

# Equality Policy and Action Plan

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# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Introduction	3
2	Overall Aims of Our Equality Policy	4
3	Application of the Policy	4
4	Our Approach	4
5	Our Vision Statement About Equality	5
6	Our Duties	5
7	Roles and Responsibilities Within Our School	6
8	Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) & Using Information	8
9	Commissioned Services (Buying In Services)	8
10	Our Staff	8
11	Responding to Hate or Prejudice-Based Incidents and Bullying	9
12	Implementation, Monitoring and Reviewing	10
13	Equality Objectives: Our Equality Action Plan	10

This policy is based on the Calderdale MBC Equality Policy template dated 2013 and is their latest template.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This Equality Policy for The Brooksbank School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations between groups

We welcome our responsibility to promote community cohesion and are committed to developing good relations across different cultures, ethnic, religious (and non-religious) and socio-economic groups. We are also committed to supporting our staff in the practical implementation of this policy

Our school will embrace the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and embraces the UN Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup>.

1.2 Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their local and wider communities, and recognising their role in promoting an understanding of equality for different groups of people. Much of this work is in response to legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings, but it also sits within the specific context of a school's role in providing learning and opportunities for all - it is about fairness, rights and justice.

1.3 Equality legislation exists to protect people but also to try and advance equality. Inequality still persists in the UK despite 40 years of equality legislation. In Calderdale we know that some groups do less well than others in terms of progress, achievement and later life chances. This picture is reflected nationally. The recognition of diversity and promotion of inclusive and equality practices will help to overcome this disparity.

1.4 The new Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/Our-mission/UN-Convention/>

- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (for staff only)

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and academies.

## 2. Overall Aims of Our Equality Policy

2.1 To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes.

2.2 Overall, our aim is to:

- *To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including challenging prejudice and inequality.*
- *To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.*
- *To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.*

## 3. Application of the Policy

3.1 Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community: pupils/students, staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies who we have engaged with and who will contribute to the ongoing development of our policy and equalities work.

3.2 The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between groups.

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

## 4. Our Approach

4.1 We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

4.2 We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- **Shared Humanity.** Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.

- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- Social cohesion within our school and the local and wider communities.
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- Assess, monitor and conduct Equality Impact Assessments of our functions and policies.
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

## **5. Our Vision Statement About Equality**

- 5.1 Our school seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.
- 5.2 We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.
- 5.3 We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

## **6. Our Duties**

- 6.1 We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and will seek to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 6.2 We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.
- 6.3 These opportunities may include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents, staff and partner agencies
- preparation for entry to the school
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion and inclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or Theatre in Education (TIE).
- school sports
- staff welfare

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities Within Our School**

7.1 Our Headteacher is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy and, alongside the Senior Leadership Team will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they are given necessary training and support.

The Headteacher will also:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy, report ongoing progress to the Governing Body and at least annually report to them on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership Team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
- Ensure Equality Impact Assessments are conducted on functions and policies, where appropriate.

7.2 Our governing body is responsible for the Equalities strategy in school and will:

- designate a governor committee and/or governor with specific responsibility for the equality issues in school
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), if appropriate

- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- review the policy every three years
- receive information annually on its effectiveness
- will receive and attend training, as required

#### 7.3 Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP

#### 7.4 Our pupils/students will:

- understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy
- be encouraged to actively support the policy

#### 7.5 Our parents/carers will:

- have access to the policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy
- be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child

#### 7.6 Our school staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school and challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ensure appropriate support for students with additional needs and maintain a good awareness of equalities issues
- be fully aware of the Equalities Policy, be involved in the development of the policy as appropriate, and be aware how it relates to them
- will receive and attend training

#### 7.7 Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be encouraged to support the policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy

#### 7.8 Our curriculum:

- Where relevant, we will ensure that curriculum planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross-curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity. All staff ensure the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel their contributions are valued.

- Positive steps are taken to include pupils who may otherwise be marginalised. We take account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, experiences and starting points and are responsive to pupils' different learning styles. All pupils are regularly consulted about their learning.
- We will monitor and analyse pupil performance by protected characteristic, special educational need and other appropriate groupings. We will use that information to inform curriculum priorities and whole school development.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) & Using Information**

8.1 Where appropriate, we will use data and other information about our school, and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) as a common sense measure to determine the effects of a policy, practice or project on different groups and ensure compliance with our duty to have a 'due regard' for the three aims of the Equality Duty. EQIAs help us to analyse whether what we are planning potentially has a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). They help us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. They help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils/students and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

## **9. Commissioned Services (Buying In Services)**

9.1 Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we will ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

9.2 We will ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

## **10. Our Staff**

10.1 We value our staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our school. Our policies and programmes benefit all members of staff in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and faith, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation
- irrespective of other factors such as age, income, family circumstances or where they live.



10.2 We will comply fully with legislation which protects **all** our staff from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we will make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

10.3 We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

10.4 We interpret our duties positively, take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

10.5 We will ensure that all our staff will receive appropriate training to help them understand their equality duties/and the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

## **11. Responding to Hate or Prejudice-Based Incidents and Bullying**

11.1 We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice-based bullying behaviour is usually driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These can be then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people, sexism and other forms of discrimination. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

11.2 Clear procedures are in place so that all forms of bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly, firmly and consistently. All forms of bullying and harassment are recorded, monitored and dealt with in line with relevant school policies.

11.3 We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

11.4 Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

11.5 We use this information to identify trends and patterns and to provide any necessary reports, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

## 12. Implementation, Monitoring and Reviewing

- 12.1 Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.
- 12.2 We will report every three years on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

## 13. Equality Objectives: Our Equality Action Plan

- 13.1 This policy and any agreed equality objectives and action plan will be published on our school website and hard copies will be available from the school, in line with the 'Specific Duty' in the Equalities Act.
- 13.2 We will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all governors and staff and as appropriate to all pupils and their parents and carers.
- 13.3 In addition all governors and staff will have access to a range of resources that discuss and explain the concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion.
- 13.4 We will set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed every three years.
- 13.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended by the Governing Body at any time.

### **Other areas of action:**

We will monitor and evaluate the progress of all pupils within the school. As a result targets will be identified to improve the quality of learning for those who are not making good progress. Resources will be provided to support all staff in meeting the needs of the school's diverse community. These will include:

- professional development and in-service training for teaching staff and support staff and training for the governing body
- identification of resources to meet the needs of staff, governors and pupils in appropriate ways
- use qualitative and quantitative data to monitor the attainment and progress of all pupils, and to set targets
- monitor racist incidents, take appropriate preventative action and provide support, and report such incidents to the relevant body where required
- Investigate the feasibility of creating appropriate spaces within the school site for quiet reflection and prayer along with associated policies and procedures