

This document was approved by the Full Governing Board on 27 March 2024



Equality Objectives and Equality Duty

March 2024

1. Equality statement

We are committed to ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity for all children, staff, parents, and guardians irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, gender identity (including gender reassignment), and age.

Our aim is to develop a culture of diversity and inclusion in which all those within the establishment's community can celebrate their identity and participate fully in experiences and learning, enabling our children to take part as fully as possible in every part of the establishment's life by developing each child's self-confidence, recognising their strengths, and encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

We challenge discrimination through the positive promotion of equality through learning, by tackling bullying, racism, and stereotyping, and by creating a safe welcoming environment that champions respect for all.

Our establishment has a firm belief that diversity is a strength that must be respected and celebrated by all of those who learn with us and visit us.

2. Scope and purpose

This Equality Duty Review covers all individuals working at all levels, including staff, consultants, contractors, trainees, home-workers, part-time and fixed-term staff, volunteers, governing board members, casual workers, and agency staff. It also applies to the wider community such as children, job applicants, and parents/guardians.

The purpose of the Equality Duty Review is to set out our approach, through our equality objectives, to promoting equality and diversity and how we will tackle discrimination and challenge social exclusion. It outlines our commitment, actions, reviews, and how we comply with the law to ensure that equality and diversity are promoted in our establishment and that our staff, children, and community are not subject to, and do not commit, unlawful acts of discrimination.

3. Equality Act 2010

The [Equality Act 2010](#) protects people from discrimination and harassment. If someone thinks they have been discriminated against they may take their complaint to a court or Employment Tribunal (if they are an employee). But the act also places duties on public authorities (including establishments) to be pro-active about addressing inequalities. The Public Sector General Duty (Section 149) states that a public authority must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people.

'Advance equality of opportunity' means to remove or minimise disadvantage, meet people's needs, take account of disabilities, and encourage participation in public life.

Failure to observe these public sector duties could result in a judicial review, but also put establishments at risk of discriminatory practice.

These duties apply to eight **protected characteristics**:

- **Age** - A person of a particular age (e.g. 32 years old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds). Age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Disability** - A person has a disability if they have, or have had, a physical or mental impairment that 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. HIV, multiple sclerosis, and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
- **Gender reassignment** – Transgender people may have the body of one gender but feel that they are the opposite gender. The word transgender is sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as transsexual or gender-variant but usually has a narrower meaning and different connotations than gender variant, including non-identification with the gender assigned at birth.
This relates to a person 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). Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in any establishment environment.
- **Marriage and civil partnership** – Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to staff and other adults.
- **Pregnancy and maternity** - Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including stillbirths), 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. Within education it also protects children who are pregnant.
- **Race** – A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- **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 an establishment from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but children may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- **Gender identity** – Gender identity refers to a person's understanding and experience of their own gender, it is their internal sense of self. Everyone has a gender identity; for some people, it corresponds with the gender assigned at birth, and for some others, it does not. Gender identities are expansive and do not need to be confined within one collectively agreed-upon term. An individual's appearance may not inform you of their gender identity. It is important to understand that one's gender identity does not direct the way we are or the clothing we choose to wear.
- **Sexual orientation** – A person's sexual orientation is the part of their identity that relates to who they find attractive. Although it is in the name, the attraction to other people does not have to be sexual, it could be romantic, or connection-based. Some people are attracted to a particular gender, or genders, some people are attracted to who the person is (their morals, values, humour, intelligence, etc.) and for some it is a combination of the two. Sexual orientation equality is as relevant in a primary school environment as it is in a secondary school. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'questioning' or disclosing at any age. Establishments with a particular religious ethos cannot discriminate against non-heterosexual children or parents/guardians.

We understand that an individual's gender identity and sexual orientation is individual to them.

The legal duties to eliminate harassment and foster good relations make it clear that establishments must address bullying and prejudice-related incidents, based on a protected characteristic, such as racism or homophobic bullying.

The expectation in law is not only for establishments to respond when an incident occurs, but to also take steps to prevent those incidents from occurring or escalating.

Because of its relevance to the duty to eliminate harassment and foster good relations, this means that establishments should report incidents to the local authority, publish information on performance, and set objectives about bullying and prejudice-related incidents. What is published will vary according to establishment size, but it could include publishing basic data, supported by a narrative, about the number and type of incidents reported and dealt with.

Care must be taken to not publish any details that could identify specific individuals. An establishment can include relevant objectives in its development plan and it should also refresh its equality objectives at least every four years.

For more information, please familiarise yourself with the DfE's Equality Act 2010 and schools guidance.

4. Responsibilities

Governing Board

- Ensure that the establishment complies with equality-related legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher.
- Ensure all other establishment policies promote equality.
- Give due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making decisions.

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.
- Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff. It is unlawful for an employer to enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until a job offer has been made unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work – for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties. Establishments should no longer require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire. Neither should an establishment seek out past sickness records until they have made a job offer.
- Ensure that all staff and children are aware of the process for reporting and following up on bullying and prejudice-related incidents.

5. Data

We gather and analyse the following data regarding our pupils annually, and use this to compare different groups of pupils in relation to attendance, attainment, suspensions, bullying and prejudice incidents, and engagement in extracurricular activities/residentials:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Looked After Children
- Pupils with a home language other than English
- Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium

6. Equality objectives 2024-2028

Our establishment has two specific duties to assist us in meeting our general duty, set out by the Equality Act 2010.

They are:

- To publish information to show how we are complying with the equality duty. This must be updated at least **annually**.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every **four years**.

Our equality objectives are in response to this general duty:

- To improve the participation and engagement of different groups of parents and carers – because family engagement in schools contributes to positive pupil outcomes, including improved achievement, behaviour, parent-teacher and teacher-pupil relationships, as well as improved school environments.
- To improve access to school facilities for all of our pupils outside of school hours – to maximise opportunities for all of our pupils and to contribute to improved parental engagement and the positive outcomes this promotes.
- To ensure that all pupils attend school consistently to receive the full benefit of their education.

These objectives will be monitored by the Headteacher and governing board, and will be formally reported on in 2028.

7. Review of previous equality objectives

Prior to 2024, our equality objectives were:

- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all appropriate curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. We aimed to meet this objective with particular reference to issues of equality and diversity, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to people with disabilities.

Assessment, February 2024: At Mill Water School the curriculum includes diverse perspectives and materials that encourage understanding of different cultures, religions, and people with disabilities. We are guided by the National Curriculum's references to promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Our latest Ofsted inspection (2023) highlighted the curriculum and pupils' personal development as particular strengths. Teaching strategies promote inclusive learning, avoid stereotypes and encourage critical thinking about prejudice, drawing on guidance from the DfE and Ofsted on effective teaching practices. Extra-curricular activities are designed to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and we ensure that these are accessible to all pupils.

- To move beyond accepted social constructs of fixed ability and to model learning and teaching that avoids labelling. Our pupils and staff would be visibly promoting a culture of understanding both within the school and in the wider community, while taking part in a rich range of experiences, fostering good relations across people who do have protected characteristics and people who don't.

Assessment, February 2024: Our school environment is structured to encourage a growth mind-set, as advocated by educational research, and challenge the notion of fixed abilities. We are committed to equality and to removing barriers to achievement, underscored by our belief that all pupils have the potential to succeed. Staff have professional development opportunities to equip them with the skills they need to support differentiation and inclusion in their teaching. Staff are also trained to use language that reflects diversity and that does not label individuals or groups.