



**THORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**POLICY FOR EQUALITY,**  
**ACCESSIBILITY and DISABILITY.**

**INTRODUCTION**

At Thornhill Primary School we want to make sure everyone is allowed to be an active member of our school and community. We will ensure that we can meet the diverse needs of all people in our school community and continue to acknowledge the skills and abilities of all people who attend, work and visit our school.

We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion 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 able to participate fully in school life.

We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Thornhill Primary School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

**Teaching and learning**

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 in supporting their child's education
- encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning
- including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils

**Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability faith or religion or socio-economic factors, or any other grounds. Admissions to the school are coordinated by the Local Authority admissions team.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with. Prior to a decision being reached on any exclusions made there is consideration regarding discrimination.

## **Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Thornhill Primary School. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law.

## **Employer duties**

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination. Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

## **Race Equality**

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

Under our specific duty we will:

- prepare an Equality Plan which includes our written policy for race equality
- assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these pupils

## **Disability**

Definition of disability taken from the Equality Act.

The Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions such as 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.

## **Legal duties**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Under our specific duty we will promote:

- vision and values based on an inclusive ethos. An inclusive vision for the school, clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all, is an important factor in enabling staff to make reasonable adjustments

- a "can do" attitude from all staff. The attitude of staff is fundamental to achieving successful outcomes for disabled pupils. Where staff are positive and demonstrate a "can do" approach, barriers are more easily overcome
- a pro-active approach to identifying barriers and finding practical solutions. Actively identifying barriers as early as possible and exploring solutions using a practical, problem solving approach
- strong collaborative relationship with pupils, parents, guardians and carers. Schools that are effective at making reasonable adjustments recognise that parents and pupils have expertise about living with impairment and will be a major source of advice. Pupils can also be the best judges of what is effective. They can be good advocates for what worked well for them
- a meaningful voice for pupils. Schools are more likely to make effective reasonable adjustments where there are strong consultative mechanisms in place for all pupils and where peer support is well developed
- a positive response to challenging behaviour. Combined with an appropriate curriculum and a variety of learning activities, a positive approach of managing behaviour can enable pupils to take charge of their own behaviour and support others in taking charge of theirs
- strong leadership by senior leaders and governors that sets a clear direction, promotes positive outcomes for disabled pupils, deploys the resources of the school to support teachers in identifying and removing barriers and keeps progress under review, makes for a school that is more effective at making reasonable adjustments
- effective staff training and development where staff training and development is given a high priority. This can ensure that staff have the understanding, knowledge and skills required to make reasonable adjustments for a range of disabled pupils
- the use of expertise from outside the school. Other agencies supplement and complement what a school can provide on its own. The school draws on a wide range of expertise beyond the school from local schools, units and support services, from different statutory agencies and from voluntary organisations
- a sensitive approach to meeting the specific needs of pupils. A sensitive approach protects the dignity of disabled pupils particularly, but not only, in relation to meeting medical and personal care needs
- the availability of role models and positive images of disability. This can boost the self-esteem of disabled pupils and have a positive effect for all pupils. This can be supported by positive images of disabled children and adults in pictures, books and a range of materials used in the school

### **Gender Equality**

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender
- promote equality between men and women

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

### **Community cohesion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community

cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of governors:

- the governing Board has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability
- the governing Board seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability
- the governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils
- the governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability
- the governing Board ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability

The role of the Head Teacher:

- it is the Head Teacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and she is supported by the governing Board in doing so
- it is the Head Teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations
- the Head Teacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities
- the Head Teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life
- the Head Teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness

The role of all staff:

- all staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan
- all staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images
- all staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Head Teacher
- teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents

### **Tackling discrimination**

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation 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 pupil's individual circumstances. Staff record any incidents on CPOMs.

Racist 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 racist incidents are reported to the governing Board and local authority on a termly basis.

## What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation 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.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

### Types of discriminatory incidents

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation 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 or sexual orientation
- discriminatory comments in the course of discussion
- attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc
- refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

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