

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

SLT	Ian Paish
Committee	School and Community
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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Aims	3
3.	Reviewing & Assessing Impact.....	5
4.	Protected Characteristics covered within the Equality Act	5
	Race:.....	5
	Religion or belief or none:	5
	Pregnancy & Maternity:.....	6
	Sexual Orientation LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer):	6
	Sex/Gender:	6
	Disability:.....	6
5.	Microaggressions	7
6.	Mental Health and Well-being Commitment	7
	Intent.....	7
	Implementation	7
	Impact	8
	Procedures:.....	8

1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality & equity and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We seek to apply this policy to all aspects of school life including student admissions, teaching and learning, behaviour management, staff recruitment and career development, parental involvement and the role of the governing body. All school policies should be cross-referenced with this policy with regards to our unequivocal stance against any form of discrimination or prejudice.

Audience: This policy applies to all students, staff, parents and carers, helpers, visitors and contractors to Deptford Green School. They are referred to in this policy as *The School Community*.

2. Aims

- Racism, in any form, will not be tolerated in our school. We will work to eradicate all forms of racism and we will regularly review our systems and procedures to ensure this happens.
- Deptford Green is a multi-racial, co-educational school. We aim to give students of all genders and from any racial and cultural backgrounds the opportunities to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Deptford Green will present positive role models of LGBTQ+ people both through and beyond the curriculum.
- Deptford Green will work closely with families and members of our wider community to challenge stigmatisation and discrimination and ensure that appropriate support is in place and information is shared, including for LGBTQ+ students and their families.
- Deptford Green will challenge the stigmatisation of LGBTQ+ families in lessons about families, marriage and stable relationships and ensure that LGBTQ+ families receive appropriate support during their time in the school.
- Deptford Green values the best efforts of all its community and is intent on creating a stimulating and caring environment in which these efforts can flourish, underpinned by our GREAT Values (Growth, Respect, Equity, Accountability and Togetherness).
- Deptford Green is also intent on respecting the individual but expecting the individual to recognise their role and responsibilities as part of the school community.
- Deptford Green aims, within our general and comprehensive education, to provide children with an ability to understand and interpret the complex world in which they live and to confront honestly the moral choices that will face them.
- To build a curriculum around the students that we teach fostering their ability to question and then to develop informed opinions and decisions around the issues that they might face.
- To ensure that our curriculum reflects our students' lives, the experiences and history of the local community and people's lived experiences across the world. Celebrating the value and culture of all members of our school community.
- To develop a pastoral programme that will best support the teaching and learning of all of our students including the PSHE curriculum and work related Learning.
- To have robust systems around Safeguarding to ensure staff receive regular training on this.
- Deptford Green is a secular institution that aims to create a safe environment for all of our students and staff.
- To promote a culture of citizenship and British Values that is at the heart of the school's ethos to promote principles of community, participation, democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance and a sense of agency.

- To be restorative in our approach to misbehaviour, valuing the needs of all members of the school community.
- To develop Student Voice, ensuring that every child matters and has an active role in developing the school community in its widest possible sense.
- Accommodate members of the school community with additional physical and special needs.
- Ensure the majority of areas in the school are accessible to wheelchair users and are appropriately maintained.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Ensure that no discriminatory material is used in the school.
- Ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all. To review these regularly in line with changes to employment law and procedures.
- Provide continued professional development in equality and diversity to ensure staff are empowered with the skills and information to address and support equality within the classroom.
- Deptford Green will support any student who wishes to come out as LGBTQ+ to the best of our ability in communication with the student and where appropriate with home.
- The school will support members of our community in their emotional and mental well-being through the promotion of healthy lifestyles, a 'Wellness Strategy' and working with Place to Be and an Employee Assist Scheme as well as Mental Health First Aiders.

We are mindful of the difficulties that some groups can face, both students and staff, and we will ensure that any obstacles to them are removed. We have an active awareness of personal prejudices and stereotypical views, and we will endeavour to avoid labels related to these. We will value every member of the school community. As a school we must be aware of the power of language, of the spoken word, and we must make every effort to make sure that any use of language does not serve to marginalise any member of the school community. We will ensure that staff receive regular training to enable them to be confident in tackling the use of discriminatory language, including homophobic and transphobic language. Any incidences of unacceptable and discriminatory behaviour will be reported to the governing body.

To this end the school must take an unequivocal stand against prejudice and discrimination with a rigorous practice in place to ensure that all incidents contrary to our Equal Opportunities Policy are challenged on the grounds of the following protected characteristics (in alphabetical order):

- Ability
- Age
- Class
- Culture
- Disability
- Gender
- HIV Positive and AIDs status
- Languages
- Physical Appearance
- Racial, Ethnic or National Origin
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender Status

(Includes all protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010)

This requires commitment from each member of the school community and the acceptance of a code of conduct which:

- Encourages respect for the individual
- Encourages collective action to challenge prejudice
- Challenges stereotypical images and in their place promotes positive images
- Declares as unacceptable any language, action or belief that is prejudiced or encourages prejudice in others
- Challenges institutional and organisational structures which have prejudice or discriminatory effects

3. Reviewing & Assessing Impact

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessment should be considered for future planning and decision making. The governing body will receive annual reports for review, this will include reference to the school population, key initiatives and progress against targets and future plans.

4. Protected Characteristics covered within the Equality Act

We will seek, over time, to develop a common treatment of the various groups referred to individually below:

Race:

- Recognising the level of ethnic diversity within the local community it is an aim of the school to reflect the cultural diversity of the wider community, both in terms of our curriculum and our recruitment of staff, to promote awareness and understanding.
- It is the right of all students to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any form of behaviour that discriminates on the basis of race, colour and culture. All incidents of a racially motivated nature will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate sanctions applied.
- All incidents will be recorded through the conduct log. A central log of racially motivated incidents will be maintained by the Headteacher on SIMs. Support, respect, empathy sympathy and understanding are shown to the victim. Following investigation and in appropriate circumstances, parents are informed by the senior member of staff if their child is either a perpetrator or victim.
- Where there are reported incidents of this nature appropriate sanctions and support are applied.
- Deptford Green is proudly a HALO School. This means that we adopt the HALO Code which promises that all members of the Black community have the freedom and security to wear all afro-hairstyles without restriction or judgement.

Religion or belief or none:

It is the right of students, staff, parents, governors and visiting community members to not be treated differently on grounds of their religion or belief. All incidents of a religiously discriminatory nature will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate sanctions applied. Students are encouraged through a comprehensive Ethics Education programme to explore a range of religions and to encourage tolerance and acceptance of others who have differing religions or beliefs or none.

Pregnancy & Maternity:

Protection for students from discrimination or less favourable treatment because of pregnancy is required under the Equality Act 2010. Deptford Green School will ensure, if the situation arises within the school, that students are given support and the school ensures quality provision is made. Members of staff who become pregnant should arrange a meeting with Human Resources, as soon as they are confident to do so, in order to ensure appropriate maternity provision is provided.

Sexual Orientation LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer):

- We do not tolerate any form of behaviour of a HBT (homophobic, biphobic or transphobic) nature. Incidents of this kind are officially reported through the reporting system which incorporates a specific tick box for HBT bullying. All incidents of this nature are taken seriously and dealt with by the senior staff. The leadership team is able to identify through this system if HBT bullying is on the rise and react accordingly.
- The school ensures that all gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender students, or the children of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender parents are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other students.
- Deptford Green School operates a PSHE curriculum which supports students to address relationships in all forms.
- Issues around LGBTQ+ and bullying will be addressed through assemblies and tutor times to ensure that the school generates a common language of acceptance of LGBTQ+ students and issues.

Sex/Gender:

As a fully inclusive mixed gender school, we ensure that students of any gender are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment given to other students. The school operates a curriculum that allows all students to access lessons and every effort is made to combat gender stereotypes with regard to curriculum choices and career opportunities. The schools CIAG strategy addresses gender stereotypes. The senior team regularly review the staff body to ensure that equity is central to any professional development opportunities, recruitment or promotion.

Disability:

- The Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.
- The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.
- The school does not treat a disabled member of the school community less favourably simply because that person is disabled.
- The school will provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled person when it is reasonable to do so and if the aid would alleviate substantial disadvantage that the person faces compared to non-disabled people.

- At Deptford Green School we will ensure that disabled people can play as full a part as possible in school life and will make any reasonable adjustments to support this. The school is committed to the equality of opportunity between disabled and able-bodied people.
- We will eliminate discrimination that is unlawful as well as any harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- For additional information relating to DDA under the Equality Act 2010, please see: Schools Accessibility Plan, Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- Where appropriate for staff we will make referrals to Occupational Health and carry out risk assessments to ensure colleagues are adequately supported to complete their work. We will maintain regular well-being meetings with these colleagues.

5. Microaggressions

A microaggression is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority group, because of someone's gender, their sexual orientation or personal identity.

All members of the school community will be trained in what microaggressions are, how they are an unacceptable part of life that must be challenged and the appropriate ways and means of challenging such behaviour.

A microaggression will be treated in the same way as any other prejudicial or discriminatory incident.

6. Mental Health and Well-being Commitment

Intent

- Identifying areas of risk to physical and mental health so that they can be minimised and managed appropriately.
- Promoting a culture of care and concern for our school community, which demands that everybody accepts responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing.
- Promoting a culture of open conversation so we talk about our wellbeing and mental health having our networks in mind and make support available when members of our community may be struggling.
- Providing a comprehensive training offer for staff aimed at providing colleagues with tools for managing their wellbeing, including mental health.
- Providing a comprehensive PSHE curriculum for students that explores the full breadth of well-being from managing exam stress to body image.
- Putting in place a system of management practices, which enables employees to enjoy a healthy work-life balance, whilst recognising the impact of personal choice and lifestyle.
- Ensuring the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social wellbeing.
- Making sure working environments are healthy, safe, secure and suitable.

Implementation

- Ensuring children have regular access to specialist provision, E.g. music, drama, art and sport, shows the importance placed on the wider curriculum in our offer.

- Ensuring children have regular opportunities to take part in learning beyond the classroom shows the importance placed on the wider curriculum in our offer. E.g, trips, residential trips, school shows & performances and sports fixtures.
- Children access PSHE lessons, tutor support and assemblies. This enables open and free discussions around key issues.
- Ensuring mental health problems are identified early and appropriate support provided through our pastoral support systems.
- All staff know the importance of mental health. There are several Mental Health First Aid trained staff and an Employee Assist scheme.
- We have a well-being lead (Gemma Courtney) who ensures that there are a range of supports and activities in place to support good mental health.
- The IT curriculum provides students with up-to-date skills within technology including e-safety awareness.
- The school has an anti-bullying policy which our student leaders helped to write.
- We have comprehensive safeguarding procedures in place at Deptford Green. Our safeguarding team are displayed around the school and children are aware of who they can go to if they have any concerns.
- Rigorous and supportive pastoral care systems are in place.
- Place-to-Be counselling services are available to all students.

Impact

- Students and staff have mutual trust, respect and support from the school.
- Students and staff feel safe and enjoy coming to school.
- Students at Deptford Green are engaged in their learning.
- Lunchtime behaviour incidents have reduced due to positive engagement in enrichment activities.
- Our students are developing their knowledge and understanding of the rich, cultural heritage of modern Britain.
- Parents play an increasingly engaged role in the overall life of the school, including through Parents' Forums.
- Student questionnaires demonstrate they feel safe and well cared for in school. They identify who can help them and who they can talk to.
- Pulse surveys completed with staff regularly demonstrate that overwhelmingly colleagues are happy at work.

Procedures:

School Governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with current equality legislation.
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed.

Every member of staff takes responsibility to:

- Treat all members of the school community with respect.
- Constantly recognise the contributions made by every member of the school community.
- Ensure all incidents of a discriminatory nature are immediately challenged and recorded through the appropriate channels.
- Log all incidents of discrimination or prejudice in accordance with the statutory guidance.

The class teacher:

- Ensures they are aware of the background of all children they teach and that students are treated equally and with respect. We do not, under any circumstance, negatively discriminate against any child.
- Reads all the Inclusion Passports for the students they teach.
- When planning activities, teaching staff pay due regard to the racial, cultural and personal sensitivities of the class. Teachers strive to incorporate diversity in a positive way which challenges stereotypes and assumptions.

The role of the Headteacher

- To implement the School's Equal Opportunity and Accessibility Policy.
- Ensure staff are aware of the Policy contents.
- Ensure all appointment panels are transparent and give due regard to this Policy, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities and that all staff work in an environment that is free from harassment.
- The Headteacher treats all acts of discrimination and unfair treatment seriously.
- The Headteacher monitors all incidents of a discriminatory nature.

The role of parents/carers

- Parents/carers are expected to support the School's Equal Opportunity and Accessibility Policy.
- Where a child has intentionally behaved in an unfair, unjust or discriminatory manner it is the expectation that the parents/carers will support the sanction applied.
- The school works collaboratively with parents/carers so a strong and consistent message is delivered about appropriate behaviour.

The role of the students

- Students are to abide by this policy, in school and when travelling to and from school.
- When witnessing an incident of discrimination, a student must report it.
- A child who is a victim must report it to an appropriate adult so that the School can deal with the matter swiftly and effectively.

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with a named member of staff & governor: Acting Deputy Headteacher Mr Ian Paish and Responsibilities include:

- Monitoring work on equality issues.
- Monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents).
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of students.
- Monitoring exclusions and isolations.

Reporting an incident of discrimination or prejudice with regards to any of the protected characteristics, or any incident deemed to be in contradiction to this policy:

An incident can be reported by any member of the school community. Teachers should record these incidents on Class Charts, Students should report directly to their Head of Year (who will then also record this on Class Charts and parent/carers should email the Headteacher or a member of the leadership team.

This concern will be swiftly followed up and the person who reported the concern will be updated on any relevant action.

This process for reporting incidents will be regularly shared with all members of the school community.

This policy will be reviewed annually.