

Equality and Equality Objectives Policy



Springfield is a Rights Respecting School.

Article 3- The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children.

Article 28 – Every child has the right to an education.

Introduction

This Equality Policy for Springfield Infant School and Nursery brings together policies and action plans for Race, Gender and Disability equality, meeting the statutory duties in these areas. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 and includes sexuality, religion & faith, age and every aspect which has the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community such as against those with special educational needs or potential language barriers. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on which we have based our aims.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

To have regard to the need:

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

Our vision statement

Article 28 – Every child has the right to an education.

Springfield Infant School and Nursery 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 therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

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.

Staffing

The Governing Body of Springfield Infant School and Nursery recognises its responsibilities in the employment of staff in the school. In accordance with those responsibilities, it wishes to ensure the fair and equal treatment of its entire staff, all those who work in the school. This policy along with the Recruitment and Pay policy available in the school office sets out the principles under which the Governing Body of the school will operate to meet these aims.

Statement of Intent

The Governing Body of the school is committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with pupils and parents of Springfield. The Governing Body recognises the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce and with the Head teacher will operate at all times within the requirements of antidiscrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions. The school will follow West Sussex Recruitment and Employment policies and all decisions, including advertising of

vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of school requirements. The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account, will be those which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.

All staff will have a right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff who deliberately and knowingly contravenes the policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

Statutory requirements

The Governing Body is bound by law not to discriminate on certain grounds. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the 'protected characteristics' that qualify for protection from discrimination as: -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex; and Sexual orientation

The Governing Body will give sympathetic consideration to requests for time off or for religious observance from staff that are active members of particular religions or beliefs and will follow guidance from the LA and West Sussex Employment policies.

The Governing Body will wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants or members of staff who have a disability.

The over-riding premise that will be adhered to in matters of equality, by all governors and staff in the school, is that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect whatever their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Advertising of vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised openly and will normally be available for members of staff in the school to apply.

Specific Issues

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

- i. Age
- ii. Disability
- iii. Gender reassignment
- iv. Marital status or civil partnership
- v. Pregnancy and maternity
- vi. Race
- vii. Religion or Belief
- viii. Sex
- ix. Sexual Orientation

Acts of Worship

The Equality Act does not cover the daily act of worship, which for maintained schools is mandatory and should be of a broadly Christian nature. This exception means that Springfield will not be acting unlawfully if we do not provide an equivalent act of worship for other faiths. It also means that we are free to celebrate religious festivals such as putting on a nativity play at Christmas or celebrating Diwali and Eid without discriminating against children of other faiths.

Uniform

The school has a Uniform Policy which all pupils are expected to follow. The governing body decides what the uniform for the school is and considers its obligations under the Human Rights Act and under equality law.

Positive Action

The Governing Body recognises that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure that equality exists in the school. The Governing Body will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. E.g. the law on disability discrimination means that the school is allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably and in some cases is required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities.

Pupils

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome 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 and 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 duties, roles and responsibilities

We recognise and accept our duties and responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, including the requirement to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

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, for example, visitors to the school or theatre groups
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Head teacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils and visitors 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 governing body will:

- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the head teacher 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 Head teacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP

Our pupils will:

- understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the scheme

Our parents/carers will:

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

Our school staff will:

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

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

Publication

The Equality Policy will be published on the school website and hard copy available in the school office. The school will provide a copy for anyone asking for it.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the Policy

The Head teacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring of this policy and its appendices. The policy will be updated by the HT and governors annually and the equality objectives will be monitored and updated at least once every four years.

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