

Equality and Diversity Policy.

Diversity, tolerance and equality are at the heart of every activity in E-ACT Free Schools, where young people of all races, faiths and cultures learn together

The guiding principles for our equality and diversity policy are:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and potential learners as of equal value:

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

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same but providing people with an equal opportunity through a variety of means to reach their full potential. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity
- age.

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 boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual harassment.

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender

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

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:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men
- people of different ages.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

We will 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 will consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones. We will involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, girls and boys

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We will maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture
- gender.

Action Plans

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

We will draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and processes of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality objectives we shall pursue.

The Curriculum

We will keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect our guiding principles.

Ethos and Organisation

We will ensure our principles 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
- safeguarding
- admissions and attendance
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling our legal duties:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

Roles and responsibilities

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.

The Principal 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.

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

Religious observance

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

Staff development and training

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.

Breaches of the policy

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 Principal and governing body.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

In particular we collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, national origin and national status; and gender.