

**Laureate Community Academy
Equality Policy**

Statutory

Updated	March 2021
Approved by governors on	
Next review	March 2023

Introduction

Laureate Community Academy is an inclusive school where we focus on the wellbeing and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is central to our school aims and values encapsulated in our 'REACH' acronym and our journey towards becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

- **All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- **We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- **We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- **We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- **We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.
- **We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
- **We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

Purpose of the Policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity. Age and marriage and civil partnership are also protected characteristics but are not part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools, to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

- **The Public Sector Equality Duty or 'General Duty'**. This requires all public organisations, including schools to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups;
 - Foster good relations between different groups.

- **Two 'Specific Duties'**. This requires all public organisations, including schools, to:
 - Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty;
 - Publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations.

The school's Equality Objectives are specified in an Equality Plan, which is included as an appendix to the **School Improvement Plan**.

Development of the Policy

This policy was developed in consultation with pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers. It is part of our commitment to promoting equality and providing an inclusive school community.

When developing the policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted Inspection Framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards. We note that Ofsted has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

Links to Other Policies and Documentation

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our School Improvement Plan, Self Evaluation Framework (SEF), the school website and newsletters. There are also references in the minutes of meetings involving staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils (e.g. School Council, Rights Respecting Schools Award Steering Group).

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies including (but not limited to) SEND, Behaviour & Relationships, Anti-Bullying and Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Education Policies. The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our Recruitment and Selection Policy.

What we are doing to Eliminate Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

We take account of equality issues in relation to the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.

We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils, designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.

We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.

We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

We do not discriminate against pupils or adults by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance

The Behaviour & Relationships Policy, Exclusion Policy and Attendance Policy take full account of our duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and act promptly to address concerns.

Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice-Based Bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- Prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- Prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- Prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes.

Staff are trained on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and act to reduce incidents.

What we are doing to Advance Equality of Opportunity between Different Groups

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil induction and transition arrangements.

We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We act to close any gaps, for example, for those making less progress than other pupils in English and maths.

We know the needs of our school community very well, and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements, including:

- On the school population by gender and ethnicity;
- On the % of pupils identified as having a special educational need and/or disability;
- By year group in terms of ethnicity, gender and whether English is spoken as an additional language;
- On inequalities of outcomes related to ethnicity, gender and disability and whether English is spoken as an additional language;
- An analysis of standards reached by different groups is also published at the end of each Key Stage, including:
 - Gender;
 - Ethnicity (including White British);
 - FSM and non-FSM;
 - Pupil Premium;
 - EAL;
 - SEND;
 - Children in Care.

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current, but also to future pupils – we will, for example, be sufficiently prepared if a hearing impaired or Gypsy Roma Traveller pupil joins our school.

We avoid language that may place a ceiling on any pupil's achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as 'less able', and provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving. We also use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.

We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- Disabled and non-disabled people;
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Girls and boys.

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We also have an Accessibility Plan (included as an appendix to the School Improvement Plan) designed to:

- Increase the extent to which pupils with disability can participate in the curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment;
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Positive Action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the school's Equality Objectives.

What we are doing to Foster Good Relations

We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils, e.g. through our 'REACH' ethos.

We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, RE and across the curriculum.

We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.

We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice-based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour, e.g. through our journey towards becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School.

We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and promote positive images of people from diverse backgrounds, e.g. through the selection of Nobel Laureates from diverse cultures and backgrounds to name our school houses.

We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events, e.g. Language of the Month and cultural theme days linked to the Laureate Mile.

Other ways we address Equality Issues

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community, we:

- Review relevant feedback from the annual parent questionnaire and other surveys, parents' evenings, PTA meetings, 'Coffee, Cake & Chat' meetings and other opportunities for parents and carers to give their opinions;
- Secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events as appropriate;
- Review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, e.g. from the Junior Leadership Team, School Council, PSHE lessons, and pupil dialogues by staff and governors;
- Analyse issues raised in reviews of Education, Health & Care Plans, SEND Passports and other mentoring and support;
- Ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Local Governing Body meetings and working parties.

Publishing Equality Objectives (see Equality Plan)

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues. We produce an Equality Plan that shows how we will achieve our objectives (see the School Improvement Plan); these objectives are also displayed on the school website.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups, including (but not limited to) closing achievement gaps.

Monitoring and Reviewing Objectives

We review and update our equality objectives annually, and also report termly to the Governing Body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

The Governing Body keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors review the Equality Policy as an agenda item at a Governing Body meeting at least annually in order to evaluate the success of the school's equality implementation plan (which is part of the School Improvement Plan), taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

The **Headteacher**, supported by the **SENDCo** and the **Senior Leadership Team**, is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All **teaching** and **support staff** will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom;
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination;
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur;
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability;
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils;
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult;
- Keep up to date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will go through the objectives of the Equalities and Accessibility Plans at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

All **visitors** to the school, including parents and carers, are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information on the school website and in newsletters to enable them to do this.

Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure, wherever possible, that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer, we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

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

We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy every two years and make adjustments as appropriate. Our review involves pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers.

Disseminating the Policy

This Equality Policy, along with the Equality Plan, is available:

- On the school website;
- In hard copy from the school office;
- As part of induction for new staff;
- In the staff room for all staff.

We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy and objectives through school newsletters, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST FOR STAFF AND GOVERNORS

- The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training;
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides;
- The Equality Policy and Plan have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders;
- The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties;
- The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when trends or patterns indicate a need;
- The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives;
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes;
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy;
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy;
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference;
- All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the School Council;
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and acts if there is a cause for concern;
- Visual displays and multimedia resources reflect the diversity of the school community;
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies;
- The school takes part in events such as the Rights Respecting Schools Award, Language of the Month and Anti-Bullying Week to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender;
- The school environment is increasingly accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school, including the acoustic environment;
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school, and issues such as language barriers are considered;
- The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information;
- It is our aim that the Governing Body will be increasingly representative of the community it serves;
- Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled.