



Equality Policy

Date agreed: 15.01.26

Date of next review: January 2028

Federation of Stoke Hill Schools

Equality Policy



Introduction:

Public bodies such as schools have a duty, under the 2010 Equality Act, to ensure they promote equality within their organisation and this statement sets out how we endeavour to achieve this at Stoke Hill Federation. Of course, we consider this to be not just a legal duty but a moral one as well. A belief in the right of every single person to be treated with equal dignity and compassion alongside equal legal protection is fundamental to the ethos that underpins everything we do in school.

The Equality Act makes explicit our responsibility to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the 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 protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

In this respect, a protected characteristic could be any one of a multitude of factors that are shared by particular groups of people, but will include characteristics such as race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. Central to a commitment to fulfil this responsibility is a recognition that all groups with protected characteristics fall within the compass of the human race as a whole, and who by definition therefore have equal status and equal rights.

We also seek to recognise that the way in which we treat people is linked to the way we treat the environment in which we live, and the other species who share the planet with us. We do not see compassion and consideration as finite resources, and the equal treatment of people can and should serve as an exemplar of our commitment to, and responsibility for, the wider world. As a school, we are in the privileged position of supporting equality in our current practices, whilst also helping children to develop and embed the principles of equality and responsibility that will best promote this in the longer term.

This single policy replaces separate policies the Federation has previously held on race, disability and gender. It sets out to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations and reflects the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and non-statutory set out by the government in December 2011 and March 2012.

Part One sets out the Federation'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

PART ONE

The primary aim of The Stoke Hill Federation is to enable all pupils to participate as fully as possible in every aspect of school life by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising their strengths and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

Across the Federation 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 means:

- We take reasonable and necessary steps to meet pupils' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, enabling our pupils to take as full a part as possible in all the activities of the school. We make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and as welcoming as possible for pupils, staff and visitors to the school. We are also committed to ensuring staff with a disability have equality of opportunity.
- Through the ethos of the two schools we actively encourage positive attitudes towards pupils and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
- We regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curriculum will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- We regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and

help our pupils to understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

- We monitor the progress and achievement of pupils by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics. This information helps the Federation to ensure that individual pupils are achieving their potential, the school is being inclusive in practice, and trends are identified
- We review 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 staff with a disability.
- We ensure the curriculum is accessible to all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN&D) 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 ensure that all pupils are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and we monitor the uptake of these to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.
- We 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 take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
- Bullying and prejudice related incidents are carefully monitored and dealt with effectively. Regular training is given to both existing and new staff to ensure that they are aware of the process for reporting and following up incidents of prejudice related bullying - see the Federations Anti-Bullying policy and Whistleblowing Guidance.
- We expect all staff to be role-models for equal opportunities, capable of dealing with bullying and discriminatory incidents and able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Throughout the year, we plan opportunities for staff to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other

cultures, religions and beliefs, anti-homophobia/gay pride or gender equality, in order to develop an understanding of the effects of discrimination.

- We regularly seek the views of pupils, 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 regularly review our accessibility plans.
- We welcome a diverse range of candidates and encourage those who are currently under-represented to join the staff and the Governing Body.
- We 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 reviewing this policy we will ensure that the policy does not, even inadvertently, disadvantage groups of pupils with protected characteristics and recommend appropriate changes where necessary.

PART TWO

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 year 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 on 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. ([The Intercom Trust](#) in Devon supports schools in supporting children undergoing gender reassignment).
- **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 no 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 pupils may withdraw 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 pupils.

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 pupil is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a pupil because his parents are gay men or lesbians. It would be race discrimination to treat a white pupil 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 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 this 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 re-assignment 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 pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.

Public Sector Duties (applies to schools):

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation 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 substantial 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 pupils' 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 pupils generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular pupil is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled pupils. 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.

For more information download guidance from the

DfE: <http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

and **Equality Human Rights website:**

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com> which includes the guidance for education providers (schools)

or Devon County Council at [Equality policy - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(devon.gov.uk\)](http://devon.gov.uk/equality-policy)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion.

Aspects of educational legislation have also promoted equal opportunities, for example the Education Act includes a duty for local authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure that the school complies with equality-related legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher.
- Ensure all other school policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

Executive Headteacher

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties. Schools should no longer require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire. Neither should a school seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.
- Ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

All staff

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

Pupils

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)

- To be aware of, and comply with, the school's equality policy.
- To refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour (for example, racist language) on school premises.

Appendix

Definitions:

Equality This is more clearly defined as equality of opportunity and outcome, rather than equality of treatment. This means treating people fairly and according to their needs as some people may need to be treated differently in order to achieve an equal outcome.

Inclusive Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.

Diversity Recognising that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Cohesion People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Community From the school's perspective, the term 'community' has a number of meanings:

- The school community – the pupils the Federation serves, their families and the staff.
- The community within which the Federation is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area.
- The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it.
- The global community – formed by European and international links.

Gender Dysphoria Gender dysphoria is a recognised condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. Biological sex is assigned at birth, depending on the appearance of the infant. Gender identity is the gender that a person 'identifies' with, or feels themselves to be.

Policy agreed: 15.01.26

Date of next review: January 2028

Stoke Hill Federation Equality Objectives and Public Sector Equality Duty Statement

Public bodies such as schools have a duty, under the 2010 Equality Act, to ensure they promote equality within their organisation and this statement sets out how we endeavour to achieve this at Stoke Hill Federation. Of course, we consider this to be not just a legal duty but a moral one as well. A belief in the right of every single person to be treated with equal dignity and compassion alongside equal legal protection is fundamental to the ethos that underpins everything we do in school.

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Objectives

Our equality objectives are based on the principles of human rights and human dignity, and can be summarised as follows:

To ensure that the Federation retains a culture of advancing equality both in its policies and its practices

- To develop the children's understanding of, and commitment to, the promotion of equality and the elimination of discriminatory practices and beliefs
- To deepen an understanding among all children and staff of the strengths and needs of all protected characteristic groups
- To continue to seek ways in which the culture, policies and practices within school can be further improved to advance equality and to eliminate discrimination
- To celebrate the rich variety of individual and group characteristics which constitute our school community, as well as the wider world.

Principles into Practice

The following objectives are not an exhaustive list of our equality provision, instead they reflect our Federation's prioritised individual circumstances and community needs. We want our principles to be outcome focussed, based on 'SMART' targets and to be embedded within our Federation Improvement Plan.

Objective	Which protective characteristic this will benefit	Steps to achieve it...	How will we know we are successful?
To improve the school attendance of Indian and Pakistani pupils.	Race and ethnicity	Termly attendance meetings with outcomes that support families' engagement with school. Break down any medical barriers that may	We aim to reduce the percentage of persistently absent pupils in these ethnic groups to a percentage that

Currently 12% of persistently absent pupils across the Federation are Indian or Pakistani ethnicity, this compares to just 3.6% of the entire pupil population.		be relevant. Support communication with better translation services. Encourage communication with school regarding travel and term time overseas trips. Establish early habits of school attendance in Early Years. Leaders follow up with parents directly to understand overseas commitments and barriers to school attendance.	is in line with or below their proportion of the school community.
To support higher numbers of Muslim girls attending residential trips, especially in Year 6.	Religion and beliefs Race and Ethnicity	Ensure messages regarding residential trips are communicated appropriately and in detail to reassure and inspire parents. Create opportunities to listen to and understand barriers described from home and act to eliminate them. Embed curriculum content and life skills into residential experiences.	Girls within this religious group attend and celebrate their involvement in trips and support other children and families to overcome their barriers. Numbers of participation rise inline with other comparable groups.
To reduce the occurrence of racist behaviour incidents across the Federation. Between September 2023 December 2025 the Federation reported 15 incidents across both schools. This pattern does not show escalation however	Race and Ethnicity	We need to understand our data better in order to focus and address our actions to combat racist behaviours. We will need to report in detail the context of the language used so that we can identify patterns of use, intent, lack of understanding or wider issues. We should be a position to challenge and educate specific issues and share with	The collection of data in this area is more detailed and over time the number of incidents reduces.

we want to reduce the total number.		parents and the wider school community our actions and process around reducing racist incidents	
<p>To improve parental representation on school groups including PTFA, School Governors and parental attendance to school events.</p> <p>The Federation records the diversity of its Governing body, and supports applications from underrepresented groups, however, currently only one Governor position is held by someone from a minority ethnic group. The PTFA group and wider parental engagement is reported as having low representation from minority groups and more detailed surveys and data will be collated to establish improvement over time.</p>	<p>Disability</p> <p>Race / Ethnicity</p> <p>Gender</p>	<p>Data to be collected through parental surveys and attendance records. Barriers to attendance to be addressed by listening and reacting to feedback. Potential areas to improve include better communication, establishment of working groups, review of performances and plays. Governor recruitment to proactively encourage applications from underrepresented groups across our parent and local communities.</p>	<p>The Federation will be able to demonstrate proportional representation of parents with protected characteristics on the Governing body and PTFA.</p> <p>Parental engagement and attendance at workshops, performances and wider school events will be recorded with increasing numbers over time.</p>