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# Emerson Park Academy

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

# Equality Policy

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# Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for Emerson Park Academy brings together all previous policies around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's wellbeing.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies.

## Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

## Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access and opportunity for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

## We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- **Shared Humanity.** Identifying commonality, shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.
- **Valuing difference and diversity.** We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- **Interdependence, interaction and influence.** We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- **Social cohesion within our school and within our local community.**

- **Excellence.** We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- **Personal and cultural identity.** We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- **Fairness and social justice.** We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

## Our vision statement about Equality

At Emerson Park Academy, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. We are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the Academy, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith or religion, or socio-economic background. We aim to develop and celebrate a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the Academy feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by ethnicity, gender, disability and socio-economic background 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.

Emerson Park Academy seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

# Equality and the Law

## Equality Act 2010

On 1 October 2010, the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It has consolidated this legislation and also provides some changes that schools need to be aware of.

### KEY POINTS

- The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law. It simplifies the law and it extends protection from discrimination in some areas.
- Schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation.
- The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools are all replicated in the new act – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single sex schools and schools of a religious character.

### New Protection in Schools

Protection against discrimination is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or have recently given birth, or who are undergoing gender reassignment.

### Health Related Questions for Job Applicants

It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before the job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work. This means that schools should no longer, as a matter of course, require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. There are potential implications in relation to establishing teachers' fitness and ability to teach (as required by the Health Standards (England) Regulations 2003). Schools are advised to review their existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations and Section 60 of the Equality Act. Schools may decide to ask necessary health questions after job offer. In any case, they should ensure that any health-related questions are targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

### Positive Action

New Positive Action provisions allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim. Previously a school providing – for example - special catch-up classes for Roma children or a project to engage

specifically with alienated Asian boys might have been discriminating unlawfully by excluding children who didn't belong to these groups.

### **Victimisation**

It is now unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Act by their parent or sibling.

### **Auxiliary Aids**

The Act extends the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils. Following consultation on implementation and approach, the duty came into force on 1 September 2012.

### **Equality Duties**

The three existing general and specific equality duties on schools (race, disability and gender) to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity have been combined into a single, less bureaucratic and more outcome-focused duty extending to all of the protected characteristics. The new duty is explained in chapter 5 of this advice.

These are the new provisions of the Act but schools will need to be aware of how the rest of the Equality Act applies to them. This is set out below.

## **Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance November 2012**

### **What does this mean for schools?**

For a school, having 'due regard' means:

- When making a decision or taking an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- It should consider equality implications before and at the time that it develops policy and takes decisions; not as an afterthought, and it needs to keep them under review.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of a school's functions. The analysis necessary to comply with the duty should be carried out rigorously and with an open mind – it is not a question of just ticking boxes.
- Schools need to do this themselves and cannot delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

### **How does it help schools?**

The equality duty supports good education and improves pupil outcomes. It helps a school to identify priorities such as underperformance, poor progression, and bullying. It does this by requiring it to collate evidence, take a look at the issues and consider taking action to improve the experience of different groups of pupils. It then helps it to focus on what can be done to tackle these issues and to improve outcomes by developing measurable equality objectives.

# Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010. We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately, negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster good relations between different groups of pupils and the wider school community.

We will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under an SEND EHC plan (Educational Health Care plan), or where the EHC does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

## Check list for school staff and directors

- Is information collected on race, disability, socio-economic background and gender with regards to both pupils and staff e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides?
- How has your Equality Plan been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents and pupils?
  - Is pupil achievement analysed by ethnicity, disability, socio-economic background and gender? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action, and has action been taken to address these?
  - Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to ethnicity, disability and gender?
  - Are all pupils encouraged to participate in school life? Are pupils who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity e.g. through class assemblies / school council?
  - Is bullying and harassment of pupils and staff monitored by ethnicity, disability, socio-economic background and gender, and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other pupils? Are racist incidents reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis?
  - Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of your school community? How are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions such as form time and class assemblies?

- Does the school take part in annual events such as Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week and One World Week to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender?
- Is the school environment as accessible as possible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school, and are issues such as language barriers considered?
- Are the accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff considered in the publishing and sending out of information, in terms of race, disability, socio-economic background and gender?
- Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to candidates and voters who are disabled?

## **Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice**

As well as the specific actions set out in this plan, the academy operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

### **Teaching and learning**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender, disability and socio-economic background and take action to close any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Ensure that teaching and classroom-based approaches are inclusive and appropriate for the whole school population, and are reflective of our pupils.

## **Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements, which follow LA guidelines, are fair and transparent and do not discriminate on ethnicity, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour 4 Learning 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**

At Emerson Park Academy 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, ethnicity, 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 staffing 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;

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- preparation for entry to the school
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers

- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

## **The roles and responsibilities within our school community**

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership Team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our Board of Directors will:

- designate a director with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Development Plan
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years.

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy

- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- Assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SDP.

Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy.

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child.

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements.

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy.

## **Tackling discrimination**

Harassment on account of ethnicity, 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 Head of Faculty/Head of House/Senior Pastor / SLT or Headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported

to the Headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the board of directors on a regular basis.

## **What is a discriminatory incident?**

Harassment on grounds of ethnicity, 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**

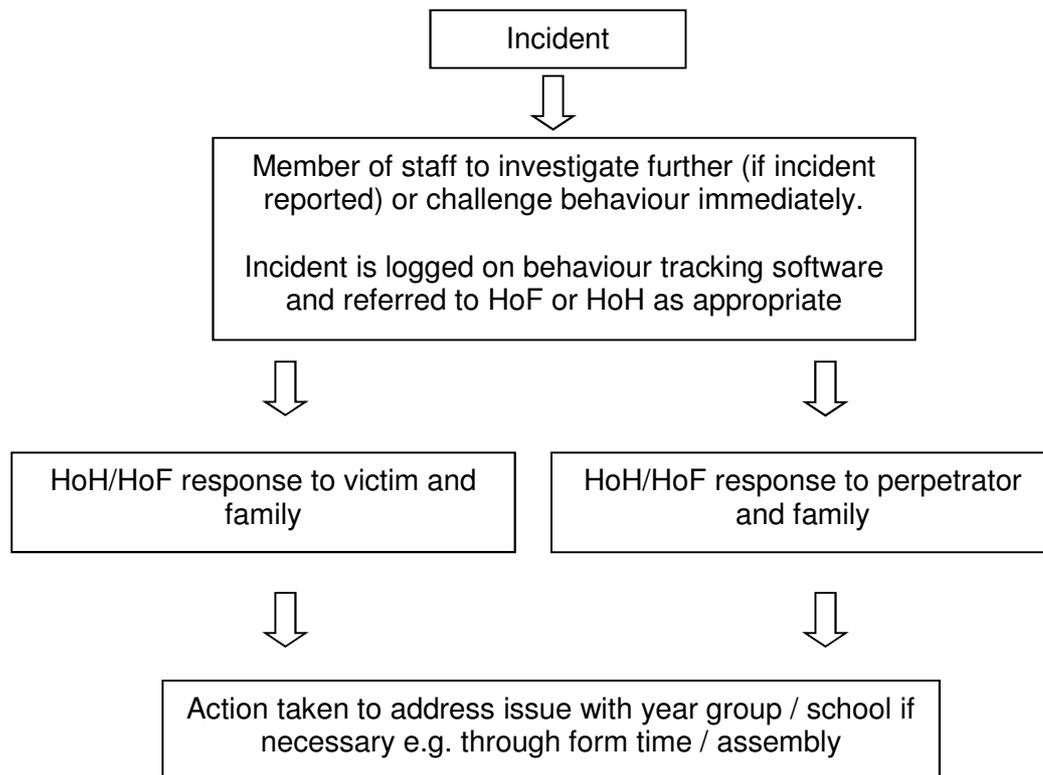
Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- 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 ethnicity, 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 ethnicity, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

## **Responding to and reporting incidents**

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

The procedure for responding to and reporting such incidents is outlined below:



## Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by our board of directors. Our academy policies and their impact are reviewed and updated regularly. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three year cycle.

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

## Publishing the Equality Policy

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

Publish our plan on the school website and raise awareness of its whereabouts to all members of the community;

Raise awareness of the policy to the pupils through Form Activities;

Raise awareness of the plan through the academy newsletter, the EPA Gazette, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;

Ensure the policy is provided to new and temporary staff, including daily supply staff;

Make sure hard copies are available.

### **Policy into practice**

Follow promotional procedures as outlined above.

SLT to discuss relevant data each half term and create action points where necessary.

Create a portfolio of evidence, including case studies, of where the Equality Policy has been implemented and what impact it has had.

Review Equality Policy in Autumn Term 2016.

