



Burstow Park School

Equality Policy

Introduction

Burstow Park School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every member of our school community and where all members are equal. We believe that the Equality Act 2010 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 key principles:

- All members of our community 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.
- We recognise, respect and value difference. We take account of this 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, embraced and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- We actively promote positive attitudes, mutual respect and relationship building between groups and communities different from each other.
- 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.
- 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.
- We have the highest expectations of all our students. We expect that all students can make good progress and that all members of the community can achieve to their highest potential.
- We work to raise standards for all students, with a distinct focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty” requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Development of the policy This policy takes account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010, The Equality Act 2010 and other internal school policies

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, the approach outlined in this policy underpins all decision making in relation to our school policy reviews, self evaluation, the school prospectus, school web site and newsletters.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the ways we comply with this by eliminating 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, services, trips and visits. We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers. 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 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 actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all, working together and the need for all to embrace diversity. 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 AttendanceThe Burstow Park School Behaviour Policy makes reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for students with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school to 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, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

All staff receive guidance on how incidents of bullying and prejudice should be reported, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously and keep a record through the school CPOMs system.

Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups

We know the needs of our school population and we are working towards a system to 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 take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills.

We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any students' 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. 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.

What we are doing to foster good relations

We prepare our students for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students. We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, citizenship and across the curriculum. We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping. We promote a whole school ethos that challenges prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.

We provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures. We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people from a diverse range of cultures. We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences. We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, whole school events.

Other ways we address equality issues

We maintain records of all training relating to equalities. Our monitoring records include evaluations of aspects of equalities. We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed. We have a rolling programme for reviewing all of our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and well-being of our students. The implications for equalities of all new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

Our Equality Objectives for 2022-2024 are:

- To improve outcomes for all students including those with protected characteristics so that they make progress at least in line with expectations based on their prior attainment and ability
- To enable all students including those in groups with protected characteristics, to make a positive contribution to school life
- To promote mental health and well-being so that all members of the school community are valued and supported, regardless of special educational needs and disability, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation
- To develop processes around all transition points for all students, including those in groups with protected characteristics to ensure that appropriate advice, guidance and support is in place to ensure successful transition
- To promote equal working conditions for all staff regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment

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.

Headteacher

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.

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.

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.

Equal Opportunities for 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 concerned to ensure wherever possible that 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, 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 every two years and make adjustments as appropriate.