

The Federation of
St. Alphege Schools

Equal Opportunities Policy



Jesus said 'Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.' Matthew 19 v 14

COOPERATION LOVE

VALUING
DIFFERENCE

FORGIVENESS

RESPONSIBILITY HONESTY

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Introduction:

Our school welcomes our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations for adults and children in relation to gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

At St. Alphege, we recognise these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

We also recognise:

‘Church of England schools have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God, are individually unique and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually. Our aim is that all may flourish and have an abundant life. Schools have a duty to try to remove any factor that might represent a hindrance to a child’s fulfilment. We want all pupils to willingly engage in learning in a safe and welcoming environment.

Schools should ensure that their Christian ethos statement offers an inclusive vision for education. This includes affording pupils a sense of their own dignity and a vision of the innate dignity of all humankind. Inclusivity and hospitality should be hallmarks of Church of England schools: every child should be revered and respected as a member of a community where all are known and loved by God.’ - Valuing All God’s Children Guidance for Church of England schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying Second Edition Updated Summer 2019

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy statement such as this are what make a difference.

School Vision and Values:

This policy supports our school vision and values statement:

‘Jesus said ‘Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.’ Matthew 19 v 14

Our values were chosen through consultation with the school communities with each value in turn being of particular focus through our Collective Acts of Worship programme each half term. Our values are also woven through our curriculum pledge and associated policies and many of them relate directly to equal opportunities for all. We aim for our Vision and Values to speak for themselves as they are incorporated within every aspect of daily life to form our distinctive ethos.

Our School Values:

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- *Cooperation*
- *Love*
- *Valuing Difference*
- *Forgiveness*
- *Responsibility*
- *Honesty*

Aims and Objectives:

- We aim to act positively and have due regard to the need to challenge and eliminate unlawful discrimination – within both our school and our community.
- We aim to ensure every member of our school community feels they have the right to feel safe all of the time and respect that all others have this same right.
- We aim not to discriminate against anyone, be they staff, pupil or parent, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, level of educational need or background.
- We aim to promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some children differently.
- We seek to ensure that all children have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups of children.
- We aim to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.
- We aim to challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.
- We value each child's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school community, and showing respect for all minority groups.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are often caused by poor self-image and also aware of the relationship between that and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

Racial Equality:

In our school we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion;
 - promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
 - seek to educate children in a manner which promotes community cohesion in a multicultural society.
- We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures. Any incidents are recorded and reported to the governing body.
- We endeavour to make our school and its environment welcoming to all minority groups.

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- We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.
- Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, in the curriculum topic on human rights, children learn about how significant figures have used freedom of expression to fight for equality.

Disability Non-discrimination:

- Some children in our school may have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not disadvantaged compared with nondisabled children.
- The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning.
- Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, ensure access, modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.
- The Federation of St Alphege Schools has a separate Accessibility Policy, including a regularly reviewed action plan.

Gender Equality:

Through analysis of pupil tracking throughout foundation key stage and key stages one and two, we identify any discrepancies that occur between gender groups and aim to provide a rich curriculum and targeted interventions to address any identifiable trends. These may include:

- ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- removing gender bias from our resources and ensuring, for example, that fiction books capture boys' interest;
- employing a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
- making sure that our school environment promotes positive gender role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- minimising male stereotyping;
- providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate children.

If our analysis of pupils' attainment data indicates areas where girls achieve less well than boys, for example in mathematics or science, we will take measures to address this discrepancy. These may include:

- ensuring that boys do not dominate certain lessons, for example by answering the teacher's questions more readily;
- ensuring that mathematical and scientific subject matter is relevant to real life situations and problems;
- beginning lessons by clarifying the learning intentions, and giving the 'big picture';

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- minimising female stereotyping and learning about female role models, for example, in the realms of science, technology and sport;
- using praise and celebration of girls' achievements in those areas where they may traditionally achieve less well than boys.

We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to the relative achievement of boys and girls. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group does not do so at the expense of the other.

Sexual Orientation:

- Through a progressive and cohesively planned PSHE curriculum, we use teaching materials, content and resources which presents a variety of family unit contexts, including same-sex relationships in an age-appropriate way. Such materials are available to parents and carers should they wish to view them in advance.
- Every member of staff shares the responsibility for challenging and reporting any use of homophobic language, following the school procedure.

Religion and Beliefs:

As detailed within our Policy for Religious Education:

'As a school we recognise that our pupils will meet with people of other faiths, as they grow and mature. We recognise that Jesus had a concern and love for all people and we will, through our teaching and example, encourage our pupils to respect the religious beliefs of others, and to appreciate the diversity in today's multicultural society.'

- In teaching our school value of 'valuing difference', we present learning opportunities in a way to promote the need to value and respect the beliefs of all others, whether founded within religion or not.
- We encourage the belief that it is socially acceptable to agree, disagree or remain impartial as long as attitudes and behaviours are mutually respectful.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, children and parents and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

The Role of the Class Teacher:

- Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.
- When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give

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positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.

- We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, in Year 2, the children compare the town of Solihull with Kampong Ayer, Brunei which is a 'water village' built in the middle of a wide river. The children learn how the villagers learn to live 'on the water' and what challenges all schoolchildren might face. An example of how equal opportunities are promoted in history in Key Stage I, includes a study of Britain in Victorian times provides the opportunity to explore why girls were not given an education and how significant figures including Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole had to fight to get their beliefs heard.

In Key Stage Two, children are provided the opportunity to learn about cultural traditions by enabling children to acquire an appreciation for and respect for other cultures (E.g. in a study of China, children learn how Chinese traditions and history have contributed to the world: printing press, art and religion.) In studying World War II, children learn how race and religious tensions influenced the outbreak and impact of this conflict. Children also explore how the United Nations was created to promote equal opportunities for all. Learning about refugees encourages children to understand the circumstances that lead to those seeking asylum or refugee status and also the value that many refugees contribute to society.

- All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. Any incidents are reported to the Executive Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher and are recorded and reported in line with school guidelines.

- All staff share the responsibility in supporting children in their class for whom English is an additional language.

- All staff have the responsibility to keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

The Role of the Executive Headteacher:

It is the Executive Headteacher's role to:

- provide staff, including administrative and support staff, with relevant staff development and training opportunities in regard to Equal Opportunities (Stonewall training for example);
- ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and of their responsibility to apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- ensure that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively and to take appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination;
- ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;
- promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for learners, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; during collective acts of worship, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school. Respect is one of the key Christian values adopted by the school.
- manage all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due seriousness, and in line with this policy.

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The Role of Governors:

In this policy statement, the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and accessibility, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all children are making the best possible progress and that no group of learners is underachieving. To do this we monitor:

- admissions;
 - attainment;
 - exclusions;
 - parents' and pupils' questionnaires.
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- The governing body seeks to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010 (see introduction) are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group they may be from.
 - The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.
 - The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

Monitoring and Review:

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of children from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other learners in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the Executive Headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or children regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that children from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

Breaches of this Policy:

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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 Executive Headteacher and governing body.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years or sooner if it is considered necessary.

Associated Policies Relating to Equal Opportunities:

Although the key principles to promote Equal Opportunities are applied within every curriculum policy and every aspect of school life, key documents that are referred to within this policy document include:

1. Accessibility Policy
2. Behaviour Policy
3. Anti-bullying Policy
4. School Vision and Values Statement
5. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
6. Policy for Religious Education
7. School uniform policy which is non-gender specific

Date approved by the Governing Body: