

Mickle Trafford Village School



Equal Opportunities Policy

Date of policy	Spring 2021
Date for Review	Spring 2024
Signed Headteacher	
Signed Chair of Governors	
Date policy approved by Governing Body if necessary	N/A

Mickle Trafford Village School Equal Opportunities Policy

We care, we learn, we belong

Statement of intent

We have created this Equal Opportunities Policy because, unfortunately, the conditions and prejudices which fuel inequality are still prevalent in our society. This creates considerable barriers that prevent the full access of children and young people to the rights and services which are guaranteed to them through both national and international law.

We hope that, by establishing a clear framework in which to govern the treatment of all pupils at our school, we can remove human prejudice from the decision-making process and overcome any inequality, ensuring that every child and young person that attends our school receives an education which offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential.

Introduction

Mickle Trafford Village School is committed to protecting the rights of every child in its care. This policy has been written with the UN Convention on Rights of the Child in mind with particular reference to Article 3 (Best Interests of the Child) and Article 2 (Non-discrimination): which states:

The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Schools can have a major influence on the attitudes of society and those we educate. We are in a powerful position to bring about change for the good. We aim to give confidence and promote awareness of the valuable contributions of all members of our society. Within the philosophy of the school it is recognised that all children are entitled to full access to the curriculum regardless of race/religious belief, gender, physical ability or special needs.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the principle legislation aimed at eliminating discrimination, harassment or victimisation where someone is perceived to have one of the 'protected characteristics' or where they are associated with someone who has a 'protected characteristic'. We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their protected characteristics which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent/carer, with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations in relation to the protected characteristics.

S21(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 governing bodies have a duty to promote community cohesion. We welcome this duty to promote a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'The Equality Act and schools' 2014
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children' 2014

This policy is related to the following other school policies:

- Looked After Children Policy
- SEND Policy
- Curriculum Policy

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Head Teacher will implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.

The Head Teacher will conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority.

The school will have measures in place to ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

The Head Teacher will review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.

Teachers will have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles above
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

The Governing Board:

- To ensure that the school complies with equality legislation.
- To make sure that the school's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate assessments, informing future plans.
- To scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures at least annually.
- To follow the Local Authority's (LA) admissions policy, which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all.
- To observe good practice and fairness in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Governing Body.

- To provide information in appropriate, accessible formats.
- To be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy.

Data protection

The school will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.

The school will gain consent from the pupil and parents/carers before any sensitive personal data is processed.

The school will respect all pupils' right to privacy and will not disclose a pupil's trans* status or sexual orientation to any other pupils, staff members or third parties.¹

The school holds a Data Protection Policy containing further information addressing data protection.

Sex

We will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to pupils of other sexes, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as sex and relationship education (SRE), but we will ensure that such classes do not give children an unfair disadvantage when compared to children of the other sex in other classes.

Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, pupils undergoing gender reassignment will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender role in which they identify.

Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities

Race and ethnicity

We will ensure that pupils of all races and ethnicities (including those who have English as an additional language) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' cannot be sustained, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

We may, however, take positive action to address the particular challenges affecting pupils of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

¹ Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum.

Disability

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with a disability by implementing a rule for all pupils that could have an adverse effect on pupils with disabilities only (for example, making physical fitness a basis for admission), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for him/her to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the child also has a special educational need (SEND), but does not have a SEND statement or education, health and care (EHC) plan.

We will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities, and ensuring that any accessibility plan is duly implemented, and reviewed where necessary.

The school holds a SEND Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

Religion and belief

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that pupils and staff are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.

Sexual orientation

We will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents/carers, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that pupils are taught about marriage of same-sex couples whilst meeting our legal requirement to teach about the nature of marriage in SRE lessons through the Jigsaw programme.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

Gender reassignment

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they have undergone, or are proposing to undergo, gender reassignment, or have trans* parents/carers, regularly checking our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of trans* pupils by external sources. Any such absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively by Head Teacher to ensure the privacy of the pupil.

Pupils have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our prospectus.

Pupils who face discomfort using a shared changing space will be provided with a safe and non-stigmatising alternative, such as curtains or a separate changing schedule.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where trans* pupils can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

The Headteacher has attended Trans inclusion in Primary Education training to improve knowledge base and access further information addressing equal opportunities for trans* pupils including those with SEND.

Looked after children

Looked after children (LAC), and previously looked after children (PLAC), will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our Admissions Policy.

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all LAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

We will ensure that any SEND that a LAC or PLAC has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school holds a Looked After Children Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

The curriculum

We believe that pupils should be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, and will not make any unjustified changes to our curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a pupil may have.

We will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way as to prevent discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

The observation of inclusive teaching strategies is an aspect of the school leadership team's annual programme of monitoring.

We will respect the right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from religious education classes or assemblies.

Our environment reflects the school's commitment to a policy of equal opportunities for all. Displays reflect a positive image of the protected characteristics whenever possible.

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping;
- promote attitudes and value that will challenge prejudice related behaviour;
- provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- provide educational visits and extra-curricular activities that reflect the diversity in our society.
- provide access to learning during periods of home schooling and ensure all children have devices to access Google Classroom for this time.
- Provide alternative resources for learning where families report difficulty in supporting children through online learning methods.

Staff expectations are the same for all groups of pupils. Extra curricular activities are open to all students who self select by aptitude, ability and personal preference.

Promoting inclusion

We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

- Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing body and school staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling in pupils an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
- Providing a variety of educational and residential visits which expose pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences.
- Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents/carers to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.

Supporting pupils with medical conditions

We will ensure that any medical conditions related to a pupil with a protected characteristic is fully supported in line with our First Aid policy – including supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Pupils that have left school

Our liability not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left the school, but will continue to apply with regards to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

Bullying and discrimination

Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Safeguarding Policy.

It will be up to the headteacher to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services, and/or the police, of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Policy.

Staff training

New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction.

Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training, which will:

- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE, and International Women's Day.

Staffing - Recruitment, Training and Professional Development

The school is required to supply the LA with employment data related to all groups employed. The school is committed to attracting and developing a workforce on a basis of merit. The recruitment process will be monitored to ensure that there is no bias based on the protected characteristics. All teaching and support staff posts are not sex-specific. Both men and women are encouraged to work with all age groups and each Key Stage. All staff have equal access to in-service training and posts of responsibility.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by eight principles. In all cases, the principles apply to the protected characteristics listed on page one.

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value.

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless 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 and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote non-prejudicial attitudes, mutual respect and positive interaction between people, both in school, and the wider world.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

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

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We aim to consult and would involve as much as is practically possible in our setting.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally and internationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life.

Principle 8: Objectives

Each year we formulate and publish specific and measurable equality objectives

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference. Every three years, accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

In our school, we aim to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations across all aspects of school life. We do this by:

- creating an ethos in which all pupils and staff feel valued and secure;
- building self esteem and confidence in our pupils, so that they can then use these qualities to influence their own relationships with all others respecting their differences;
- removing or minimising any barriers to learning, so that all pupils can achieve;
- ensuring that our teaching takes into account the learning needs of all pupils
- actively tackling discrimination and promoting equality and inclusion through our Prospectus, School Rules, newsletters to parents and displays of work;
- making clear to our pupils what constitutes aggressive and prejudice related behaviour;
- identifying clear procedures for dealing quickly with incidents of prejudice related behaviour;
- making pupils and staff confident to challenge prejudice related behaviour.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure the principles listed above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

The school building has been inspected for access and the plans have been accepted by the governing body. (see Accessibility Plan).

Children and all staff are encouraged to value each other and build up and maintain cooperative working relationships both within school and in the community, such relationships being based on mutual respect for each other.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling our legal duties:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

Incidents will be dealt with in a sensitive manner. The PSHE curriculum will be used to help promote a positive image of all members of society, with particular reference to the protected characteristics.

The following is guidance on the procedure for dealing with prejudice-related incidents:

- *The school will follow the LA Guidelines in dealing with prejudice related incidents as these are unacceptable in our school*
- *Any adult witnessing an incident or being informed about an incident must follow these agreed procedures:*
 - *stop the incident and comfort the person who is the victim;*
 - *if appropriate, reprimand the aggressor and inform the victim what action has been taken;*
 - *if the incident is witnessed by other pupils, tell them why it is wrong;*
 - *report the incident to the head teacher or Safeguarding Lead and inform him/her of any action taken*
 - *inform the class teacher(s) of both the victim and the aggressor when the incident relates to a child in school*
 - *record what happened in the pupils' incident book*
 - *inform both sets of parents, if appropriate.*

All prejudice related incidents will be recorded and reported to the governing body by the head teacher.

We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

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.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher on an annual basis, updated where appropriate, and duly communicated to staff members.