

## Equality Policy

The Vaynor First School  
An Academy Trust School  
2021 – 2024

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Chair of Governors

### Purpose of the Policy

This Equality Policy reflects the Single Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces the three separate duties on race, disability and gender and summarises the school's approach in ensuring equality for all irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity within the school community and throughout all aspects of school life.

The Vaynor First School welcomes its duty to eliminate discrimination or harassment of others and this policy reinforces our commitment to eliminating this on the basis of the protected characteristics listed above. Throughout our work, at every level and throughout all aspects of the school community, everyone will be treated equally.

In line with the equality duty the school takes seriously its duty to ensure that our pupils are taught to value all equally and appreciate the variety of backgrounds of both themselves and others alongside ensuring a good education for all, and improving pupil outcomes as a consequence of planned actions.

This single Equality Policy summarises the school's approach in ensuring equality for all and underpins all policies within the school.

### Definitions Defined by the Single Equality Act 2010

There are nine 'protected characteristics' these are: *age; disability, gender reassignment (transgender), marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race religion and belief (and having no belief), sex (gender) and sexual orientation*. Under the general duty schools must exercise 'due regard' in respect of each of the eight protected characteristics (excluding marriage and civil partnership). This is to ensure that they:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment**
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity**
- 3. Foster good relations between different groups**

**Equality** is about fairness and equality of opportunity and advancing equality of opportunity involves treating people differently. People should not be treated the same. Some people may need extra help or adjustments to be part of the school community; this includes teachers, administration, cleaning or catering staff employed at the school as well as pupils/students, parents and school governors.

**Diversity** is about valuing people as individuals and learning from our differences. Our differences can be visible and non-visible. Promoting diversity we can meet different needs creatively to ensure opportunities are available to all and potential is fulfilled.

**Harassment** is defined as *"unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person"*. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

**Disability** someone who has ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’ Equality Act 2010

It also includes specified medical conditions such as HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer from the point of diagnosis, regardless of their effect. This definition of disability may include pupils with a statement for SEN but there may also be disabled pupils who do not have a statement and would not require additional educational support but have rights under this legislation.

## **Rationale**

This single policy reflects the spirit of The Vaynor First School and is consistent with the vision and aims of the school to provide:

- *A safe, caring, stimulating and supportive environment in which everyone is valued and respected as an individual; a place where everyone learns respects for themselves and each other by working co-operatively together.*
- *A place where every pupil and teacher is given an equal opportunity and supported to excel personally, academically, artistically, emotionally, spiritually, socially and physically and to be the best that they can possibly be; developing healthy relationships and a strong sense of self-worth and belonging.*
- *Provide positive learning partnerships between parents, carers, school and the community which enables each child to benefit from the diversity of the school community and appreciate their role in the wider world.*

Discrimination, harassment or victimisation on any grounds will not be tolerated and all pupils, staff parents and carers are made aware of this. We are committed to providing a broad, balanced, relevant and challenging curriculum in which all children have the opportunity to excel and be the best that they can possibly be, whilst preparing them for the culturally diverse and multi-ethnic society and world in which they live.

## **What do we mean by Equality at The Vaynor First School?**

1. Recognising and appreciating one’s own cultural background/heritage.
2. Raising awareness of different ways of life.
3. Raising awareness and appreciating all people irrespective of their individual protected characteristics and make up.
4. Promoting tolerance and understanding of all people, including those with protected characteristics.
5. Valuing the richness and diversity across all peoples.
6. Valuing the skills, attributes and learning styles of all.
7. Using qualitative and quantitative data to remove disadvantage or increase participation by making measurable improvement decisions.

## **The Vaynor First School Aims to:**

- ✓ *Create an environment where all feel secure and valued as individuals*
- ✓ *Develop pupils awareness and understanding of themselves and what it means to be human, valuing their own sense of self-worth and that of all others*
- ✓ *Develop and deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, ensuring it contains non-stereotypical images in order to overcome preconceived ideas of gender, ethnic origin, culture or religion*
- ✓ *Promote justice, equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all and allows all pupils, irrespective of their protected characteristics and skills, to achieve the level of success to which they are entitled.*
- ✓ *Promote an appreciation and understanding of the richness and diversity of British society and an understanding of the variety of peoples and lifestyles within our community and globally, valuing the positive contribution each make to their own community.*
- ✓ *Promote an environment where discriminatory assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are challenged and never tolerated.*
- ✓ *Challenge harassment should it occur*
- ✓ *Use fair recruitment procedures at all times*
- ✓ *Ensure equality of opportunity*
- ✓ *To develop a positive attitude to equal opportunity by all staff, parents, helpers, governors, children and all who participate in school.*

These aims provide the foundation for the work of the school and include the range of equalities covered under the Act such as: admissions policies; curricular policies; attainment monitoring and personal development; policies on staff recruitment and development; and work with parents and the wider community.

## Policy into Practice

At The Vaynor First School we teach children:

- to recognise, appreciate their own cultural background and heritage
- about the history of and religions of a variety of different peoples and cultures; reflecting areas of diversity within our school and beyond
- the benefits of a multiracial society that also has people with many backgrounds, ages, histories, skills and protected characteristics which makes each person special in their own right, whilst equally sharing human and lifestyle characteristics
- through a variety of resources that reflect our society
- to celebrate and value the skills, attributes and learning styles of all
- that any form of discrimination is a form of bullying, it is wrong and based on false values and therefore is not acceptable

Teaching in this area does not take place in isolation. It is seen through the school ethos, engagement with the curriculum and other aspects of school life, it is often addressed along with spiritual, moral and social development.

## The Ethos of the School

The ethos of the school, of the family and of the community provides the context in which spiritual, moral, social and cultural development takes place. For such development to be promoted in school, a positive ethos in which mutual respect and self-esteem are encouraged and the individual is valued is essential. We see the fostering of good relationships as a means of tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

The consistent application of the Behaviour and Bullying Policy is a valuable tool in supporting children to celebrate the skills and aptitudes of all, and equally help pupils understand when their behaviour and attitude towards others are not acceptable. It outlines a clear line of procedures which challenge inappropriate behaviours and potentially stereotypical thinking and harassment.

School takes very seriously its duty to ensure that discrimination does not occur and that people with protected characteristics will not be placed at any disadvantage resulting from this.

This is reflected in 5 the core values and principles underpinning our school, which every member of our school community is expected to demonstrate as determined by the children through their School Council. These are embedded throughout our curriculum. They are:

- ✓ **Honesty** - being true to yourself and inspiring trust in others  
This value ensures a strong sense of moral values, right & wrong, integrity of character
- ✓ **Respect** - for yourself, each another and our environment  
This value focuses on developing tolerance through everyone valuing themselves, celebrating diversity & difference in their relationships, their interactions and their learning.
- ✓ **Kindness** - showing consideration, compassion and empathy to others  
This value develops an understanding of how our actions impact on others. It is also referred to as compassion in the context of our curriculum and is used in reference to the community and our environment.
- ✓ **Forgiveness** - choosing to let go of wrong things that have been done to you

This value enables children to see that they have a choice to move beyond the hurt and what has made them feel bad about themselves on the inside and affected their wellbeing. It helps them to understand that forgiveness takes courage and strength and can cause you not to trust.

✓ **Happiness** - enjoying learning and feeling positive about myself and others

*The value of happiness* is a fundamental building block, which influences a child's behaviours, choices and emotions. It has positive effects on memory and the brain's ability to learn. It is key to health, relationships, a child's ability to perform, to think and to create. We believe that children achieve their best if they are happy at school. By listening and valuing their well-being we encourage a sense of community, support and compassion.

### **Collective Worship**

Collective worship offers children opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:

- *addressing matters of common interest or concern*
- *exploring shared values*
- *celebrating, exploring and reflecting on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others*
- *providing the opportunity to worship.*

### **The Curriculum**

The curriculum is excluded from the Equality Act, however the delivery is not. In practice this means that material related to groups with protected characteristics should be taught, appropriately to children to enable understanding, but in a sensitive way that would not lead to a pupil feeling victimised or belittled by doing so, in line with our behaviour policies.

All subjects contribute to the understanding of equality, but some subjects and activities such as language, literature/story, art, music, history, PSHEC and RE make a particularly strong contribution.

When planning for inclusive learning the child's individual need is catered for using a range of learning opportunities, teaching styles and strategies to overcome any potential barriers to learning. Teachers will take specific action to enable the effective participation of pupils with protected characteristics by:

- Planning appropriate amounts of time to allow for satisfactory completion of tasks.
- Planning opportunities, when necessary, for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum.
- Identifying aspects of their programme of study and attainment targets that may present specific difficulties for individuals.
- Use termly pupil tracking, summative data and quantitative information to identify areas where specific interventions are required, action such and measure the impact to ensure that children with protected characteristics make at least as good a progress as others.

### **Environment**

The Vaynor First School will consider the needs of pupils, other school staff, Governors and visitors to the school when making policy, or considering building alterations.

We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-worth and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any bias and promoting equality of opportunity. Therefore when developing all policies we consider embedding opportunities to positively promote equality. Furthermore, when monitoring both policies and pupil progress these issues are taken into account. Pupil tracking is used in core subjects and information gathered, acted upon strategically, with appropriate interventions where indicated.

In addition, when undertaking any building improvements or additions we will consult with Property Improvement personnel engaged for building projects to ensure that as facilities are developed or adapted they meet access requirements.

### **Staffing and Community**

We will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to working conditions for people with protected characteristics. In addition the school will ensure that discrimination does not occur and that equality between all adults with or without protected characteristics will be an exception, given the measure of reasonableness. In particular, our policies related to the education and related services we provide and our admissions policy will ensure that there is no substantial disadvantage. Furthermore, we encourage all parents to take an active part in the education of their child, and in return offer a range of services to support parents who require additional support. We achieve this by utilising people such as the School Nurse, Education Welfare Office and Early Intervention Worker (Connecting families). School also fosters strong links with local community groups such as the police, social care, and local churches with an aim to try and help meet and support the needs of our wider community.

### **Special Provisions for Disability**

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction – that is to say, it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. Provision for disabled pupils is closely connected with that for children with Special Educational Needs.

### **All Areas Covered by this Policy**

We want all our pupils to personally excel during their time with us. As such. We work to ensure that everyone's expectations, attitudes, and practices in relation to equal opportunities issues do not prevent any child from enjoying success or emotional security.

The school will ensure the policy is followed through appropriate training ensuring staff and governors are proactive in promoting equality in all areas. In tackling discrimination we will work in partnership with parents and the wider community to establish, promote and discuss good practice.

All incidents regarding inequality must be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or Deputy. They will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

### **Responsibilities**

The Governing Body holds statutory responsibility for this area, including overseeing, agreeing, monitoring and reviewing of our School's equality objectives, and related activity.

The day to day leader is the Headteacher who reports to the Local Governing Body about issues or the results of monitoring in this area including bullying, prejudice related incidents e.g. homophobic bullying, racist incidents and incidents targeted at children with SEN and bullying incidents on a termly basis and an annual overview report at the end of each academic year.

When considering staffing issues, we are committed to high quality employment policies and practices and draw upon Human Resource expertise to guide our policies with relation to every member of staff, including part time, supply and ancillary staff. This also includes opportunities for professional development. We will ensure that all staff, including governors are trained in equal opportunities practices and that our procedures are fair, honest and open.

Furthermore, the Governing Body will publish at least one specific and measurable equality target (legally once every four years) alongside accessibility targets (legally once every three years), and publish progress towards any targets yearly together with the equality policy which shows how they are complying with the equality duty (a copy of this can be found on our school website).

To inform planning the school will use available information from a range of sources it already utilises such as gathering information through:

- The use of SIMS system to collect and analyse information on pupils and staff with disabilities, considering and acting upon this information as necessary. This is regularly updated on induction and confidentiality is ensured.
- Consulting with parents, during induction meetings, to gain their views and knowledge regarding any disabilities or other protected characteristics and to share any concerns about their child and schooling. This information will be considered in ensuring our policies and practices meet the child's needs, or the parents should these be a barrier to engagement.

- Discussing pupils due to enter the school with the leaders of the appropriate pre-school setting.
- Consulting with pupils in an appropriate manner to their age via discussion or questionnaire or through the school council system.
- Using parents evenings/other suitable meeting contexts to seek updated information on those with disabilities, both parent and pupil, and to seek their opinion on issues which can be improved upon by school.

Information will be analysed, taking into account the following:

- If there are areas of the curriculum to which parents/pupils feel disabled pupils have limited or no access.
- Disability issues are reflected adequately in the PSHE curriculum.
- The participation of the disabled and those with protected characteristics in extra-curricular activities.
- If there remain parts of the school to which disabled pupils have limited or no access, or whether physical features of the school environment hamper access to the whole life of the school.
- The provision of different forms of communication to enable all to express their views and to hear the views of others
- The extent to which access to information is planned, with a range of different formats available for those with protected characteristics; and other issues affecting the participation of those pupils, for example: bullying; peer relationships; policies on the administration of medicines; the provision of personal care; the presence or lack of role models or images of, for example, disabled people or different types of families; in effect, all the school's policies and procedures, written and unwritten.

### **Concerns or Complaints**

This policy links to other policies and in general the principles of equality will apply to all other school policies. Concerns or complaints in the first instance should be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy. If issues or concerns remain unresolved these should be raised in accordance with the schools Complaints Policy.

Particular aspects that should be addressed are:

- Ensuring that all curricular and extra-curricular activities are accessible to all pupils regardless of their ethnic group
- Promoting cultural diversity and challenging racism throughout the whole curriculum in a range of personal, community and global contexts
- Inviting pupils to develop their own strategies for promoting justice and challenging justice
- Providing opportunities for young people to develop empathy
- Encouraging universals between people in biology, health education and Physical Education
- Highlighting that excellence can be found everywhere, not just in the West. Examples of excellence should be taken from a wide range of cultures across the subject range and positive images should be exhibited in displays and resources
- Regularly monitoring resources to ensure that stereotyped and outdated images are not being used
- Recognising and meeting the needs of those pupils whose first language is not English

- Building positive links with community groups and utilising the expertise of people from local minority ethnic communities to ensure that the multicultural dimensions of the curriculum are fully developed

Pupils should be given the opportunity to discuss and challenge racist issues eg. through citizenship lessons or the school council.