EQUALITY & COHESION POLICY

“To be the best that they can be.

No one is excluded.

Everyone has a voice “

(Learn to Live Federation Vision Statement)

A copy of this policy can be provided in an alternative format eg in large print or audio if needed, on request from the school office.

1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate how the federation promotes and advances equal opportunities and community cohesion, and tackles inequalities and discrimination.

Ellen Tinkham School & Bidwell Brook School, are lively and supportive Community Special Schools, one on the outskirts of Exeter, one outside Totnes. There are approximately 240 children attending the federation.

The federation community is made up of a mixture of families in terms of employment and economic background. Our annual census data shows us that the children are predominately from a White British background. All our children have a Statement of Special Educational Needs/EHCP and the school sites are accessible for wheelchair users.

As migration and economic change alter the shape of our local and national communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion and inclusion. But community cohesion is not just about good race relations, it applies to many aspects of community life including positive relations between older and younger generations, and as Devon has an increasing older population this is another important factor.

2. Definitions

Equality = Treating people fairly and according to their needs. Equality of opportunity and outcome, rather than equality of treatment. People

have similar life opportunities in so far they are able to fulfil their own potential.

Inclusive = Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.

Diversity = Recognises that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Cohesion = People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.

Community = From the school's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings:

- The school community – the students we serve, their families and the school's staff.
- The community within which the school is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area.
- The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it.
- The global community – formed by European and international links.

3. Scope

This policy applies to and aims to benefit all staff, Governors, pupils, parents/guardians and carers.

4. Our Values and Commitment

It is our belief that every school, irrespective of its intake and location, is responsible for educating young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of age, culture, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, nationalities, sex/gender, gender identify, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic backgrounds.

The Federation's ethos is centred around a core promise of person centred planning and provision. This includes the regular review of progress and action planning to ensure pupils' individual needs are known and catered for effectively within the curriculum and progress is made. Action points are followed up to support the well being of pupils and encourage progress regardless of challenges faced by the individual.

We are committed to:

- ✓ Celebrating diversity.
- ✓ Promoting and advancing equality and inclusion.
- ✓ Meeting people's needs.
- ✓ Encouraging participation.
- ✓ Promoting cohesion, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- ✓ Tackling discrimination and disadvantage.

- ✓ Tackling bullying.
- ✓ Encouraging, supporting and striving to enable all pupils and staff to reach their potential.

- ✓ Working in partnership with parents and the wider community to establish promote and disseminate good practice.
- ✓ Ensuring that this policy is followed.

5. Our Legal Duties

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010. Legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education.

Employers (schools) are liable for acts of employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

- **Age -** A person of a particular age (eg 32 year old) or a range of ages (eg 18 - 30 year olds). However, age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Disability -** A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions.
- **Gender reassignment -** A person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with this 'Gender Identity'. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' are not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as potentially Trans children. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in a primary school environment.
- **Marriage and civil partnership –** Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Pregnancy and maternity -** Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
- **Race -** A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people. It may include Caste.
- **Religion and belief -** Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- **Sex -** A man or a woman.
- **Sexual orientation -** A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian until later, promotion of sexual orientation equality is still relevant in a primary school environment. For example, a child may have an older

sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'coming out' when they are older.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful):

- **Direct discrimination** - Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** - A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Harassment** - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context. Harassment because of gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion and belief in relation to the provision of education does not apply but such acts may constitute direct discrimination.
- **Victimisation** - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.
- **Combined (dual) discrimination** - Discrimination because of two protected characteristics such as age and sex/gender. Not yet effective.
- **Discrimination arising from disability** – Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) **and failure to make reasonable adjustments.**
- **Gender re-assignment discrimination** (allows reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave).
- **Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination –** unfavourable treatment because of a girl's/woman's pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman because she is breastfeeding.
- **Discrimination by association or perception** - For example, discriminating against someone because they "look gay", or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Public Sector Duties (applies to Schools):

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

Reasonable Adjustments and Access Plans (Schedule 10)

Schools are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.

- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Access Plans which will
    - Increase disabled pupils' access to the school curriculum
    - Improve the physical environment
    - Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that you owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether you know that a particular pupil is disabled or whether you currently have disabled pupils. You should plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments you may need to make.

For more information: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com which includes the guidance for education providers (schools) or http://www.devon.gov.uk/equalitylegislation.htm

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion and on Ofsted, to report on the contributions made in this area. The duty on schools came into effect on 1 September 2007 and the duty on Ofsted is due to commence in September 2008.

For more information: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion

Aspects of educational legislation has also promoted equal opportunities, eg the Education Act includes a duty for local authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

6. Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure that the school complies with equality and cohesion legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher.
- Ensure all other School policies promote equality and cohesion.

Headteacher

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.

All staff

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality and cohesion legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.
- To ensure that pupils with physical and / or learning disability needs are met.

Specific Staff

- PSHE co-ordinator to ensure diversity issues are addressed in the implementation of the PSHE and citizenship framework throughout the school.
- RE co-ordinator to ensure that RE is in line with county guidance and stereotypical views of particular faith groups or beliefs are not perpetuated.
- Access co-ordinator to maintain and monitor access to every aspect of school life.

Visitors (eg parent helpers, contractors)

- To be aware of and comply with the school's Equality and Cohesion Policy.

7. Communicating and Promoting this Policy

All staff and governors, including supply teachers and visitors are to be made aware of this policy and any subsequent updates or amendments.

Parents will be invited through the school's fortnightly newsletter to be involved in any review of the policy.

A copy will be:

- Displayed on the school's website.
- Available at Parents' Evenings where the child's progress and targets are discussed.
- Included in the folder of public documents available to any parent on request.

8. School Development Plan

Legislation requires us to set objectives to meet our public sector duties and improve our practice. Objectives will be contained with in the School Development Plan.

Objectives will be agreed by Governors and based upon the following:

- Pupil performance/monitoring data.
- Consultations with staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Impact assessments and other audits such as disability access.
- Inspection feedback.
- Legal duties.
- National or local issues relevant to the school.

9. Practice

▪ Admissions and attendance

The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and has a separate Admissions Policy.

Devon admissions and transfer criteria are determined by the Local Authority which is responsible for assessing the impact of its policies on different groups.

Information about pupil's gender, ethnic origin, home language, religion or belief, physical and emotional needs and diet is collected to enable the school to meet the needs of all pupils. The PHSE curriculum and ethos of the school, as laid out in the mission statement, are evidence of this.

Attendance of all pupils is monitored regularly by the Education Welfare Officer. Where individual or groups are identified as causing concern appropriate strategies are implemented with support from the Education Welfare Services.

Provision and support is available for pupils to take time off for religious observance with minimal disruption to their education.

▪ Policies

When the governing body approves policies, all policies shall be checked to ensure they do not have potential to disadvantage people because of a protected characteristic, and advance equality and foster good relations where possible.

▪ Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

In school, there will be a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils, removing barriers to learning and wider activities and reducing unjustifiable difference in outcomes for different groups of pupils.

Our teaching and the curriculum provision will support individual's standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping where appropriate.

The taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

The curriculum of our school will promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of our learners and society, and prepare our students for the wider opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life after their school career with us has ended.

All pupils will have equal access to a curriculum appropriate for their age or ability. The curriculum may be modified and/or differentiated to enable the individual pupil to better access that curriculum due to any specific educational or physical needs they may have. Tolerance and understanding are embedded within our wide and varied person centred curriculum.

Equal opportunities will be embedded through all aspects of the curriculum. Issues relating to gender, physical disabilities (e.g. mobility, hearing, and sight), age, race and religion or belief can be addressed as appropriate for individuals.

Science and sex and relationship education lessons (SRE) will provide opportunities for issues relating to gender and sexual matters to be addressed as appropriate for the age of the children.

Assembly and Collective Worship also enable specific matters around religion, belief and culture to be directly addressed.

Resources bought by the school and used to teach the various subjects, and provide the children with a range of images and messages about diversity e.g. posters, books, computer software, will promote equal opportunities and be free of prejudicial or stereotypical messages. Resources will be reviewed from time to time to ensure they are appropriate.

In planning the curriculum, account will be taken of the needs of the pupils, including disability, cultural background and linguistic needs, and appropriately differentiated work produced.

Where appropriate within certain curriculum areas:

- pupils are given opportunities to explore issues of identity, equality, and racism, including the use of language;
- learn about and celebrate festivals and traditions of different cultures;
- learn about world development issues, global issues and our interdependence on each other.

A variety of strategies will be used to encourage the participation of all pupils to enable the widest possible engagement and understanding of these issues.

Consultation and advice from teaching support services will be accessed as appropriate to help us meet the needs of all pupils, e.g. Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, Traveller Education Service.

Teachers will be mindful of children's specific needs, such as partial sight or hearing, or those with restricted mobility, when considering classroom organisation, lesson planning and practice.

▪ Purchasing

When purchasing equipment the school follows a holistic approach liaising with Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and VI and other relevant specialists.

▪ Pastoral care

Support is available for specific pupils if necessary e.g. pupils for whom English is a second language, to enable them to participate equally and achieve their own potential.

▪ Activities, including extra-curricular activities

A variety of extra-curricular activities will be offered. For reasons of health & safety and management it is often necessary to restrict membership of the activity to specific age groups and/or a specific number of members.

Extra curricular activities are open to all children including those, such as football and dance which historically orientated to one gender. All children are welcome and reasonable adjustments will be made so that all can successfully participate.

The school works in partnership with a wide variety of agencies and organisations to support the learners' education. Engagement with parents through an open door ethos, parents' evening, parent and child classes and other celebrations is considered a priority at the school.

The School Council, which involves the children in the decision making and organisation of the school, teaches the children the importance of participation and making a difference to the school, local community and beyond.

▪ Consultation, Engagement and Understanding

At least once every three years, the school will consult with the following stakeholders on its approach to equality and cohesion:

- Current pupils (via the school council)
- Parents/Carers
- School staff
- Governors

SENCO and Access Coordinator along with Finance and Premises Manager, will form to lead any consultation and analysis exercises.

The consultation will involve:

- A detailed questionnaire to pupils, staff parents / carers and governors.
- Meetings to provide an appropriate forum for discussing issues and formulating priorities.

Throughout the process, we will ensure that the setting for meetings has been conducive to participation for all those involved, including those with disabilities.

▪ Monitoring of attainment, progress and assessment

The federation aims to be fully inclusive, and the federation policies and procedures are firmly in place to cater for and make adjustments for any child.

The progress of children is tracked carefully through the school's assessment framework, and monitored carefully to ensure that they are achieving in line with expectations at all times. We will monitor, compare and analyse children's progress in relation to the following characteristics:

- Sex/gender
- Disability/SEN

- Ethnicity
- Eligibility for Free school meals

Individual pupil attainment and progress is monitored. Attainment and progress of different groups is monitored for differences in performance e.g. whether boys are falling behind girls.

Targets are communicated regularly to the children. Where differences in the performance of certain groups are identified, appropriate strategies to curriculum planning and delivery are implemented and targeted at these specific groups.

Appropriate assessment strategies are employed as far as possible to ensure no individual or group is disadvantaged by the assessment system due to physical or linguistic needs whether culturally based or not. For example, assessment material could be produced in large print format, another language, Braille, etc.

Employment diversity monitoring questionnaires, data will be collected for all staff to fulfil monitoring duties. These questionnaires are available from the local authority.

The school is aware of its legal duties in relation to asking job applicants questions about disability and health, insofar that it can only do this to make reasonable adjustments or for diversity monitoring.

In order that children feel comfortable in raising issues or difficulties they have as a result of any health conditions or impairments, or any other characteristic, systems are in place in school to ensure that children can discuss issues or potential barriers to their success.

▪ Impact Assessment

The results of monitoring and consultation exercises will be used to produce an accessibility plan, the results of which will identify areas for improvement.

▪ Anti-Bullying and dealing with incidents of a discriminatory nature

See Learn to Live Federation Bullying Prevention Policy.

▪ Behaviour and discipline

See Learn to Live Federation Behaviour Policy and Learn to Live Federation Conduct Policy

▪ Staff recruitment, support and professional development

See Learn to Live Federation Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

▪ Governors

The constitution of the Governing Body is determined by Government legislation to be representative of the local community, with local authority appointed members, and others

elected by, and representative of, the parents, the staff. The school conducts the election of parent and staff governors and on these occasions it is made clear that all staff and parents have an equal opportunity to stand for election.

All governors are eligible to hold posts of responsibility (e.g. Chair of Governors) and annual elections are held for these posts. The governing body meetings are arranged and timed to enable full participation by representatives of all members of the community.

- **Partnerships with the local communities**

All parents/guardians shall have equal opportunities to, and are encouraged to, become involved in the life of the school either during the school day or as part of our school Parents' Association, PTFA, regular meetings held for new parents as well as the AGM at which all parents have equal opportunity to stand for election to one of the offices.

As appropriate we draw upon and involve the experience and expertise of the parents and community in the life of the school, and welcome parents and guardians from all backgrounds and abilities.

As far as practicable and appropriate we may provide information for specific parents in a format alternative to that normally used to take into account their specific needs and thereby enable them to access the information.

The school has a Lettings policy that enables individuals or groups within the community to hire the school premises for after school functions. No group shall be discriminated against unlawfully in relation to lettings.

We promote equal opportunities for all parents to meet staff formally and informally. At the beginning and end of the school day, staff are available for informal meetings with parents. Formal opportunities are provided each term.

10. Annual Reporting

A full review of the whole policy will be carried out every three years.

Progress reports will be communicated via Schools Governors Meetings.

As with all school policies, the impact of them must be monitored closely to ensure that they are effective in reaching their aims, and to ensure that resources are used effectively.

A rolling programme of policy review is in place and this is very successful.
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Disability Equality Scheme accessibility action plan 2015-2018