

Equality Information & Objectives

Hermitage Primary School			
Review frequency	Annually	Date Produced	November 2017
Governing Committee Responsible	Teaching and Learning	HT Approval (date)	
Website	Yes		
Staff Responsible (Deputy Head teacher)	Parmjit Varaitch	Review Date	November 2021

➤ Introduction

At Hermitage, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and guardians receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Hermitage, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

➤ Aims

In line with the Equality Act 2010 it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

➤ Vision and Values

The values of Hermitage Primary School guide all that we do. At Hermitage we aspire to be an excellent school in every sense of the word.

We strive to achieve excellence by:

- providing a challenging, stimulating, caring environment where children can be encouraged to develop to their full potential
- encouraging independence, responsibility, self-discipline and a genuine pride in our achievements and our school
- enabling all children to be granted respect irrespective of age, race, creed, gender, background or ability
- developing every child academically, physically, morally and spiritually
- offering well-planned and appropriately resourced teaching
- equipping our children for the future and to nurture a desire to learn
- showing care and sensitivity in the way we behave with one another in our school and the community

Hermitage is an excellent school where children love learning. We want all our children to achieve the highest standards possible in a thriving, multicultural, learning environment. Hermitage is a diverse community which strives to provide a happy environment where all children achieve their potential.

Above all, we want our school to touch on the lives of all our children to ensure they grow up to be reflective, self-aware and resourceful. They are at peace with themselves; empathetic towards others and confident young people.

Every decision is made with the question in mind 'will this help the students to learn better and achieve more?' We believe in a relentless focus on high achievement in all areas of School life. At our core is an understanding that every individual has the opportunity and responsibility to impact positively on the lives of others; that every individual in our community is unique and has gifts and talents that should be celebrated at every opportunity.

Our Caring Code underpins all values at our school:

- Always be kind and helpful
- Fulfil responsibilities with care and attention
- Treat everyone and everything with respect
- Be the BEST that YOU can be!

➤ **Admission and Exclusions**

- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors
- The admissions process is centralised through the Local Authority and is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently to all pupils
- Information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, medical needs etc. is included on all the admission forms
- At Hermitage parents / guardians are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil's attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate staff
- Responsible provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance which includes staff as well as pupils
- Provision is made for pupils on extended leave so as they are able to continue with their learning
- Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with

➤ **Equal Opportunities for 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. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all

Training

The principles outlined above in relation to fair and equal treatment will also apply to selection for training. Requests for training will be considered in accordance with the school's operational priorities, based on the school's overall development plan and budget allocations.

Similarly, the training of school managers and Governors in issues of equality and discrimination is an essential part of our Equalities Plan.

Where training is scheduled to take place on site, the school will, where possible, adapt the methods of training delivery if current arrangements disadvantage particular individuals or groups of staff.

➤ **Statutory requirements: Equality and the Law**

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Disability Equality Duty (2005) and Equality Act (2006).

This Equality Plan outlines the actions Hermitage will take to meet the general duties detailed below:

Race Equality

This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

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

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Plan which includes race equality
- Assess the impact of our policies and action plans, on students, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of students from minority ethnic groups

Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Plan.

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is "clinically well-recognised", although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish as part of our Equality Plan an Accessibility Plan to increase access to education for disabled students in the three areas of:
 - Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school **curriculum**;
 - Improving the **environment** of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
 - Improving the delivery to disabled students of **information** which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

It is a requirement that the school's accessibility plan is resourced, implemented, reviewed and revised as necessary and reported on annually.

Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment
- Promote equality between boys and girls, men and women

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for equal opportunities identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them
- Review and revise this Scheme every two years.

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief or sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion.

Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

We are committed to supporting community cohesion by:

- developing a common vision and sense of belonging
- developing an appreciation of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances
- creating opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential
- building strong and positive relationships

Engagement with Extended Services

- We have good links with other schools, locally and regionally
- Teachers have links with other schools and promote good role models when interacting with staff from other schools, through a range of activities
- Learners have a strong voice and opportunities to take responsibility through our Student Council
- We engage parents / guardians through a range of activities, consultation evenings and workshops to name but a few. Our pastoral system works with the Participation Team, to improve children's attendance
- We have strong links with external agencies including social services, the Participation Team, the health service and police
- Multi-agency working with voluntary agencies and private sector. Building networks and partnerships between services to encourage joint thinking and sharing of skills
- Outreach work via Early Help team including preventative work and crisis intervention, satellite groups, home visits and needs-led support
- Integrated support to ensure a personalised service
- Relevant signposting to other agencies in the community
- Raising awareness

➤ Consultation and Involvement

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils, parents and guardians. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from parent questionnaires, parents' evening
- Staff meetings / INSET
- Feedback from the student council, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school
- Discussions at annual reviews
- Feedback at governing body meetings

➤ Roles and Responsibilities

The role of Governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, guardians and students
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socioeconomic background, race, gender or disability
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, religion, gender or disability

The role of the Headteacher (and senior leader responsible for Equalities: Mrs P Varaitch)

- It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and s/he is supported by the governing body in doing so
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life
- The headteacher regards all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness

The role of all Staff: teaching and non-teaching

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher
- Teachers support the work of support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents

➤ **The Curriculum**

The curriculum builds on pupils starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:

- Boys and girls
- Pupils learning English as an additional language
- Pupils from ethnic minority groups
- Pupils who are looked after by the Local Authority
- Pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion

Wherever possible, the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils

The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes

Extracurricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all students and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture

➤ **Assessment and Progress**

- All pupils have the opportunity to achieve to their highest standards. At Hermitage we ensure that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias, and that assessment methods are valid
- The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by gender, ethnicity and background enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. At Hermitage we ensure that action is taken to counter this
- Staff have very high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards. We recognise all forms of achievement however small
- All pupils have full opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and therefore, to benefit from assessment which summarises what they have learnt. Information from assessment is used to inform future planning
- Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupils' progress

➤ **Partnerships with Parents / Guardians**

- Progress reviews to parents and guardians are accessible and appropriate in order to ensure that all parents and guardians have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue. Parents and guardians are encouraged to telephone the school for an appointment at any time if they have concerns
- All parents and guardians are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school for example, through parent workshops, assemblies, parents' evenings etc.
- At Hermitage we work in partnership with parents, guardians and the community to develop positive attitudes to diversity and to address any specific incidents.
- We take steps to encourage the involvement and participation of under represented groups of parents / guardians and sections of the community
- Information material for parents / guardians and users of the community facilities are easily accessible in user friendly language
- The premises and facilities are equally available and accessible as far as is reasonably possible for us by groups within the community

➤ **Tackling Discrimination**

Harassment on account of race, religion/beliefs, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / deputy headteacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body.

Some incidents may lead to consideration under Child Protection. In these cases, the school's Child Protection procedures will be followed.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, religion/beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia
- Bringing discriminatory material into school
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

➤ Review of Progress and Impact

The Equality Plan has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan and Accessibility Plan annually.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track student progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

➤ Publishing The Plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish our Equality Plan and Accessibility Plan, we will:

- Publish our plan on the school website
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications
- Upon request, make sure hard copies are available from the school office

The Equality Plan is to be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- SEND Policy and Information Report
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racism Policy
- Behaviour Principles Statement
- Accessibility Plan
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Hermitage Values

Appendix 1: Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and nonteaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

A suggested procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:

