



Equality of Opportunity

Reviewed and agreed by Trustees: 24/09/14

Next Review Date: September 2017

Equality of Opportunity Policy

Equal opportunity is the right of everyone to equal chances, and each individual is respected for who they are.

Introduction

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the staff, Trustees and Trustees of West Norfolk Academies Trust to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. These include:-

- Pupils
- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- Parents
- Trustees
- Governors
- Visitors to the school
- Students on placement

Equal opportunities should permeate all aspects of school life, and is the responsibility of every member of the school community.

The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all individuals within the school community. The responsibility for keeping the issue of equal opportunity at a high level of priority at all times and in all areas, is that of the Headteacher.

All members of the school community should be aware that every individual has a right to be considered of equal value and be given equal opportunities regardless of:-

- Ethnicity
- Gender (including Transgender)
- Social background
- Ability/Disability
- HIV/AIDS
- Belief
- Age
- Marital status
- Nationality/Citizenship
- Sexual orientation.

Ethos and Atmosphere

The Trust is aware that those involved in the leadership of the school communities are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community.

- There should be an 'openness' of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school.
- Pupils are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect.
- The displays around the school are of high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity.
- Wherever possible access to all areas of the school (buildings and grounds) will be for all persons.
- Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all pupils through planning of both assemblies and classroom activities

Learning Environment

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or social background. All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.

- Teacher enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all pupils.
- The adults in the school try to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity.
- The school places a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability. We aim to meet all pupils' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of work (see SEN policy and Disability Equality Scheme).
- The school provides an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources.
- All pupils are actively involved in their own learning.
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.

The Taught Curriculum

The Trusts aims to ensure that our planning reflects our specific commitment to equality of opportunity in all subject areas and cross curricular themes in line with the National Curriculum 2000.

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:-

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;

- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any inconsistencies are identified and dealt with.

Resources and Materials

The provision of good quality resources and materials within the Trust is a high priority. These resources should:

- reflect "the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexually diverse society"
- reflect a variety of viewpoints
- show positive images of males and females in society including people with disabilities
- reflect non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context
- include materials to raise awareness of equal opportunity issues
- be equally accessible to all members of school community consistent with health and safety
- not include explicitly and implicitly racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist materials. Our materials seek to promote all areas of equality.

Language

We recognise that it is important within the Trust that all members of the school community use appropriate language which:

- does not transmit or confirm stereotypes

- does not offend
- creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document
- creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem
- uses correct terminology in referring to particular groups or individuals e.g. Inuit rather than Eskimo, Native Americans rather than Red Indians.

Organisation of Learning

When organising groups for various activities, consideration is always given to the composition of the group, to provide a balance appropriate to the activity.

The Trust is aware that our environments are not culturally diverse, and we are very conscious of the need to provide first hand experiences for the pupils to encounter people from other cultures. We do this by:-

Extra-curricular provision

It is the policy of the Trust to provide equal access to all activities from an early age e.g. girls playing football, boys playing netball.

We try to ensure that all such non staff members who have contact with pupils adhere to these guidelines.

Provision for Bilingual pupils

We undertake at the Trust to make appropriate provision for all bilingual groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include:-

- Traveller children
- those from refugee families
- pupils whose home language is not a standard form of English.
- pupils for whom English is an additional language.

While there is a need for pupils to learn to communicate in standard English we believe that their home language should be celebrated and respected.

Equality and the Law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Disability Equality Duty (2005) and Equality Act (2006).

The action plan at the end of this Equality of Opportunity Policy outlines the actions the Trust will take to meet the general duties detailed below.

Race Equality

This section of the policy reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Under our specific duty we will:-

- Prepare an Equality Plan which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this policy, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these pupils;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such pupils, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Strategy.

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal Duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;

- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff. This must include pupils' access to a balance of male and female staff at both key stages.

We undertake to encourage the career development and aspirations of all individuals.

It is our policy to provide staff with training and development which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils in the various dimensions of equality of opportunity.

Harassment and Bullying

It is the duty of the Trust to challenge all types of discriminatory behaviour e.g. unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions about another person's appearance, character, race, ability or disability, sexuality, gender (or transgender).

The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with incidents such as these (see Behaviour Policy)

Parents and the Wider Community

We aim to work in partnership with parents to help all pupils to achieve their potential. We wish to affirm our continuing commitment to reach out to other diverse groups within our immediate community and beyond.

ENSURING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

The school will ensure that:

- Pupil achievement is monitored by race, gender, socio-economic status, and disability and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed;
- All staff are aware of the Trust's Equality of Opportunity Policy
- The talents of disabled pupils are recognised and represented in Gifted and Talented programmes, and representation on the programmes fully reflects the school population in terms of race and gender;
- There is an inclusive approach to ensuring all pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council by election or co-option); class assemblies; fund raising;
- Disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE and dance and assemblies;

- Extended school activities such as breakfast and after-school clubs take into account pupil needs and access issues and pupils attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status;
- Staff, pupils, parents and carers will continue to be involved in the future development of the Equality policy through input and feedback from surveys, staff meetings, school council meetings, parents evenings;

The Trust will provide:

- Extra and additional support for pupils who are under-achieving, in order to make progress in their learning and their personal well being, e.g. ensuring that children with visual impairment have accessible texts; that children with hearing impairment have an enhanced acoustic classroom environment;
- Additional support for parents of under-achieving children (e.g. reporting progress; discussing needs);
- Additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. providing a sign interpreter for a deaf parent; ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible parts of the school to support wheelchair users).

PROMOTING POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND MEETING NEEDS

The Trust will:

- Promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display.
- Provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities;
- Provide extended services, with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups;
- Support disabled pupils in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;
- Help pupils and young people to understand others and value diversity;
- Promote shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them;

- Develop skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new ‘Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK’ strand of citizenship education.

Trustee Monitoring

This policy will be monitored during Autumn Term after data such as RAISE and Fischer Family Trust is available. The main strands of the monitoring will be:-

	Responsible Staff
An analysis of the examination results which focuses upon significant student groupings. This report would identify any groups which are underachieving relative to the whole school. Student groupings should include gender, ethnicity, SEN,FSM	Senior Leadership Teams SENCO
An analysis of participation in the life of the school with emphasis upon extra curricular activities	Senior Leadership Teams
Monitoring of any activities that contribute to the school fulfilling the requirements of this policy e.g. Special Year Group themed days.	Senior Leadership Teams
School walk by Trustees to monitor that displays etc are consistent with the policy	Trustees