



**Brindishe Schools' Equality Policy**  
**Updated November 2019    Review November 2020**

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**Section 1 – Introduction**

**Legal context**

The Equality Act 2010 brings together over 116 pieces of legislation into one single Act, with the aim of simplifying the legal background relating to equality as well as extending provisions in some areas. Combined, they provide a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The Act includes a new integrated Equality Duty on all public bodies, effective from April 2011, that encompasses protection for the following nine personal characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The duty requires public bodies to do the following in respect of all these characteristics:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relationships between people with differing personal characteristics.

Our Schools' Equality Policy aims to reflect and meet all legislative provisions to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination, including the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Our policy also aims to provide a base for ongoing development in line with our inclusion policy, with continuing developments in the law and good practice.

### Implementation

In the implementation of this policy we adopt an approach that builds on consideration of the 9 protected characteristics from the start and at every level of the school; at strategic, policy, management and classroom level. This policy will be monitored and delivered through the governors' role, Schools Improvement and Self Evaluation process. We will report on progress annually and review and revise the policy every three years.

### Consultation

We will involve pupils, staff, parents / carers, governors and appropriate and diverse stakeholders in the development of our policy. They need to be involved from the very start and their involvement will inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the policy. The aim is to ensure that we meet the needs of all members of our community.

### **Section 2 – Values**

Our children, families and staff are drawn from a rich variety of social backgrounds, family structures, ethnic groups and religions.

The schools value the right of each person to respect, courtesy and the recognition of individual differences.

We will actively work to ensure that all adults and children are given every opportunity to achieve, to recognise their own worth and to play an important part in our community. We place the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all our work.

Our six guiding principles are:

- Children are valued as individuals and encouraged to be confident and open-minded learners

- Parents/carers, children and staff work together to set and meet high standards of attendance, work and behaviour
- We oppose prejudice and discrimination and work to ensure that everyone is regarded as important in our community
- Staff are knowledgeable, fair, adaptable, well organised and continue to develop expertise
- We provide a high quality learning environment and an inclusive and wide-ranging curriculum
- We make clear, open and effective decisions which best support children's learning.

### **Section 3 - Race Equality and Community Cohesion**

We are committed to:

Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between members of our school community regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. .

- Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination.
- Ensuring that the policy is also part of planning arrangements that the schools already make, and our actions and objectives are met through our Schools' Community Development Plans.

Race discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. We provide a culture and ethos in which everyone feels safe and valued. We try to engender a sense of belonging amongst every member of the schools community. We celebrate cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Diversity is seen as an opportunity and not a reason for underachievement.

All staff are committed to responding to and dealing with any racist incidents in accordance with our clear guidelines and expectations as published in our protocol for responding to racist incidents.

### **Community Cohesion**

Communities in the UK and the world are changing, in most cases, becoming more diverse. Schools can prepare all learners to interact successfully with others from different backgrounds throughout their lives. This is achieved when young people learn to respect others' beliefs and attitudes, explore issues from different perspectives, work in collaboration with many different people and show fairness and consideration to others.

In the our community we are working towards a society in which:

- There is a **common vision** and **sense of belonging** by all communities;
- The **diversity** of people's backgrounds and circumstances is **appreciated and valued**;
- Similar **life opportunities** are available to all; and
- Strong and positive **relationships** exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in school and in the wider community.

## **Section 4 - Disability Equality**

### Defining disability

A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day- to- day activities. Long-term is defined as 12 months or more.

The effect on normal day-to-day activities involves one or more of the following:

- Mobility
- Manual dexterity
- Physical coordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk of physical danger

The definition of disability includes a wide range of impairments including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments and attention deficit disorder. These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term.

### Guiding principles on disability :

Our schools will have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and disability-related harassment
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

### Participation and access

We improve the environment of the schools to increase the extent to which our disabled children can take advantage of educational opportunities including access to previously inaccessible (or difficult-to-access) areas.

We fully enable disabled children to participate in the schools curriculum, including schools trips, by removing potential barriers to access wherever possible.

Children with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in physical activity, both in and outside of schools hours wherever possible.

#### Promoting a positive culture

We promote positive attitudes towards disability by staff modelling respectful attitudes to disabled children and adults and we provide positive images of participation of disabled people in public life/book resources etc

Stereotypes are actively challenged in both the classroom environment and in the playground and by all staff / adults working in schools.

#### Information and communication

We ensure confidentiality and provide a supportive ethos where schools users feel able to disclose a disability.

We ensure that information is communicated appropriately where a child or parent/carer has a disability.

Our overriding concern is for the achievement, safety and wellbeing of all children in our schools. We will take positive steps and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils can fully participate in their education so that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which are offered to all. However, in circumstances where educating a child in one of our schools may be detrimental to the achievement, safety and wellbeing of others, or if educating a child here is an inefficient use of resources, then we will discuss and advise this in an appropriate, respectful and sensitive manner with the local authority and parents/carers.

### **Section 5 - Gender Equality**

We welcome our obligations in respect of Gender Equality We will do our best to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender (including gender re-assignment).
- Be proactive and promote equality of opportunity between women and men and boys and girls.

#### Eliminating discrimination

We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all, irrespective of gender or sex. We recognise that definitions and choices may go beyond being male **or** female and include, for example intersex and self definitions of transgender.

We actively challenge gender stereotypes and we encourage all children to take a full and active part in all areas of schools life, including physical activity, extra-curricular clubs and activities and curriculum based learning.

#### Promoting equality of opportunity

Children are encouraged to think about roles, activities and occupations that are outside traditional gender stereotypes.

Parents/carers of both genders are encouraged to participate in their child's education e.g. attending parents' evening, helping in schools and accompanying groups on visits.

### **Section 6 - Religion and Belief**

Our schools will strive to create a positive environment through education and awareness raising of cultures and religion; actively promoting tolerance within our community.

Members of any religion, followers of any faith or belief and those without religious belief will be treated with equal dignity, respect and fairness.

As highlighted by UNICEF 'Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and others cultures.' (Article 29) and 'Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.' (Article 30).

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is underpinned by this policy.

### **Section 7 - Sexual Orientation**

Our schools recognise the need to protect everyone from unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation as required by the law. We are committed to taking a proactive approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the schools.

People in our communities maybe gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual. We recognise the existence and damage of homophobia and transphobia in society.

Homophobia and transphobia amongst adults is classified as a hate crime and incidents may be reported to the police. Homophobia in and amongst children is much more likely to be about their lack of understanding. It is usually simply a learned response and not a considered view or opinion based on experience. In short it is prejudice.

We will not tolerate homophobia and transphobia of any kind in our schools. We will not allow or support discrimination or prejudice or accept language or behaviour which is harmful or negative or less than respectful to any individual person or group of people. We will always respond in a consistent, clear and positive way in dealing with any and all kinds of homo/transphobia or

homo/transphobic name calling. We enable children and young adults to understand that there are a range of differences, options and choices in people's sexuality, sexual and gender identities, lifestyle, culture and partner preferences and that all our differences are valid and valued and recognised.

We will help children understand that being, for example, gay or lesbian is about more than sexual preference (just as ethnicity is about more than skin tone). Everyone has a gender identity and expresses their gender in a unique and personal way. We help children to understand that the words gay and lesbian are not terms of abuse or ridicule and they are not 'rude' or swearing. We will help children to understand that this also applies to being bisexual, transgender or intersex.

We also help parents / carers and staff to understand that an act of parliament known as 'clause or section 28' which forbade schools from promoting gay relationships as if they were 'normal', valid and recognised was repealed as long ago as 2003 and that now we all recognise and welcome that helping children to understand the validity and existence of different lifestyles, sexualities and relationships is encouraged and expected in schools.

### **Section 8 - Anti-bullying and Discriminatory Policy Framework**

Our Promoting Good Relationships Policy states clearly that all forms of bullying and discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It sets out the measures that our schools will take to address bullying and discriminatory incidents in our Anti-Bullying Policy. We submit data on a termly basis regarding bullying and discriminatory incidents to the Children and Young People's Directorate in Lewisham Council.

### **Section 9 - Employment Practices**

#### **Recruitment**

##### **Advertising of vacancies**

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply. In most cases permanent vacancies will be advertised externally unless there are exceptional reasons why this should not occur, for example in situations of potential redundancy.

##### **Selection for appointment or promotion**

All decisions relating to appointments or promotions will be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- A detailed job description and person specification will be drawn up which accurately describes the duties of the post
- An objective and sufficiently detailed person specification will be defined from the role
- From these documents a list of objectively assessed selection criteria will be drawn up
- Job descriptions, person specifications and selection criteria will be available to all candidates
- Shortlisting will be carried out against the selection criteria

- All interview panel members must be appropriately trained and will act in accordance with the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation
- Selection decisions will be made against the agreed criteria and no other criteria will be used
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment and selection process where necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are enabled to compete for appointments in the school

### **Specific Issues**

#### **Age**

The Governing Body is opposed to any direct or indirect discrimination based on age.

#### **Disability**

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination against people with disabilities based on assumptions of their ability or otherwise to carry out the duties of a post in the school and candidates with disabilities who meet the essential criteria for a post will be interviewed. Where a candidate who has a disability is appointed to a post in the school, reasonable provision will be made for adjustments to the working conditions or environment where this is practicable.

#### **Gender reassignment**

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination as a result of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex

#### **Marital status or civil partnership**

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination against employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

#### **Pregnancy and maternity**

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination against:

- A woman because of her pregnancy and/or maternity leave or a man on paternity leave.

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination based on:

- Race, colour, ethnic or national origin. (There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where an occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of one particular race or ethnic origin. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance).

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination based on:

- Religion or belief, including no religion or belief.

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination based on:

- Gender. (There may be situations in the school which require special consideration and where a genuine and determining occupational requirement may apply to justify the employment of someone of a particular sex. However, these situations will be unusual and exceptional, and will be discussed with the staff in advance).

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination based on:

- Sex or sexual orientation

The Governing Body is opposed to any discrimination by association (e.g. association with a disabled person) or perception discrimination (e.g. perception of a protected characteristic such as age)

### **Positive Action**

The Governing Body recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. It will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action, designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups.

The Governing Body will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination), but it will take positive action which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis.

Positive action measures may include:

- Encouraging applications from protected<sup>1</sup> groups which are under-represented in the school
- Encouraging people with disabilities to apply for posts
- Advertisements which encourage applications from individuals of a particular protected group, but make it clear that selection will be on merit
- Flexible working – promoting the use of job shares and flexible working where operational factors make this possible
- Language/literacy training
- Supporting training measures for under-represented protected groups
- Assistance with applications for candidates with language difficulties

## **Section 10 – Procurements and contracting**

**Procurement (We define this as the way we obtain and/or purchase goods and services in school or as a school)**

### **Business interests**

All staff and Governors are required to declare their business interests and any which members of their immediate family have. These interests will be recorded in a register which must be made available for inspection by Governors, staff, parents and the LA. Staff and Governors will be required to confirm the accuracy of the information annually.

The Governing Body will ensure efficient and effective procurement in the provision of appropriate resources within schools. We have a Financial Procedures policy and follow central audit

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<sup>1</sup> A *protected group* is a *group* of people who qualify for special *protection* by a law or policy; such groups are identified in the Equality Act 2010 as those who share a particular characteristic against which it is illegal to discriminate.

requirements and the standards of FMSIS to ensure that efficient and effective procurement of goods and services is undertaken with regard to sound principles, the values of Brindishe Schools, economy of effort, and achieving best value.

All staff involved in procurement follow the arrangements outlined in our Financial Procedures policy in respect of procurement processes, authorisation of orders and payments. At all times we seek to streamline processes, achieve savings, secure quality goods and services and where possible and appropriate, allow choice.

Where possible we will take advantage of situations where market testing has already happened. This may include local authority contracts; partnership contracts and contracts arranged by the school or groups of schools.

### **Section 11 - Consultation and Information**

We want all school users to be supportive of and involved in the implementation of this policy. We involve children, staff, parents/carers, governors and school users in the development and implementation of our Equality Policy by consulting them to determine their priorities for the schools with regards to equality over the next three years. Our consultation will include methods such as, questionnaires, feedback slips, governors' open house and our open-door policy, feedback from parents/carers' meetings and informal and formal discussions and listening to pupil voice.

### **Section 12 – Equalities Analysis Assessments**

We review key policies, functions and procedures that have been assessed as relevant to meeting the duties set out under race, gender, disability and religion or belief legislation. In line with best practice we also assess the impact of our key policies, functions and procedures on promoting sexual orientation equality. We look for opportunities to promote equality that have previously been missed or could be better used, as well as negative or adverse impacts that must be removed or mitigated. The main system by which we will assess the impact of our current policies, functions or procedures will be through carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

## Brindishe Schools' Equalities Action Plan

Our action plan shows explicit objectives for all relevant equality issues:

- Clear allocation of lead responsibility and resources
- Clear timescales
- Publish policy and Action Plan, which is updated every 3 years
- Monitoring annually by Governors for impact on all stakeholders.

SCDP Theme	Aspect of equalities policy	Expected Outcomes Details of actions	Responsibility	Time scale
<p><b>The Brindishe New Curriculum and pedagogy. Finding voices and making choices.</b></p> <p>Ensure the Learning Year and pupil progress meetings drive provision and secure Inclusion.</p> <p>Make central to our planning &amp; pedagogy the emotional, mental and physical health and well-being of each learner.</p>	All	<p>Children's achievement is monitored by ethnic group, gender and SEND/disability and pupil premium entitlement</p> <p>Identify and plan for additional action and targeted support on evidence from monitoring exercises</p>	English/Maths/ Assessment Leads	On-going
		<p>Children of different ethnic groups, boys / girls , PP and non PP children and without and with disabilities participate in the range of opportunities, clubs, tuition etc and uptake is monitored through and alongside a cultural entitlement.</p>	All staff / inclusion teams	Termly
		<p>The curriculum promotes role models, mentors and heroes that young people positively identify with, which reflects the school's aspirations and diversity in terms of race, gender, SEND, PP ( pupil premium entitlement) and disability.</p>	All staff / P.E. and clubs leads	Termly
		<p>Ensure that displays, resources, books and language are truly inclusive of range of families in our schools.</p> <p>Continue to identify, respond and report racist/ homophobic /sexist incidents as outlined in the Plan.</p>	All staff / curriculum leads / through assemblies etc	On-going

<p><b>Taking the lead</b> Extend, embed and share beyond our schools our Educate and Celebrate curriculum - not a week, a project or display.</p> <p><b>Mutual understanding</b> Model and teach children that 'there is more that unites us than divides us' Broaden (our own and) children's understanding of faith, culture, custom and context</p> <p>Progress the Rights Respecting agenda.</p>		<p>Report the figures to the staff, Governing body / Local Authority on a termly basis. Analyse to identify patterns e.g. year groups, location of incidence etc and respond accordingly</p> <p>Look at communities and at what we share. Assemblies, sharing and celebrating. Encourage parents/carers to share with children different life experiences, cultures, religion and faith within the school environment, when opportunities arise.</p> <p>All Brindishe schools to secure / renew Rights Respecting award.</p>	<p>Educate and Celebrate Team and all staff</p> <p>SLT and Governors</p> <p>SLT and all staff</p> <p>Rights respecting teams</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Termly</p> <p>On-going By July 2020</p>
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SCDP Theme	Aspect of equalities policy	Expected Outcomes Details of actions	Responsibility	Time scale
<i>The Brindishe Staff, Teams,</i>	All	All children feel safe to talk about their own background and identity and take pride in this.		On-going

<p><b>Community &amp; Connections</b>  <b>Finding voices &amp; making choices</b>  Encourage difference, diversity and pride in one's own identity</p> <p><b>Mutual understanding of communities</b>  Ensure all parents and carers are aware of how they can access information about and contribute to their child's learning and progress  Extend, celebrate and share our diversity and differences and be fully inclusive within and across our local community.</p>		<p>Parents and carers know who they can ask about different aspects of learning and progress and are actively involved in their child's learning</p>	<p>All staff</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>SCDP Theme</p>	<p>Aspect of equalities policy</p>	<p>Expected Outcomes  Details of actions</p>	<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Time scale</p>
<p><b>The Brindishe Horizons:</b>  <b>Mutual understanding of communities</b></p> <p>Improve the ways we communicate</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>We reach out to all parents and carers, ensuring that information is up to date and accessible</p>		

with and to our community about why we do what we do (website, translations, open-door, marketing and publicity)				
<b>Quality assure equalities</b>	All	Apply for and secure / renew Rights Respecting Awards		By July 2020