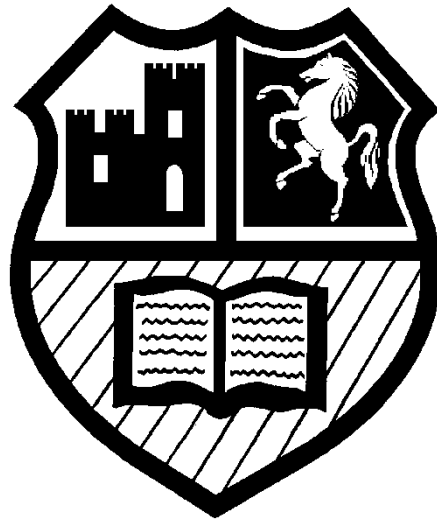


Otford Primary School



Equality Policy

Reviewed and approved by **FGB**

Date **March 2026**

For review **March 2027**

Introduction

Equality should permeate all aspects of school life and it is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Everybody should feel valued, safe, secure and of equal worth.

The policy outlines the commitment of staff, pupils and governors of Otford Primary to ensure that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community. This means not simply treating everybody the same, but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, whilst celebrating and valuing equal opportunity achievements and strengths of all members of our community. These include:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents and Carers
- Governing Body
- Multi-agency staff linked to school
- Visitors to school
- Students on placement

The Equality objectives are chosen in response to the Equality Act (2010) which established nine 'protected characteristics': age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and sexual identity.

Our equalities statement is guided and supported by our school values of Kindness, Courage and Curiosity.

Equality Objectives 2024-2026

- To increase school staff and governors' understanding of equality, inclusion and the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and how these apply in day-to-day school practice.
- To promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through a broad and balanced curriculum and enrichment opportunities, ensuring equality of access and participation for pupils.
- To prevent, challenge and respond effectively to all hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying, with the aim of reducing and eliminating incidents related to protected characteristics.
- To promote community cohesion and continue to narrow the gaps in achievement, attendance and engagement between groups of pupils, including,
 - Pupils from certain cultural and ethnic backgrounds,
 - Pupils who belong to low income households
 - Pupils known to be eligible for FSM
 - Pupils who are disabled, or suffering with any significant mental issues, health conditions or impairments
 - Pupils who have special educational needs, or are vulnerable

The Act places both general and specific duties upon all public bodies such as local authorities, schools and other state funded educational settings including children's centres and academies.

More information on Equality Legislation Guidance is provided in the Appendix.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Oxford Primary School recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Background

Equality Policy and Objectives

Most of the clauses of the Equality Act 2010 came into effect in October 2010. The primary purpose of the legislation is to bring together existing equalities legislation: Equal Pay Act (1970), Sex Discrimination Act (1975), Race Relations Act (1976), Race Relations Amendment (2010), Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and three major statutory instruments of recent years protecting discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

In May 2014 The Department for Education produced a non-statutory, advisory document for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities. It was produced to help schools to understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act. It was updated to include information on same-sex marriage.

Association

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

Perception

It is also unlawful to discriminate because of a characteristic which you think a person has, even if you are mistaken. For example, a school must not treat someone less favourably because they believe them to have a protected characteristic, even if they are incorrect.

The Act extends protection against discrimination on grounds of pregnancy or maternity to pupils, so it will be unlawful – as well as against education policy – for a school to treat a pupil unfavourably because she is pregnant or a new mother.

Protection for transgender pupils against gender reassignment discrimination is also included in this Act.

The term “protected characteristics” is used as a convenient way to refer to the personal characteristics to which the law applies.

A person’s age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment and the Act extends this (except for children) to the provision of goods and services, but age as a protected characteristic does not apply to pupils in schools. Schools therefore remain free to admit and organise children in age groups and to treat pupils in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development without risk of legal challenge, even in the case of pupils over the age of 18.

Approach

Ethos and Atmosphere

At Otford, everybody has the opportunity to fulfil their potential irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination.

The British Values play a key part in our school ethos; an environment where mutual respect is promoted and demonstrated between all members of our school community.

Pupils are encouraged to value others, appreciate difference and show empathy. The displays around our school celebrate diversity and children are encouraged to learn about each other and from each other.

Teaching and Learning

In order to promote equality of opportunity, teaching and learning will:

- Provide equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use stimuli and materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds and representations, without stereotyping
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discrimination
- Celebrate the diversity of different cultures and provide opportunities for children to celebrate their own
- Involve parents in their child’s learning
- Provide enrichment opportunities, including educational visits
- Promote the fundamental British Values
- Celebrate achievements of all
- Take account of the performance of all pupils when planning for future learning
- Make the best use of resources to support and challenge the learning of all groups

Curriculum

Pupils have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality, which is underpinned by our Curriculum Intent. Our planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross-curricular theme-based learning promotes positive attitudes to equality and diversity.

Our **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)** curriculum is taught in an age-appropriate way and reflects our duties under the Equality Act 2010. Teaching promotes respect for others, challenges prejudice and discrimination, and supports pupils to understand diversity within families, relationships and wider society.

Learning Environment

At Otford, we pride ourselves on high expectations and aspirations. All pupils are encouraged to develop a growth mind-set and a 'can do' approach to their learning and wider life. Pupils are encouraged to focus on their own achievement and progress rather than to compare themselves to others.

Teachers model enthusiasm in order to motivate pupils. Adults are positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity.

The school places a very high priority on the provision for those with special educational needs and disability. We aim to meet every child's needs including the more able by carefully assessed programmes of study.

All pupils have access to all facilities and resources within the classroom and around the school and a range of teaching methods are used to ensure inclusion and equality of access.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Accessibility Plan, which sets out how we increase access to the curriculum, physical environment and information for disabled pupils over time.

Language & Communication

We recognise the importance of effective communication and the use of appropriate language within our community which:

- Does not confirm or transmit stereotypes
- Does not offend
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups
- Creates conditions for all people to develop their self-esteem
- Uses accurate language in referring to particular groups or individual and challenges instances when this is not the case

Monitoring and Review

Our school is inclusive. Our curriculum and teaching enhances the self-esteem of all those it serves and we provide a learning environment where every child is supported and challenged in order to fulfil their potential.

As part of our Self-Evaluation we collect the following equality information for our pupils:

- Attainment data, attendance data, exclusions, sanctions, intervention, complaints of bullying/racist/comments

- We report all racist comments via KELSI and access their digital front door for reporting a racist incident.

In addition, we analyse this in terms of:

- Ethnicity, SEN and disability, gender, free school meals, pupil premium

We make on-going and summative assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils throughout their education. As part of this, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups to ensure that all groups are making the best possible progress.

The Governing Body receive regular updates on pupil performance and resources are allocated to diminish gaps in progress and attainment.

School performance information is compared to national data and to schools in a similar context. Our School Improvement Plan is written with due regard being given to promoting equality.

Staff Development & Recruitment

We encourage the career development and aspirations of all school staff. Access to opportunities for professional development is equal to all staff groups.

All those involved in recruitment are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process.

Partnership with parents, carers and the wider community

We work closely with parents and carers to help all children to fulfil their potential.

- All parents and carers are encouraged to participate in school life
- All stakeholders are involved in ensuring and promoting equality
- Members of the community are encouraged to join in school activities

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body ensures that the school complies with its statutory duty in respect to equal opportunities and inclusion
- The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they are adequately trained
- Staff promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to discrimination and harassment and ensure that all groups are provided with the support they require
- Mutual Respect is rooted within our community. Staff and children treat each other with respect. All members of our school are taught to speak out if they witness or are subject to inappropriate behaviour

Raising Concerns and Complaints

Any concerns regarding discrimination, harassment or unequal treatment should be raised with the class teacher, Headteacher or through the school's Complaints Policy. All concerns will be taken seriously and addressed in line with school procedures.

Review and Publication

This Equality Policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body. Equality information is published annually, and equality objectives are reviewed at least every four years in line with statutory requirements.

Appendix : Equality Legislation Guidance

Race

The term race includes colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin and citizenship as well as race.

Duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 require the governing body to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

To meet this requirement, the governing body will monitor that our school:

- Identifies action to be taken to tackle discrimination and promote equality and good race relations across school activity.
- Assesses and monitors the impact of the equality policy on pupils, staff, and parents, in particular the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups
- Records racist incidents and report them to the local authority on a regular basis.

The school will use the format, process and frequency of reporting as required by the Local Authority.

Disability

Disability is a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be: substantial, adverse and long-term.

The governing body will monitor the school's ability to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to

Gender (sex)

Duties under the Equality Act 2010 require the governing body to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex.
- Promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

The Equality Act 2010 requires the governing body to promote equality of opportunity between women and men (including boys and girls) and to publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how the school intends to fulfil the general and specific duties.

Gender reassignment

Protection from discrimination because of gender reassignment in schools is new for pupils in the Equality Act, although school staff are already protected. It is unlawful for schools to treat pupils less favourably because of their gender reassignment.

Gender reassignment is defined in the Equality Act as applying to anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes. This definition means that in order to be protected under the Act, a pupil will not necessarily have to be undertaking a medical procedure to change their sex but must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender, or proposing to do so. The protection against discrimination because of gender reassignment now matches the protection because of sexual orientation in schools. That is protection from direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation, which includes discrimination based on perception and on association.

We will ensure that all gender variant pupils, or the children of transgender parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. It is relatively rare for pupils – particularly very young pupils – to want to undergo gender reassignment, but when a pupil does so a number of issues will arise and these will be sensitively handled.

Sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership

Oxford Primary school will ensure that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils. We will check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such pupils. For example, it would be unlawful for a school to refuse to let a gay pupil become a Community Ambassador/ etc because of his/ her sexual orientation. Teaching about marriage must be done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. Teachers are subject to professional requirements, the school curriculum, school policies, and anti-discrimination duties towards colleagues and pupils. No school, or individual teacher, is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. Teaching should be based on facts and should enable pupils to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education, and to meet duties under equality and human rights law

Religion or Belief and Sexual orientation

Duties under the Equality Act 2010 require the governing body to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief.

There are no specific duties or requirements on schools to publish a Scheme relating to religion, beliefs or sexual orientation.

Age

The school will give due regard and act in accordance with the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 and any subsequent updates.

Purpose of the Equality Policy and Objectives

The purpose of the school's Equality Policy and Objectives is to meet the duties to promote equality of opportunity for and between diverse members of the school community, including, disabled pupils, staff, parents, women, men and different racial groups within the school. In order to do this the school will establish with all staff an overall vision of the duty to promote equality of opportunity for pupils, staff and parents.

Elements of the duties are:

1. To promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people, women and men and between different racial groups.
2. To eliminate discrimination and harassment on the grounds of disability, sex, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and religion or beliefs.
3. To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
4. To encourage participation of disabled pupils, parents, staff and carers.
5. To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The Head teacher and senior management of the school will be responsible for the following aims:

- Raise awareness of elements of the duties with all staff, parents and pupils.
- (DDA no longer exists – instead add...
- Ensure understanding of the definition of disability as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Encourage disclosure of disability by pupils, parents, staff and other users of the school.