

Vernon Primary School



Policy for Equality

Related documents:

- Accessibility Action Plan
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

Equality Act 2010

'The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, replacing all the previous UK anti-discrimination laws. This Act 2010 defines types of unlawful behaviour in relation to persons with protected characteristics. This Act 2010 applies to all schools including maintained and non-maintained special schools. The guidance provides information about the types of behaviour that are unlawful and information about the characteristics that are protected under the Act. The Equality Act 2010, specific duties (Regulations, 2011), introduced new specific equality duties to help public authorities meet their new obligations under the general duty. These specific duties apply to all schools.'

In order to comply with their specific duties, schools are required to do the following:

- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with their general duty;
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

In this document, Vernon Primary school will set out to inform parents/carers and staff of our aims and objectives in promoting equality through our daily practice across the school community.

Introduction:

At Vernon, we are committed to promoting an understanding of equality and diversity throughout our school life. The overall objective is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality objectives to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. The school will endeavour to create a community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse society. We aim to ensure that all members of the school community through their contact with the school are treated with fairness and respect at all times. The plan is based on the following core values as expressed in the Schools' Aims and Values (see below).

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Vision and Aims:

Our aim at Vernon Primary School is to help prepare our children to value and embrace their future. We believe that the children are our richest resource and we seek to foster a love of learning and of life. Our School is a vibrant, dynamic learning community, building positive relationships with all children, staff, parents and the wider community. We have an open door policy which means that Parents/Carers are always welcome to come and talk to us if they have any concerns or issues that they would like to raise. We adopt a child-centred holistic approach to the planning and delivery of the curriculum, ensuring that all our children receive their entitlement of a broad and balanced education. We endeavour to create an open and friendly environment where individual children's needs are met. This will enable them to flourish in our School and achieve their full potential.

Our School Aims:

- To create a rich, safe, stimulating and purposeful learning environment to enable children to grow in confidence and work with independence;
- To encourage, praise and reinforce success, celebrating efforts, enabling all children to gain a sense of achievement;
- To encourage and welcome the wider community into the daily life of our School, drawing on the skills of others and working in partnership to further support and extend children's learning;
- To help each child to achieve their full potential, by aiming for excellence, in providing a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum that meets the needs of individual children;
- To enrich the curriculum through educational visits, visitors and extensive use of the environment;
- To nurture a life-long love of learning and support children in making the right choices socially, morally, spiritually, culturally and emotionally;
- To promote full inclusion and equal opportunities for everyone in the community;
- To work in true partnership with parents, carers and the community, involving them in the evaluation of the school's successes;
- To give responsibility to learners and develop their self-confidence by contributing to the community;
- To build on our very high expectations for success.

Teaching and Learning

School Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils and considers them in relation to the various equality strands. This is in-line with our key values which are stated below.

Curriculum Values

The key curriculum drivers (values) for our school, **Creativity and Curiosity; Independence; Respect and Cooperation**, thread through our planning, teaching and learning across the whole school, ensuring that our ethos is consistent and progressive from Reception to Year 6. These values prepare our pupils for modern Britain and as such, we feel that they play an integral role in shaping our curriculum and celebrating diversity through equality practices. Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, included and their contributions are valued. Through collaborative learning opportunities children become equipped with lifelong skills, a love of learning and we aim for all children at Vernon to become confident in driving their own learning forwards, striving to achieve their potential. The importance of learning through our core values and beliefs are embedded in daily practice. The Personal Development curriculum provides further opportunities to explore equality at a greater depth of understanding.

Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 defines direct discrimination as occurring when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have, are perceived to have or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics as set out in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age;
- Disability or long term health condition;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race (which includes ethnic origin, colour and nationality);
- Religion or belief;
- Gender (gender reassignment);
- Sex (Previously referred to as gender);
- Sexual orientation.

Indirect Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 defines indirect discrimination as occurring when a condition, rule or policy in the school is applied to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your school, i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.'

Harrassment

Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Equality Act: it is "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. Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Any case against the school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment. The consequences, procedures and policies related to harassment are the same as those that apply to direct and indirect discrimination.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Equality Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is carried out under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation. As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, a child must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or sibling in relation to the Act. If a pupil has himself or herself carried out a protected act – such as making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher – then the child's own good faith will be relevant. The consequences, procedures and policies related to victimisation are the same as those that apply to direct and indirect discrimination.

The Equality Duty for Schools

The Headteacher and leadership team have the responsibility for the following:

Visitors (including parents /carers, contractors and volunteers) are expected to:

- Support the school's approach and commitment to equality and to comply with the provisions of the policy;

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- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour which is unlawful under the Act whilst on the school premises.

The Governing Body of the school has responsibility for:

The governing body is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation. It is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, and partner organisations to promote equality. The governing body will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work. The school ensures the involvement of staff and governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties. Members of the school community will be kept informed of Equality and Diversity initiatives being undertaken.

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of their responsibilities under the Act and this policy, and recognise that they have a role in their day-to-day work to promote equality, inclusion and strong community relations;
- Highlighting any training they require developing their responsibilities under the Act;
- Dealing fairly and professionally with any incidents of bullying and discrimination;
- Promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their lessons and being role models for equal opportunities through their words and actions.

Recruitment and training

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in-line with statutory duties, safeguarding procedures and local authority guidance.

- Selection criteria and procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities
- All employees who are involved with recruitment and selection have a responsibility to ensure that they have received the appropriate training to enable them to act in a fair and lawful manner and to ensure that no unlawful act of unfair discrimination occurs.
- This policy will be made available to all employees, new employees and job applicants.
- All new employees are given a full induction, including information about relevant policies.

Appropriate provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for pupils and staff.

Anti-Bullying

Bullying is hurting a person deliberately, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It is described as a deliberate act carried out to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the person bullying. It can be a single incident that has a lasting effect upon the victim, or it may be a pattern of repeated behaviour that takes place over time.

Bullying is:

- Meant to hurt or intended to cause distress;
- Deliberate including harassment and victimisation as described below;
- May be repeated over a period of time;
- An imbalance of power;

Bullying manifests itself in several ways:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft);
- Verbal (e.g. name calling);
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone);
- 'Cyber-Bullying' or 'Virtual' bullying (the use of technology and/or social media to bully an individual).

At Vernon we do not accept bullying of any kind. We encourage all children adults to recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so they understand how to promote equality, inclusion and positive community relationships. If bullying has been alerted, a full investigation will occur and actions will be taken, in accordance with our behaviour management and anti-bullying procedures. In line with our Safeguarding procedures, action plans will be produced, enabling all parties to be supported through this process and beyond.

Support is also given to both victims and perpetrators. Children displaying unacceptable behaviour, including harassment and victimisation will be signposted to the pastoral support team in school (children and families will be supported through this process). Where appropriate signposting to external agencies can be required (see below):

- Education welfare;
- Educational psychology department;
- Police;
- Family doctor;
- School health;
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service);
- CEAT (Cheshire East Autism Team);
- Counselling services;
- Family support services.

In the event of the need to exclude a pupil for a fixed term, the headteacher would support parents and child through the exclusion process. Further information about the exclusion process is detailed in the behaviour policy.

Special Educational Need Disability (SEND):

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;
- Or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disability) are fully included in all aspects of school life. We celebrate the learning for all pupils and where significant adjustments are needed, we endeavour to work collaboratively with external agencies, child and family members to meet the need/s of the child.

Discrimination arising from a Disability

With regard to a disability there are two further types of unlawful behaviour. These are:

- Discrimination arising from a disability;
- A failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Discrimination arising from a disability is when a disabled person is discriminated against because of something that is a consequence of their disability. This is unlawful unless the discrimination can be justified. The duty to make reasonable adjustments now extends to a duty to provide auxiliary services and aids.

‘The duty to make reasonable adjustments means that where a school places a disabled pupil or member of staff at a disadvantage compared to other pupils or members of staff. The school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.’

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Auxiliary aids or services are things or persons which help children in their learning, whether a school should provide an auxiliary aid or service is a question of reasonableness in all the circumstances of the case.

Accessibility

The main priorities of the Accessibility Plan are to ensure that disabled people have:

- An accessible school environment;
- Equal access to the curriculum;
- Equal access to training and personal development;
- Appropriate means of information sharing and communication.

This is achieved in-line with the Strategic School Development Plan. For further information refer to the Accessibility policy and three year plan.

Diversity

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender (including gender re-assignment), sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

At Vernon we are mindful that diversity means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

- Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment;
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own;
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- Recognising that personal, cultural and institutionalised discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

Uniform

At Vernon the Headteacher and Governing body determines the guidelines about school uniform and aspects of appearance such as hair, jewellery and make up.

Although the Equality Act does not specifically deal with school uniforms, the SLT and Governing body exercise due regard to equality law and to obligations under the Human Right's act 1998 when making decisions in this regard. Sensitivity is shown to the needs of different groups when determining reasonable adjustments.

Safeguarding

All staff at Vernon Primary believes that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected as well as feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing that they will be effectively listened to;
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children at risk of harm;

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- To emphasize the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff, for example: the reporting of continuous absence from school;
- To develop and promote effective working relationships and reporting between other agencies, in particular the Police and Social Care;
- To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications and a satisfactory DBS check (accordance to guidance), and a central record is kept for audit purposes.

For further information on safeguarding please refer to our Safeguarding policy

Monitoring and review

At Vernon, we celebrate and value all forms of achievement. We promote a reward system throughout the school and appropriate to each developmental stage that is based on positive reinforcement. At the forefront of all practices is the schools mission statement: ‘Nobody else is quite like me!’

Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress giving all pupils full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from the process.

Often through face to face discussions, questionnaires and surveys, Vernon primary school uses a range of mechanisms to consult with and obtain feedback from its pupils, parents and staff as well as other interested parties.

Dealing with Breaches

The commitment and approach to equality is of high importance and is embedded in our practices; therefore, we take breaches of the Equality Act seriously. At Vernon, we ensure that any complaints and evidence of a failure to comply with this policy are thoroughly investigated and are dealt with as determined by the Headteacher and /or Deputy Headteacher (and/or Governing Body), as appropriate.

Under the schools disciplinary procedures, discriminatory acts will be dealt with as misconduct where appropriate to do so. Sexual harassment may also amount to a criminal offence and may lead to police involvement. Harassment may also be an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where the harassment relates to a protected characteristic). Serious acts of discriminatory behaviour, including acts of harassment, could amount to gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Complaints procedure

Many concerns and minor complaints can be resolved quickly and informally through the class teacher or another member of staff, depending upon the nature of the complaint. All complaints will be dealt with in a transparent way and as quickly as is reasonably practical. All parties will be kept informed during the investigation of a complaint and of the outcome except where this is confidential e.g. in the case of a staff disciplinary process.

It is important that complaints are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. The school will normally expect a complaint to be raised within 10 school days of the event/matter complained of, unless the Headteacher or Chair of Governors agrees there are exceptional reasons for not doing so. All correspondence to the school or governors should be by email or letter care of the school office, and not to the home address of any governor. The school endeavours to have a full discussion of any complaints raised, with a view of resolving issues informally before moving into the formal stages of procedure.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure school will want to consider the ways in which your complaint can be resolved which may include acknowledging that your complaint is valid in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

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- An apology;
- An explanation;
- An admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- An assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- An undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.

At each stage a person will be asked to state what action they feel might resolve the issue. For further details please refer to the schools Complaints Procedure policy.

The schools current equality objectives are:

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1. To continue to improve outcomes for pupils with a range of cognition and processing difficulties, for example dyslexia and dyscalculia.
2. To further promote the positive contributions that our ‘Power for Good’ initiative has provided across the school (anti-bullying).
3. To positively promote the inclusion/provision of all pupils with a range of need including pupils with a high level of both physical and learning needs (SEND).
4. To positively promote healthy emotional well-being and mental health needs across our school community for example, working in collaboration with the Emotionally Healthy Schools programme, which involves the ‘Tools for Schools’ intervention programmes for children and consultation opportunities with link professional at CAMHs.

Availability of equality information:

This policy is available in the following ways:

- On the school website;
- As a paper copy from the school office;
- As part of the school’s induction process for new staff and Governors;
- As part of equality training for existing staff.

Members of the working party: Jo Carvell (Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead); Sarah Kiely (Deputy Headteacher, Safeguarding Deputy and SENDCo); Karen Wood (Pastoral Manager and Safeguarding Lead), Ashley Hickson (Chair of Governors).

Staff and governors will review this policy in the Summer Term 2019

Policy Date: September 2018

Review Date: September 2019

Signed: (Headteacher) Signed: (Chair of Governors) Policy to be reviewed annually
