



Equalities Policy

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Introduction:

At St Thomas Primary School we aim to promote a positive and welcoming culture where discrimination is not tolerated. This policy has been drawn up to reflect our commitment to ensuring the unbiased treatment that pupils, employees and prospective employees are entitled to expect. We believe that every individual has the right to be valued, respected and offered equal opportunities, access and treatment. This is regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, religion, gender, marital status, age, disability or sexuality. We try to promote equality and challenge discrimination and stereotyping to make our school truly inclusive and promote high achievement for all.

This policy draws on legislation ranging from the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to the Equality Act 2006, which require schools both to avoid discrimination and to promote equality for pupils, staff and others using school facilities. It sets out how our school complies with this legislation.

Definitions of discrimination:

Under the law, there are different categories of discrimination, with differences in the legal framework surrounding them. These are:

1. Direct discrimination: This is unlawful for all protected grounds except, in some circumstances, age and disability in schools. Direct Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than others in comparable circumstances because of a special characteristic such as sex, race or a disability. In the case of direct age discrimination, this is unlawful only if it cannot be objectively justified.
2. Indirect Discrimination: In essence, this occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to all but has a different impact on members of one or more protected groups, placing them at a disadvantage as a result. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless it can be justified for reasons unrelated to the characteristic in question. (An example might be a physical strength test, which would discriminate against women, and which might be justified in relation to a job necessitating heavy lifting, but not in relation to teaching.)
3. Victimisation – This involves treating a person less favourably because they have taken action in respect of discrimination, e.g. by bringing a complaint or giving evidence for a colleague. This is also unlawful.

4. **Harassment** – This refers to unwanted conduct which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, on grounds of one of the relevant characteristics such as sex or race. It is also unlawful in many of the situations covered by discrimination law.

Employment:

Our school does not discriminate in the employment of staff on grounds of gender, transsexual status¹, race, disability, sexual orientation², religion or belief³ or age⁴. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices such as dress codes and disciplinary procedures.

With regard to disability, we aim to make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

We are an equal opportunities employer. The Governing Body will:

- provide equal opportunities to any employee or job applicant and will not discriminate either directly or indirectly.
- ensure part-time staff are treated as equitably as full-time staff, having regard to national and local conditions of service and to statute.

To meet these objectives management will ensure that:-

- (a) Selection criteria relate to job requirements and are not discriminatory by asking for inappropriate qualifications or experience.
- (b) Job descriptions, advertisements and personnel specifications are not discriminatory.
- (c) Every job is open equally to all applicants who meet the required criteria.
- (d) Applications will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- (e) Promotion and training is open equally to all eligible employees and selection criteria do not exclude applicants from any group.

All staff have the right to Continuing Professional Development, and Performance Management Reviews, as detailed in our C.P.D. and P.M. policies, and should have access to relevant information.

¹ Including people who have expressed an intention to undergo, are undergoing or have completed a process of gender reassignment.

² Discrimination on grounds of perceived as well as actual sexual orientation, and/or that of friends or associates of the person discriminated against is also unlawful.

³ As a voluntary aided school, the governing body may give preference to any candidate whose religious opinions and worship are in accordance with the tenets of the Christian foundation of the school.

⁴ In some cases, direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of age may be lawful if it can be shown to be objectively justified.

Duty to promote equality:

Race:

Our school is racially diverse and this is valued by all sectors of our school community. This racial diversity enriches the experience of all at our school. We actively promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of a different race and nationality. Discrimination is tackled and not tolerated.

As part of our on-going assessments and tracking we monitor the levels of pupil attainment and achievement for different groups of pupils, including racial groups. Action is taken as appropriate.

To provide equal opportunities for all races and promote good race relations we will:

- acknowledge that our society is culturally diverse and develop an appropriate, multi-cultural curriculum and environment
- challenge racist remarks and respond in an appropriate manner. All offences must be reported to the Headteacher
- record and report racist remarks as required by the Local Authority
- ensure that books and resources reflect a wide range of cultures in a positive way
- monitor and address any differences between racial groups in their attainment levels and achievement
- value all languages and see multi-lingualism as an asset
- respect the dress requirements of all cultures and religions, taking account of safety regulations across the curriculum
- promote an understanding and respect of different cultures within our society
- invite visitors from other cultures into school whenever possible.

Gender:

We aim to provide equal opportunities for both sexes. To achieve this we will:

- monitor the achievement and progress of boys and girls as part of our on-going tracking and take action to address any identified issues
- carefully select books, equipment and teaching materials to avoid gender bias and stereotyping
- be aware of using gender as a means of organisation – e.g. in registers, for grouping, when lining up etc.
- show disapproval of sexist remarks and respond in an appropriate manner
- give positive encouragement to both sexes to participate in all activities and to work and play freely with others
- take account of the interests and concerns of both boys and girls when planning activities and allow for a variety of outcomes to accommodate both sexes. This includes in school and out of school activities
- have equally, high expectations of both boys and girls
- recognise the possibility of gender bias in our teaching styles

- ensure that rewards and sanctions, the recognition of achievement and the delegation of responsibility are all offered equally to both sexes
- take note of relevant research and advice concerning gender issues
- encourage more male visitors and helpers into school to provide a balance of role models for all children.

Disability:

We aim to recognise and provide for the needs of both children and adults with physical or learning disabilities, giving them equal opportunities within our school. To achieve this we will:

- welcome anyone with a disability into our school – both children and adults
- be knowledgeable about the disabilities or special needs of any child in our care
- facilitate the fullest possible participation of pupils with disabilities or particular needs and maximum access to activities provided
- be aware of the special provision required by some children with disability and make every effort to provide it
- foster an understanding of disability within the school
- ensure equal access and opportunity for visitors with disabilities and encourage them to visit or help in school.

Roles

The role of governors:

The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly and with equality.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their sex, religion or race. All children will have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion affects the school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

The role of the head teacher:

It is the head teacher's role to implement the school's equality and anti-racist policies and is supported by the governing body in so doing.

It is the head teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

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

The head teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.

The head teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

The role of the class teacher:

The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child.

When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

The role of the pupil: (To be discussed with the School Council)

The Curriculum:

We aim for all children to fulfil their potential across a broad, rich and balanced curriculum. To achieve this, we must promote equal opportunities. This will include:

- being aware of equal opportunities issues when planning and assessing all aspects of the curriculum
- treating children as individuals, recognising and meeting individual needs
- providing equal access to the curriculum and other aspects of school life, and facilitating the fullest possible participation of all children
- challenging myths, discrimination and stereotypes
- using materials which reflect social and cultural diversity and providing positive images of race, gender and disability.

The Hidden Curriculum:

By the hidden curriculum we mean the subtle and unintentional way in which children receive messages about themselves and the way they are seen within the school and society.

We will be vigilant in our awareness of ways in which it is possible that our school organisation, language, display, discipline, assessment, adult role models and our general approach to the children are capable of being discriminatory.

Resources:

All books, materials and resources used in school will be chosen to avoid racial bias, sexual stereotyping, and must reflect as far as possible the diverse cultures of the society in which we live. Resources should positively reflect differences in race, gender, ability, background, and religious belief. Care will be taken to ensure equal access to resources.

Monitoring:

Monitoring involves collecting data, analysing and assessing it to measure the school's performance and effectiveness, and then identifying how the school can improve. As part of our on-going commitment to school improvement, we have a programme for monitoring pupils' performance and progress, attitude and attendance and then analysing the gathered data to identify trends.

The Headteacher is responsible, with the Leadership Team, for judging whether the outcomes of monitoring are affected by issues of equality and whether this policy is being put into practice consistently and effectively.

If differences are highlighted that may indicate some inequality in provision, opportunity or treatment, this will be investigated and addressed. The Headteacher will share any concerns identified and actions agreed with Governors.

Where applicable school policies will carry an equalities statement.

In addition the school will monitor racist incidents, take appropriate preventative action and provide support, and report such incidents to the Local Education Authority using form R110.

NOTE: Form R110 is the recommended LEA report form for racist incidents. Devon and Exeter Race Equality Council provide specialist training, advice and support and may be contacted on 01392 422566. Additional local resources and contacts are included on the Devon Curriculum Services website

Breaches of the policy

All discriminatory incidents will be regarded as a serious matter. Sanctions for children will be set out in the school's behaviour policy. Any example of discrimination by a member of staff will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and dealt with in accordance with the school's personnel procedures.