilities and people without disabilities
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys

We ensure equality of access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

Positive Action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the school's Equality Objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Governing body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's

Equalities Work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

Headteacher and Leadership team

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All senior members of staff have day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all students
- support different groups of students in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers, are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information in school newsletters to enable them to do this.

Equal Opportunities for staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.

We are also committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and Reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves students, staff, governors and parents and carers.

Disseminating the policy

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available:

- on the school website
- as paper copies in the school office
- in the staff handbook
- as part of induction for new staff

We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered.

The accessibility needs of parents, students and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information.

Racial Equality Policy

Overview

Aylesford School is committed to an inclusive ethos based on respect for, and celebration of, ethnic diversity. The school strives to prepare all students for living in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. The school will strive to promote race equality in all dimensions of the school's life and community.

Cultural and ethnic diversity will be valued in the curriculum, in the school workforce, the governing body and the parental and student body. We will ensure that the culture and ethos of the school places equal value on the diverse racial faith and ethnic groups, cultural and linguistic heritage represented in our society.

We acknowledge and value all ethnic and national groups represented in the school community including people of mixed race/ heritage, asylum seekers, refugees, gypsy and other traveller groups.

The school recognises, and provides for, its responsibility to continue to learn about ways that the diversity and circumstance of the community has, can and will change.

We recognise that we live and work in a multi-cultural and multi-faith community and we will strive to recruit a workforce that reflects this. We understand that through recruitment of a diverse workforce that the school community is enriched and that the student's experiences are enhanced.

We endorse, and actively aim to respond to, the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

We accept and understand the definition of Racism and Institutional Racism included in the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry Report.

Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

Aylesford School supports and works actively to develop a curriculum that gives all students the opportunity to learn about a broad range of cultures, traditions and religions.

It is the policy of Aylesford School to ensure that all curriculum and pastoral teaching are not taught with deliberate or accidental use of stereotypes, potentially offensive language, incorrect or historically inaccurate information which suggest or implies derogatory understandings or meanings.

The school is committed to providing and publicising the opportunity for staff to train in the implementation of a multi culturally reflective curriculum.

At every opportunity Aylesford School has and will continue to provide EAL students with the opportunity to extend their multi- lingual ability and to obtain relevant qualifications.

We will ensure that methods of assessment are culturally neutral and do not disadvantage students for whom English is a second language.

We will ensure that setting and grouping arrangements raise achievement of all students and do not reinforce negative stereotypes or lower the self- esteem of students.

Teachers will seek opportunities to introduce activities that demonstrate the value of other cultures and encourage children to discuss racial equality.

Reporting and Dealing with Racial Incidents.

Aylesford School will not tolerate any form of racial harassment or abuse to any member of the school community.

We accept and understand the definition of a Racial Incident as included in the report from the enquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. This is clearly presented within this Policy.

The school has a clear reporting procedure for racial incidents:

- All suspected and actual racial incidents must be recorded as a racial incident.
- Once the incident has been recorded the matter should be dealt with in the standard way as described in the School Discipline Policy through normal channels.
- The Racial Incident Log is checked and reviewed regularly.

Monitoring and Review

- We are committed to the constant review and refinement of our Racial Equality Policy and understand why this is vital to its success and effectiveness.

In addition to this the school also monitors by racial/ ethnic/ nationality group:

- Admissions
- Attainment in all curriculum areas
- Key Stage 4 option choices
- Attendance
- Racist incidents and action taken
- Selection and recruitment of staff
- Staff development
- Exclusions
- Awards and rewards
- Disciplinary sanctions
- Participation in extra- curricular activities
- Attendance at parent consultation meetings
- Governing body representation and retention
- Student's emotional development and general well- being