

Equality Policy 2016



At Corby Old Village Primary School we will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation) within the school community.

This policy reflects the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and non-statutory guidance set out by the government in December 2011 and March 2012. Part One sets out the school's aims to promote equality of opportunity and comply with the Act; Part Two sets out the legal duties which are referred to in Part One.

The primary aim of Corby Old Village Primary School is to enable all children to take part as fully as possible in every part of school life by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

This means:

- We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet children's needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled children, enabling our children to take as full a part as possible in the activities in the school. We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for children, staff and visitors to the school. We are also committed to ensuring staff with a disability have equality of opportunity.
- We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards children and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- We will regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help children understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- We will monitor the progress and achievements of children by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information will help the school to ensure that individual children are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified which inform the setting of our equality objectives in the school action plan.
- We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will not ask health-related questions to job applicants before offering a job, unless it relates to an intrinsic function of the work they do. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our disabled staff.
- We will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for them, where reasonable adjustments are required. By planning ahead, we will ensure that all children are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and

residential visits, and we will monitor the uptake of these to ensure no-one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

- We will seek the views of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources we will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
- Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively. Regular training will be given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudiced-related bullying.
- We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, we will plan on-going events to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, developing community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- We will regularly seek the views of children, parents, advisory staff and visitors to the school, to ensure that the school environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users. We will regularly review our accessibility plans.
- We welcome a diverse range of candidates and encourage those who are currently under-represented to join.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice.
- When drawing up policies, we will carry out an equality impact assessment to ensure a policy does not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of children with protected characteristics. We will consider to what extent a new/revised policy, practice or plan meets the Public Sector Equality Duties (eliminates discrimination, advances equality and fosters good relations for all the protected characteristics) and recommend changes/mitigations where necessary.

PART TWO

Our Legal Duties

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

This legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education.

Employers (schools) are liable for discriminatory acts of their employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within Equality Law are:

- **Age** – a person of a particular age (e.g. 32 years old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 – 30 year olds). Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Disability** – a person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect of their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions. HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
- **Gender reassignment** – a person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with this 'gender identity'. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' is not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as children with gender dysphoria. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any school environment.
- **Marriage and civil partnership** – marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Pregnancy and maternity** – maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
- **Race** – a person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- **Religion and Belief** – religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but children may be withdrawn from acts of collective worship.
- **Sex** – a man or a woman.
- **Sexual orientation** – a person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian when very young, promotion of sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'questioning' or 'coming out' when they are in secondary school or college. Schools with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against lesbian, gay or bisexual children.

It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the child is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a child because his parents are gay. It would be race discrimination to treat a white child less favourably because she has a black boyfriend.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful):

- **Direct discrimination** – less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** – a provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Harassment** – conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. It also includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context.
- **Victimisation** – subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with the Equality Act.
- **Discrimination arising from disability** – treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) **and failure to make reasonable adjustments.**
- **Gender reassignment discrimination** – not allowing reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender reassignment in line with normal provision (such as sick leave).
- **Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination** – unfavourable treatment because of pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman or girl because she is breastfeeding.
- **Discrimination by association or perception** – for example, discriminating against someone because they “look gay”, or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Schools are allowed to treat disabled children more favourably than non-disabled children, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with children without disabilities.

Public Sector Duties (applies to schools):

A school must, in the exercise of functions, give due regard to the need to (in relations to protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

In practice, 'due regard' means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in schools must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking an action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.

Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans (Schedule 10)

Schools are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a significant disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example, steps and lifts.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Accessibility Plans which will
 - Increase disabled children's access to the school curriculum
 - Improve the physical environment
 - Improve provision of information

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that schools owe to disabled children generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular child is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled children. The school will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments that it may need to make, working with the **relevant admissions authority** as appropriate.

GUIDANCE

For more information, guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

In summary, this policy is designed to ensure all policies, procedures and activities do not discriminate, but take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantages which people may face.

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Signed Chair of the Governing Body

Signed Headteacher

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