



Mendip Edge Federation

Single Equality Policy

Legal Framework

1. The Mendip Edge Federation welcomes its general duties under the 2010 Equality Act and the 2011 Equality Duty to:

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

in respect of the Protected Characteristics of:

- age
- disability*
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnicity, colour or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

For the purposes of this policy the definition of disability is taken from the Equalities Act 2010. Disability is when*

- a) person has a physical or mental impairment &*
- b) the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect in their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*

We also welcome our specific duties under the Equality Act to:

- Publish sufficient information to demonstrate our compliance with the general duties (by 6th April 2012 and thereafter annually); and,
- Prepare and publish equality objectives (by 6th April 2012 and subsequently at intervals of not greater than four years).

2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion and to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

3. 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 School Context and Values

Schools in the Mendip Edge Federation are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all our pupils, for their parents/carers, for staff and for all those receiving services from the school, irrespective of their protected characteristics. Every member of our community is regarded to be of equal worth and importance.

The Mendip Edge Federation is committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. We aim to equip pupils with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference. We believe that diversity is a strength – for our schools, their communities and Britain as a whole – and we will work proactively to address inequality and foster positive attitudes to diversity so that all those who learn, teach and visit here are respected and valued. We recognise that there are limited opportunities within our school and local community for children to experience a range of cultures and we will therefore work to extend these opportunities.

This is reflected in our Mission Statement:

Creating a safe and happy environment where each child can grow academically, socially, spiritually and emotionally.

Our Overall Aims

4. We aim to :

- promote equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice
- involve people from different groups in the development and review of our equality work
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination
- eliminate harassment and bullying
- ensure equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups
- narrow the attainment gap in outcomes for children and young people
- improve other outcomes where we identify inequality
- take positive action to meet needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment
- increase participation of under-represented groups in activities and public life
- promote positive attitudes and good relations between people from different groups and support community cohesion

Guiding Principles

5. In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: Equal value

Our schools are open to all. The responsible body must not discriminate against a person in the arrangement it makes for deciding who is offered admission as a pupil. We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, and our governors and staff, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whether or not they are pregnant or mothers
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual orientation

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 of the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made and needs met
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised, and specific needs met
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised and met
- religion, belief or faith background, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- pregnancy and motherhood, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met
- sexual orientation, so that different needs and experiences are recognised and met

We also understand that people have complex, multiple identities. No-one is just one thing and people have many affiliations and loyalties. We know that although social class is not explicitly mentioned in the Equality Act, we need to consider and address inequalities of income and social class as part of our work to address other inequalities.

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:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between pupils, and adults, fair treatment for those who are pregnant or parents/carers, and an absence of sexual and homophobic or gender related harassment

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, whatever their protected characteristics.

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

We understand that disadvantage is often caused by the structures, systems, attitudes and opinions of society as a whole, not by the individuals suffering the disadvantage. Therefore, in addition to minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts in relation to our policies by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist for;

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or parents
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to 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 recognise that there are risks that consultation processes do not always access the views of some disadvantaged groups. We consult and involve:

- disabled people
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or parents
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

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, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men, people who are pregnant or parents
- people of different sexual orientation or gender identity

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence and openness about the issues that face us

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information (as appropriate) about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

We also publish other information needed to show how we are meeting our duties to eliminate discrimination/harassment/victimisation, advance equality and promote good relations between different groups.

Principle 9: Objectives

We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published (principle 8) and the engagement through which we have involved people from different groups (principle 7), in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation and gender identity

6. We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.
7. Accordingly, we draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school development 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.
8. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

The Curriculum

9. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine principles set out in paragraph 5 above.

Ethos and Organisation

10. We ensure the principles listed in paragraph 5 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
 - involvement in extra-curricular activities
 - working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
 - working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

11. The Mendip edge Federation is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1–3:
- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
 - prejudices around racism and xenophobia,
 - prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.
 - prejudices relating to age

We will not tolerate any prejudice and prejudice-related bullying and this will be taken seriously and dealt with through the school discipline procedures as appropriate. There is guidance for staff on how prejudice-related incidents involving students should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. For staff the cause for concern or grievance procedure should be followed.

12. We take seriously our obligation to report regularly to the Mendip Edge Federation Governors and the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of racial incidents at our schools and how they are dealt with.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility

We believe that promoting equality is the whole school's responsibility:

School Community	Responsibility
Governing Body	<p>The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.</p> <p>Involving and engaging the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these. Publishing data and publishing equality objectives.</p> <p>Monitoring progress towards achieving equality objectives.</p> <p>Ensuring recruitment is carried out fairly and in line with equality legislation.</p> <p>A member of the Governing Body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy. This is currently Mrs Sally Virgin</p>
Head teacher	<p>The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy.</p> <p>Promoting key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day to day duties.</p> <p>Establishing a code of conduct in which people will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, culture, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and/or age.</p> <p>Ensuring that all school community receives adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.</p>
Senior Management Team	<p>To support the Head / Principal as above</p> <p>Leading on actions to achieve our equality objectives.</p> <p>Ensuring fair treatment and access to services and opportunities.</p> <p>Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.</p>
Teaching Staff	<p>Following a code of conduct in which people will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, culture, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and/or age.</p> <p>Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom, creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance</p> <p>Designing and delivering an inclusive curriculum reflecting and valuing diversity</p> <p>Upholding the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated</p> <p>Deal with any prejudiced related incidents in line with school policy</p> <p>Ensuring that they are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.</p> <p>Support pupils in their class who have particular needs in relation to the protected characteristics</p> <p>Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.</p>

School Community	Responsibility
Non Teaching Staff	<p>Following a code of conduct in which people will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, culture, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and/or age. Supporting the school and the governing body in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders, including admissions and access to information.</p> <p>Ensuring that the services offered are inclusive of all families Making all families feel valued and good about themselves Upholding the commitment made by the head teacher on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated Supporting colleagues within the school community Ensuring that they are aware of their responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents.</p>
Parents	<p>Taking an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these</p> <p>Taking an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment given to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.</p>
Pupils	<p>Following a code of conduct in which people will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, culture, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and/or age.</p> <p>Helping the school to achieve the commitment made to tackling inequality. Upholding the commitment made by the head teacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated.</p>
Local Community Members	<p>Taking an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these</p> <p>Taking an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.</p>

Information and Resources

13. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and is accessible to all pupils and their parents and carers.
14. All staff and governors have access to a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious Observance

15. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff Development and Training

16. 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, to ensure that we are able to meet our obligations under the Equality Act.

Breaches of the Policy

17. 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 Headteacher and Governing Body.

Monitoring and Evaluation

18. Each school will collect, study and use quantitative data and qualitative evidence relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. In particular we collect, analyse and use data on achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs, ethnicity, and gender.
19. The Policy will be updated and amended in line with any changes in government legislation or Local Authority guidance.

Meeting our specific duties under the 2010 Equality Act

20. Each school publishes information annually on their school website to show that they have complied with our general duties under the Act.
21. Each school sets equality objectives and reviews annually their progress towards them. For the period from April 2012 to March 2016 our equality objectives are:
 - To promote and enhance community cohesion and a sense of shared being part of a multi-cultural society in the UK and in the world.
 - To increase understanding of issues surrounding disability.
 - To remove or minimise the potential disadvantages for pupils, parents and staff who may have any disability or medical condition which may prevent them from fully participating in school life.

Date approved: December 2014