

Equality Policy

Approval

Approval Group	Job Title	Date
Full Governing Board	Chair of Governors Jane Hardie	10.11.22
Staff Side	John Mickelwhite Headteacher	10.11.22

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Change History

Version	Date	Author, job title	Reason
5	January 2026	Paul Massey	Adopt & adapt West Berks model policy to ensure it is fully compliant
4	November 2022	Full Governing Board	9 protected characteristics more clearly stated
3	March 2016	Mathew Graham Co-opted Governor	
2	Feb 2013		Amendments
1	Feb 2010		Creation

Next Review Date:
January 2029

Contents

1.	Aim	3
2.	Purpose of Policy	3
3.	Applicability	3
4.	Aims and Objectives	4
5.	Reasonable Adjustments	5
6.	Roles and Responsibilities	5
7.	Prohibited Behaviour under the Equality Act	7
8.	Responding to and Reporting Incidents	7
9.	Monitoring and Review	9
10.	Published Data	9
11.	Equality Objectives	9
12.	Further Documentation	10

1. Aim

At Birch Copse, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Birch Copse, we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work and visit here.

2. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to show how we are integrating equality into the school's core priorities and functions, which enables us to:

- Demonstrate how promoting equality and eliminating discrimination can help to raise standards.
- Ensure that equality and diversity are part of the school's core business both as a provider of education and as an employer.
- Promote community cohesion and good relations between pupils and staff of different backgrounds through education.
- Place the school in a position, which is regarded by everyone as an environment that affords respect and fair treatment of all.

3. Applicability

This Equality Policy applies to all of the school's pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and community users.

The policy supports our responsibilities in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This states that, in carrying out their functions, public bodies, including schools, are required to have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 has broadened the groups that are protected to include nine protected characteristics. We all have one or more of the protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:-

- (i) **Age**
- (ii) **Disability**
- (iii) **Gender Reassignment**
- (iv) **Marriage and Civil Partnership**
- (v) **Pregnancy and Maternity**
- (vi) **Race**
- (vii) **Religion or Belief**

- (viii) **Sex**
- (ix) **Sexual Orientation**

To show how we are complying with the Act, we are required to:

- Publish information that illustrates how our school impacts on the different protected characteristics;
- Investigate, set and publish objectives that will improve equality in our school.

4. Aims and Objectives

At Birch Copse, we will ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that no one with a protected characteristic receives less favourable treatment.

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/carers 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;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

At Birch Copse, we are aware of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on the pupil's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

We take positive steps to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in the education provided by the school and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services that we provide for pupils.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Governing Board

- To adopt and monitor the Equality Policy and equality objectives.
- Ensure the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that its employees do not carry out unlawful discriminatory actions or behaviour.
- Support and guide the school to have 'due regard' for equality in all its functions.
- Ensure the school complies with the two 'specific' duties to publish equality information and objectives.
- To designate a named governor with responsibility in this area to ensure that the school eliminates unlawful discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity.

The responsibilities of the Head Teacher

- To implement the school's Equality Policy within the school.
- To provide appropriate training for staff in equal opportunities and diversity and its implications for teaching and learning.
- To ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity.
- To ensure that all staff appointment panels give due regard to this Policy in order that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, pay, performance management, promotion and training opportunities.
- To promote the principles of equal opportunity and diversity when developing the curriculum, as well as promoting respect for other people in all aspects of the school's work.
- To ensure that due regard is given to the principles of equality and diversity with respect to all school policies.
- To encourage staff to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.
- To treat all reports of incidents of unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment and victimisation with due seriousness.
- To report any serious incidents involving equality and diversity implications to the Governing Board via the termly Head Teacher to Governor report process (ie three times per annum).
- To provide the Governing Board with appropriate data to enable them to monitor equality.

The responsibilities of all Staff

- To contribute to the achievement of the school's Equality Objectives.
- To adhere to the school's Equality Policy.
- To ensure that all staff, adults and pupils are treated fairly, equally and with dignity and respect.
- Not to discriminate against any member of staff, adult or pupil.
- To take care when selecting classroom materials, paying due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and not using resources that are discriminatory in any way. Staff should strive to provide materials that give positive images based on race, gender and disability and challenges stereotypical images.
- To take care when designing long term planning, paying due regard to the choice of topic to study and how to approach sensitive issues.
- To challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination and report these to the Head Teacher or Governing Board as appropriate.

The responsibilities of Pupils

- To adhere to the school's Equality Policy within the school premises, when representing the school at off-site events and when travelling to and from school.
- To treat all staff, adults and other pupils fairly, equally and with dignity and respect.
- Not to discriminate against any member of staff, adult or pupil. Prohibited behaviour is set out in section 6 below.
- To raise any incidents of prejudice or discrimination and report these to a teacher immediately.

7. Prohibited Behaviour under the Equality Act

Harassment on account of any of the protected characteristics is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs, according to a student's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher/head teacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the head teacher and the governing board as they occur.

Harassment on grounds of any of the protected characteristics or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

Types of discriminatory incidents include:-

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation gender reassignment or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender reassignment;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of a discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference eg food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race gender, disability, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

8. Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the school.

Incidents relating to staff will be dealt with under the following policies and procedures (as appropriate):-

- Disciplinary Procedure for Schools
- Code of Conduct for Schools
- Schools Grievance Procedures
- Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy for Schools

Incidents involving the Governing Board should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

A suggested procedure for responding and reporting incidents involving pupils is outlined below:

9. Monitoring and Review

The School Management Team and Governing Board recognise that action and progress in relation to equality and diversity needs to be monitored and analysed and in order to do this, we will:-

- Assess the impact of our policies, practices and procedures.
- Review the school's Equality Policy in line with current legislation and any other improvements identified.
- Review the Equality Objectives annually and publish them at least once every four years.
- Monitor data on pupils' achievements, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability and use this to inform strategies to raise achievement.
- Monitor the requirement and selection process to ensure that no individual applying for a post at the school is discriminated against.
- Monitor the school's admissions, behaviour and exclusion policies to ensure that pupils from minority groups are not disadvantaged as a result of the application of these procedures.
- Monitor the use of services to ensure that all sections of the wider community have equal and fair access to services provided.
- Monitor the non-use of school services and take action if barriers to access school services exist.
- Undertake workforce profiling, including the monitoring of school workforce and student demographics.
- Ensure information is available in alternative formats and languages, and that meetings are held in accessible buildings and at suitable times.
- The school will publish an **Annual Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Statement** on its website to demonstrate how it has met the three aims of the Equality Duty during the preceding academic year.

10. Published Data

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations, the school will publish annually on its website such equality information as is reasonably necessary to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, ensuring that no individual can be identified.

This may include summary information on:

- Pupil attainment and progress
- Attendance and exclusions
- Participation in wider school life
- Prejudice-related incidents
- Reasonable adjustments

As the school employs fewer than 150 staff, it is not required to publish workforce equality data, though this is monitored internally.

11. Equality Objectives

We publish an annual Public Sector Equality Duty statement on our website explaining how we have met the duty that year.

This statement also includes our Equality Objectives. These will be formally reviewed in 2029 or sooner if required by legislative or school context changes.

12. Further Documentation

- Equality Act 2010
- Department for Education Advice: The Equality Act 2010 and Schools (May 2014)