

The Grove School Equality Policy

February 2023

1 Introduction and context

1.1 Why we have developed this Equality Policy?

This Equality Policy for The Grove School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the **protected characteristics** covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy needs to be read alongside our Anti-Bullying Policy; RSE policy; Equalities Audit and Action Plan

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community - pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- foster good relations between groups and to promote community cohesion - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; - advance equality of opportunity

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

1.2 Our school within the wider context

The area surrounding The Grove is distinctive for its social, cultural and economic diversity. The children come from a wide range of family units and there is low mobility. We serve a broad catchment area which includes a large area of households where adults have attended higher education but also a significant area of deprivation with a relatively high percentage of overcrowded housing. 16% of the school population are registered as pupil premium. A key feature of the school is the wide ability range of its pupils and its inclusive nature. BAME pupils make up 16% of the school population.

As a school we are committed to understanding our school community and frequently analyse data which provides evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community and the attainment and wellbeing of our pupils and groups of pupils. Data sources include: pupil progress data; attendance; sociograms; pupil and parent/carer survey. Issues for particular groups of pupils are subsequently planned for, actioned and evaluated.

1.3 Our vision statement

'Reaching new heights together'

The grove will be a welcoming, caring and happy learning community where the talents of all are nurtured and everyone has a voice. A learning community is one in which everyone has responsibility for their own and other pupils' learning and for the governance of the classroom.

The school will be at the heart of our wider community. It will imaginatively engage all its members, supporting their well-being and offering guidance to all those who need it, both during the school day and beyond. Through clear shared values and an inclusive vision, we will break down barriers, challenge inequality and inspire children to become life-long learners.

Our learners

We will aim for high achievement in all areas and we will create children who are confident, independent and empathetic learners. Supportive, caring, critical but respectful relationships will form the golden thread which runs through learning activity.

Child agency will be central to the maintenance and enrichment of this learning culture. The strong learning and teaching of metacognition will support a self-improving system - individually and collectively.

Regular feedback including peer and self-evaluation will be the driver and regulator within this system. The children will be healthy, self-aware, socially responsible and positive citizens. They will understand the global context of their lives and how they can contribute to sustainable growth.

They will be enquiring, willing to take risks, to seek out challenges, set their own targets and be fully equipped for a rapidly changing world.

Children will regularly review how best the community supports learning and relationships

Our Parents and Carers

We will work closely with all our parents and carers to support their children's attendance and progress at school.

We aim to ensure that all parents and carers feel part of the school community and influence and share its values so that all the children can reach their full potential.

The Grove will support parents and carers by keeping them informed of the curriculum, their children's progress and by providing supporting materials to help their children at home. The Grove will encourage regular input from parents by creating a friendly and welcoming atmosphere

Our environment

We will endeavour to create a safe, stress free, high quality learning and work environment, which reflects the high value we place on education, children and the professionals within it. It will stimulate, extend and nurture children's learning. It will celebrate the rich diversity of our community and beyond and it will fully support every need.

Our curriculum

There will be a creative, inspiring, co-constructed and experiential curriculum that constantly evolves and enables our children to be successful citizens of the 21st Century.

Enquiry based learning will be the core curriculum approach.

It will draw on the talents, innovative thinking and teamwork of all the staff and children and the rich resources found in the local, national and global community.

It will be founded on exciting personalised learning programmes which reflect the diversity in our community.

Audience and purpose will be strong.

We will fully embrace technology in all areas of our school life in order to enhance teaching and learning and our overall effectiveness.

Our capacity for improvement

We will be a learning organisation, committed to research and continually promoting the training and development of all.

Through flexible local, national and global networking we will lead on innovation and excellent practice in all areas.

We will be a reflective organisation that listens to and learns from all our stakeholders, engages in continuous self-evaluation and improvement and is fully committed to the well-being of all.

The Grove School seeks to foster a warm, welcoming and respectful environment, which allows us to question and challenge discrimination and inequalities, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We believe we all have equal rights, but may have different needs.

1.4 Overall aims of our Equality Policy

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities. We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We aim:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins

We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have protected characteristics:

- sex,
- race,
- disability,
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity

We have produced an access plan in which addresses our statutory duties to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

This access plan is part of our Equalities Action Plan.

2 Our approach

2.1 Introduction

In order to create an Equalities Action Plan and our Equality Report, we undertake an Equalities Audit - a long process. The school takes a whole school approach to equalities. We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life. We actively seek out opportunities in and outside of the curriculum to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

2.2 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 the protected characteristics (where possible) 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 the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider;
- Seek to involve all parents/carers 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.

2.3 Support for pupils / students

2.3a Auxiliary Aids

The Equality Act requires schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils. The Grove School is committed to providing reasonable, recommended aids and services to all children in need (with and without a protected characteristic)

2.3b Pastoral Support

The Grove School offers a comprehensive range of pastoral support for vulnerable pupils:

- Mentoring (offering a wide range of possible support)
- Counselling
- Early Help plans and creation of a team around the family
- Referrals to Allsorts (for LGBT or questioning young people)

2.4 Admissions

For all state maintained community schools the Local Authority is the admissions body. Local authorities / schools must not discriminate against pupils / students in admissions or in their day to day operations, such as in the allocation of pupils / students to particular classes

2.4 Exclusions

We are anti-exclusions and have not excluded a child for many years. We do, in our Behaviour Policy, retain the right to exclude a child as there could be a situation where this is deemed to be in the best interest of the child.

2.5 Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils/students and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

2.6 General Approach

At The Grove School, we place equality as the underlying principle of our school's vision. This includes our responsibility to provide equal access and equal aspiration for our pupils but also includes our responsibility to teach children to understand and value diversity and difference. We are producing separate leaflets for children and adults about the work we do to promote equality; to eliminate discrimination and to foster good relationships. Here is a brief list of some of our work:

- Curriculum - we have a high quality PSHE/SEAL curriculum which teaches children about many aspects of equality agenda (eg disability; GRT) and also helps children develop the skills to tackle prejudice and discrimination
- Curriculum - our curriculum and resources avoid stereotyping and promote positive images
- Assemblies - we have a wide range of assemblies throughout the year: religious festivals; Black History month; European Languages Day (we celebrate all languages); Gypsy, Roma, Traveller; Refugee Week; children have given assemblies about their own disabilities (eg Aspergers); Family Diversity Week; other equality assemblies (eg gender stereotyping; disability equality)
- We have an Equalities Language Code for staff (eg to value all families we never refer to 'mums and dads' and instead talk about 'grown-ups'). The multicultural section of this was discussed with and altered by a working party of parents/carers (most of whom were from minority ethnic groups) and staff over several meetings. This needs updating.
- We have adults with learning disabilities teaching children Makaton each week in KS2 and in reception, we have an adult with a learning disability teaching Makaton weekly
- We invite specific visitors to talk to / work with children (eg a blind story teller; people originally from another country; GRT performance / storyteller ...)
- All clubs and trips are available to all children and we provide support to enable this (eg adult support for a club; no child is left out of a trip due to financial reasons)
- At KS2, we have a children's Equalities (E) Team who help look and develop school equality actions

2.7 Hiring out our premises

Our lettings policy clearly states that groups contravening the school/college values and equalities policy would not be eligible to hire rooms or use our grounds.

3 Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, non-teaching staff and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the

Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development (annual audit), including professional development needs

4 The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils, visitors/contractors and extended service providers are engaged in the development of and/or informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- In partnership with governors deal with breaches of this policy

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the Equality Action Plan
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy bi-annually and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy

Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy
- be encouraged to actively support the policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the policy
- have access to the policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy
- be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- model good practice by recognising and challenging prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class
- respond to and report any equalities related bullying and incidents in line with school policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the policy
- Be encouraged to support the policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy

5 Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying

5.1 Definitions

We recognise that hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, transphobia, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

A hate incident is defined as ‘any incident which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by prejudice or hate.’

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the target, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record prejudice/hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

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 or gender identity;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic 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, gender identity 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, gender identity or sexual orientation.

5.2 Responding, recording and reporting incidents

The Grove School has clear systems and processes for responding to, recording and reporting prejudice based incidents or bullying:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- *Prejudicial Incidents* - all staff understand the need to report and record these incidents to SLT and they are recorded on Cpoms. We analyse data regularly and plan to address any emerging patterns of behaviour
- We teach and use a Peaceful Problem Solving approach and help children find a way back from a problem
- We take responsibility for helping the perpetrator of the prejudice change his or her behaviour. We contact parents/carers immediately and discuss next steps
- We take responsibility for both keeping the victim safe and helping the victim feel safe as well as reaffirming his/her sense of belonging. We contact parents/carers immediately and discuss next steps

6 Commissioned services (buying in services)

We are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement - buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

7 Involving the school community in the development of our Equalities practice

The development of this policy and of our equalities objectives involves the whole school community. We endeavour to involve and listen to a wide range of individuals and groups.

- Our pupils/students

Our pupils' voice is heard via our School Council and assemblies. We also survey our children yearly via our own pupil survey. Responses are analysed by group to help detect any issues for particular sections of our pupil community

- Our staff

Most staff are involved in the development of this policy and have a chance to suggest changes and improvements.

- Our school governors

School governors have been invited to contribute to the formation of this policy and a named governor has responsibility for overseeing equalities' policy and practice

- Parents/carers, including minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups

We recognise that it is challenging to facilitate participation by some members of our community. We will aim to make our information accessible via our website (text enlargement; translations etc) and will audit parent/carers voice/participation and plan to develop participation of under-represented groups of parents/carers

- Ongoing:

We will review this policy and our action plan annually and involve governors via annual policy/action plan review; involve parents/carers by providing full information at point of joining school and updates via the website.

8 How we identify our equalities objectives

In line with our statutory duties, we publish equalities information annually and publish and report on equalities objectives. We have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. This is currently published on school website's equality page

Our equality objective-setting process has involved gathering evidence as follows:

- i. from equality impact assessments
- ii. from the following data: pupil progress/attainment data; incident reporting data; survey results; sociogram results; club participation analysis; attendance data
- iii. from an equalities audit
- iv. via annual self-evaluation (SEF)
- v. and from involving relevant people (including disabled people) as described in section 7.

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this.

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

9 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.