



Federation Of Abbey Schools

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## Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy

*Date of Issue: December 2020*

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## **1. Purpose of the Document**

The overall objective of the Federation of Abbey Schools Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community – pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members. Partners and contractors are also expected to abide by the policy.

## **2. Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Statement**

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. We have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual or orientation.

This policy is fair, does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Through our school ethos, curriculum and community links, we will work towards

- a common vision
- a sense of belonging for all
- similar life opportunities for all
- strong and positive relationships between different communities.

The Federation of Abbey Schools is situated in Darlington. It is a large academy comprising of an infant (270) and a junior school (360). Most pupils are from white British backgrounds and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low.

Through this Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy, The Federation of Abbey Schools seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any person through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, where the person lives, or, spent convictions.

Equality and Diversity is more than just meeting legal obligations, or targets. It's about making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. This means an ongoing commitment to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of children and young people in our school. We will make sure that our employment practices are fair and promote equality. We will actively value the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally. We will prepare children and young people for living in a diverse society with increasing global connections and controversial issues.

We will ensure that the principles of this policy are reflected in all our policies, practices, procedures and services and are part of everything we do.

### **3. Guiding Principles**

#### **Principle 1: All learners are of equal value**

All learners and potential learners are of equal value and benefit equally from school policies, practices and programmes, whatever their ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

#### **Principle 2: Relevant differences are recognised**

Treating people equally can mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

#### **Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging**

Policies and programmes promote:

- positive attitudes and interactions
- mutual respect and good relations
- an absence of harassment or prejudice-related bullying between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

#### **Principle 4: Staff recruitment, retention and development**

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in recruitment, professional development and promotion. Steps are taken to positively promote equality, especially where there is evidence of inequality.

#### **Principle 5: Current inequalities and barriers are addressed and reduced**

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of policies and programmes, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by addressing, reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

#### **Principle 6: Policy development involves widespread consultation and involvement**

People affected by a policy or programme are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Such consultation is both direct and through representative organisations, and is based on principles of transparency and accountability. It involves those who in the past have been excluded or disadvantaged, and who continue to face barriers:

#### **Principle 7: Society as a whole benefits**

Policies and programmes benefit society as a whole, locally, nationally and internationally, by fostering greater cohesion and greater participation in public life of people of different ability, background, gender or cultural identity.

### **4. Equalities Legislation**

Our commitment is reinforced through our legal duty both as an employer and service provider. The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous legislation in particular the single Equality Duty has replaced three separate duties on race,

disability and gender. Through this policy we are committed to complying with the general and specific duties, as well as codes of practice. See Appendix 1 and 2 for further detail of these duties.

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against all members of the extended school community by treating them less favourably because of their

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (only in the extent of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex and sexual orientation

### **Age**

A person's age is a protected characteristic in relation to employment. The school has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of age. We will ensure that we follow these regulations. This characteristic does not apply to pupils in schools and we will ensure our children are treated in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development

### **Disability**

The act places a positive duty on us to ensure that services provided by the school and its premises are accessible to disabled people, that we promote disability equality, eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote positive attitudes to encourage participation. In some situations this may mean treating disabled people more favourably.

### **Gender/Sex**

The act places a positive duty on us not to treat anyone unfairly because of their gender, this means to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between girls and boys, men and women. We need to ensure that the needs of both sexes and transgender people are taken into account in our services and employment.

### **Race**

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to take appropriate steps to promote race equality, eliminate unlawful race discrimination and promote good race relations. (The definition of race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)

### **Religion and Belief**

The school has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion and belief it is also unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services, facilities and public functions. This also includes lack of faith and people of no faith. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

### **Sexual Orientation**

All public bodies have responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation. The act extends the provision to service delivery, making it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services and facilities. We will ensure that we follow these regulations and ensure that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment for staff, pupils and the wider community.

### **Community Cohesion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a responsibility on schools to promote community cohesion, locally, nationally and globally. We will do this through promoting a common vision, a commitment to equality and social justice, respecting people's different backgrounds and promoting positive relationships in the school and local neighbourhood. We recognise that the biggest influence on educational outcomes is social class and that this can also strongly affect community cohesion. We have programmes to 'narrow the gap' and to draw people together from different social backgrounds. See Appendix 2 for further information.

### **Future legislation**

We will also welcome the contribution of future equalities legislation to provide equal opportunities for everyone.

## **5. Implementation**

We will ensure implementation through action in the following areas

- **Relationships and ethos** – to foster behaviour based on mutual respect between all members of the school community, to support pupils' personal development and well-being, to address all forms of prejudice related bullying.
- **Equity and excellence** – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and minimising variations in outcomes for different groups.
- **Teaching, learning and curriculum** – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- **Engagement and extended services** – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different school communities locally, across the country and internationally.

## **6. Monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact**

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by staff and governors to ensure that it is effective in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessments is used to inform future planning and decision-making.

A named member of staff and a named governor responsible for equality monitors specific outcomes (see roles and responsibilities) annually.

The Headteacher provides monitoring reports for review by the Governing Body. These include: school population, workforce recruitment, retention and progression, special initiatives, progress against Key Indicators and targets and future plans. Normally this is in the Headteacher report to Governors.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

All who are associated with the Federation of Abbey Schools have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion, and avoiding unfair discrimination.

### **Our Governors are responsible for:**

- Making sure the school complies with all current equality legislation.
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed.
- Making sure that the school has up-to-date equality schemes and action plans.

### **Our Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Making sure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents know about it.
- Making sure its procedures are followed.
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary.
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.

### **All our staff are responsible for:**

- Proactively following this policy and any associated guidelines.
- Providing role models for pupils through their own actions.
- Dealing with racist, sexist and homophobic incidents, and recognising and tackling other forms of bias and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality and good community relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances.
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities offered to them.

### **All our pupils are responsible for:**

- Treating others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment
- Attending and engaging in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn
- Telling staff about any prejudiced related incidents that occur.

### **All our parents are responsible for:**

- Supporting our school in its implementation of this policy
- Following the school policy through their own behaviour
- Ensuring their children attend and engage in the learning
- Telling staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur.

**Visitors and contractors are responsible for:**

- Knowing and following our equality policy.

**Responsibility for overseeing equality practices** in the school lies with a named member of staff and a named governor. Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues.
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents).
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups of pupils (eg Black and minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers).
- Monitoring exclusion.

## **8. Breaches of the Policy**

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head Teacher and Governing Body. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised to follow the School Complaints Procedure

Racial incidents will be recorded and reported to the Local Authority following the procedures and guidelines established by CYPS.

Other prejudice driven behaviour will be recorded and reported following the procedures and guidelines established by the Equalities Unit of DCC.

## **9. References to other documents, advice and guidance**

Guidance and advice will be actively sought and used through

- utilising the information provided by the schools Human Resources Adviser on employment and staffing procedures. This is available on the Schools' Extranet / Document Library / Human Resources / Equality and Diversity
- using guidance from DofE, QCA, OfSTED
- taking advice from agencies such as The Race Equality Council for Darlington and Durham, Gay Advice Darlington and Durham, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Trade Unions.

## **Appendix 1      General and Specific Duties**

The Equality Act 2010 introduces a Public Sector Equality Duty (referred to as the general duty) that applies to all public bodies including Academies. It has three main elements. In carrying out our functions we are required to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a characteristic and people who do not share it.

### **Race Equality**

#### **General Duty**

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

#### **Specific Duties**

- Assess the impact of our policies, on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, particularly the impact on pupils' attainment levels.
- Monitor the impact of policies on pupils, staff and parents and particularly on pupils' attainment levels.
- Publish, annually, the results of our monitoring.

### **Disability Equality**

#### **General Duty**

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful
- Eliminate harassment related to disability
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

#### **Specific Duties**

- Make reasonable adjustments to resources and activities to avoid substantial disadvantage for disabled pupils
- Make improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services
- Increase access to the curriculum for disabled pupils

- Make written information accessible in a range of different ways for disabled pupils, where it is provided for pupils who are not disabled
- Provide auxiliary aids or services, such as equipment or personal support, for pupils with SEN

## **Religion and Belief**

The Act defines religion or belief as any religion and belief as any religious or philosophical belief. A lack of religion or lack of belief are also protected characteristics. It does not include political beliefs.

### **General Duties**

- To avoid all forms of discrimination, direct and indirect, in employment on the basis of religion or belief.
- To avoid all forms of harassment on the grounds of religion or belief.
- To avoid all forms of victimisation because someone has made, or intends to make, a complaint related to religion / belief discrimination.

### **Specific Duties**

- Ensure that the school includes materials, ideas and issues covering all religions in their curriculum.
- Ensure that the way in which issues are taught does not subject individual pupils to discrimination

## **Age**

The act applies to workers of all ages; it is unlawful to discriminate against young workers as well as older workers. Where schools are concerned, age will be a relevant characteristic in considering their duties in the role as an employer but not in relation to pupils.

### **General Duties**

- To avoid all forms of discrimination, direct and indirect, in employment on the basis of age.
- To avoid all forms of harassment on the grounds of age.
- To avoid all forms of victimisation because someone has made or intends to make a complaint related to age discrimination.

### **Specific Duties**

- Ensure that school procedures, job advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications are free from discrimination and does not request an applicant's date of birth.

- Ensure that the school monitors recruitment with effective recruitment monitoring forms to ensure that discrimination does not take place.

## **Sex/Gender/Sexual Orientation**

It is unlawful to discriminate against any member of the school community on the basis of sex/gender/sexual orientation.

### **General Duties**

- To avoid all forms of discrimination, direct or indirect, on the basis of sex/gender/sexual orientation.
- To avoid all forms of harassment on the grounds of sex/gender/sexual orientation.
- To avoid all forms of victimisation because someone has made or intends to make a complaint related to a persons sex/gender/sexual orientation.

### **Specific Duties**

- The school can effectively monitor for age, disability, race and gender and we plan to extend this to the other protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act. The school can request such information, the provision of the information would be voluntary.

## Appendix 2                      Community Cohesion

A **cohesive** community is one where:

- There is a common vision for all communities, an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them, a sense of belonging, of identifying with the neighbourhood and of 'looking out for each other'.
- There is a commitment to equality and social justice.
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated, respected and protected, in order to support integration and cohesion in changing communities.
- People have similar life opportunities, irrespective of background.
- Everyone understands their rights and responsibilities and is encouraged to participate at all levels.
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

The National Community Cohesion Standards are framed by four strategic aims:

- Close the attainment and achievement gap.
- Develop common values of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity.
- Contribute to building good community relations and challenge all types of discrimination and inequality.
- Remove the barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement.

The DoF Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion suggests that schools' contribution to community cohesion is under the three headings:

- **Teaching, learning and curriculum** – to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- **Equity and excellence** – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- **Engagement and extended services** – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different school communities locally, across the country and internationally.

In order to achieve a **cohesive community**, we recognise that we need to :

- Promote understanding and engagement between communities.
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community.
- Understand the needs and hopes of all our communities.
- Tackle discrimination.
- Increase life opportunities for all.
- Ensure teaching and the curriculum addresses issues of diversity

## Check list for Academy staff and governors

- Is information collected on race, disability and gender with regards to both students and staff e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the Academy provides?
- How has your Equality Plan been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents and students?
- Is student achievement analysed by race, disability and gender? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action, and has action been taken to address these?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to race, disability and gender?
- Are all students encouraged to participate in Academy life? Are students who make a positive contribution reflective of the Academy's diversity e.g. through class assemblies / Academy council?
- Is bullying and harassment of students and staff monitored by race, disability and gender, and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other students? Are racist incidents reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis?
- Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of your Academy community? How are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as circle time and class assemblies?
- Is the Academy environment as accessible as possible to students, staff and visitors to the Academy? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the Academy, and are issues such as language barriers considered?
- Are the accessibility needs of parents, students and staff considered in the publishing and sending out of information, in terms of race, disability and gender?
- Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?