

Freegrounds Junior School Equality Policy (Including Equalities Information and Objectives)



Date of last review: January 2023

Date of next review: January 2024

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Approved by: Policy Working Group

Introduction

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture, which promotes equality, will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles, which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Employment Equality Policy.

National and Legal Context

We recognise that we have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the school community to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (applicable only to staff), disability, race, gender (including issues of transgender), maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual orientation and marital status (applicable only to staff).

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

School Context

Freegrounds Junior School is part of the Wildern Cluster of Schools serving a largely white British Community of families in the South of Hampshire.

As a school we collect a broad range of qualitative and quantitative information regarding equality, inclusion and community cohesion. Our single equality approach helps us to more effectively monitor our progress and performance, as our pupils and staff may face more than one barrier to achieving their full potential. We consider the information we have collected about our school, where possible, in the context of national and county information.

Principles

To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

1. All pupils, families and staff are of equal value

We see all pupils, potential pupils, their parents and carers, and staff as 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 and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age

2. We recognise and respect difference

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we understand that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs
- Religion and belief – we acknowledge that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we appreciate that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth.

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

4. We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

5. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

6. We consult and involve to ensure views are heard

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

7. We aim to foster greater community cohesion

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

8. We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information can be found in Appendix A to this policy statement. As we have less than 150 staff, the Governing Body is not be required to publish information in relation to staff, and therefore are only required to publish pupil-related data.

9. We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in Appendix B to this policy statement and take into account both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Application of the principles within this policy statement:

The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons
- support pupils in their class who have additional needs

Please scroll down to read Appendix A Equalities Information and Appendix B Equalities Objectives.

Equalities Information

Appendix A

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We have considered how well we currently achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

We have also involved staff, pupils, parents and others in the following ways:

- parent/carer workshops
- through Freegrounds Junior School Association
- contact with parents/carers representing pupils with particular protected characteristics
- contact with members of the local community
- regular informal contact with parents/carers at the start and the end of the school day
- pupil and parent/carer questionnaires
- staff survey
- formal parent/carer consultations with teaching staff
- pupil voice through school councils; learning council, school council, eco council, house captains etc...

Pupil-related data

Information	Evidence and commentary
Pupils on roll 2022-23	362 boys – 204 (56%) and girls – 158 (44%)
English as an additional language	9 (2.5%)
Pupil Premium	65 (18%)
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	59 (16.3%)

Qualitative information

The school has published various policies on the school's website www.freegrounds-junior-school. These policies evidence the school's commitment to the principles outlined in this policy and the public sector equality duty.

Our school vision and values enable the explicit teaching of aspects of equality and ensure that all members of the school community understand and recognise the value of diversity in enriching our lives.

Details of our PSHE programme and supporting evidence can be found on our website. We embrace our role in promoting community cohesion and our curriculum contains many opportunities to promote tolerance, friendship and an understanding of different cultures.

Data analysis (taken from most recent published data in 2022 and internal data) has identified that:

- the progress of boys in Reading and Writing has been below that of girls
- girls' progress in Maths is below that of the boys
- children with Special Educational Needs (SEND) make less progress than those without SEND remains an area of focus for the school
- despite strong outcomes for disadvantaged children, the progress and attainment of these pupils continues to remain a focus for the school

Attendance analysis (year so far on 12/1/23) identifies that:

- there is a gap between identified groups (other than girls' attendance) and whole school attendance. However all groups have better attendance than national
- boys – 94.7% (national – 93.2%)
- girls – 95.5% (national – 93.5%)
- children in receipt of PP funding – 91.3% (national – 90.9%)
- children with SEND – 91.6 (national – 91.1)
- children with EAL – 93.4 (92.6)

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We have also involved staff, pupils, parents/carers and others in the following ways:

- parent/carer workshops
- involvement of the student councils
- contact with parents/carers representing pupil with particular protected characteristics
- contact with the local community and disability organisations

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