

# Woodside Academy



## Equality & Diversity Policy

***“We are committed to equality of opportunity for everyone. We want our children to learn positive attitudes so that they never limit the opportunities of others through stereotyping or intolerance”***

***from School Vision Statement “Excellence Through Opportunity”***

Reviewed and Agreed by SLT: January 2026

### Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Our school aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our values.

### Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#).

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### Introduction

At Woodside Academy we are committed to the principles of fairness. Valuing equality and diversity means ensuring equal opportunities for all and making sure that prejudice and stereotyping are rejected. It is about insisting on positive attitudes. Equality and diversity is for everyone because discrimination can be against either sex, married or single, those of a different sexual orientation, those from a different social class, people of different races, cultures and religions, those with different mental or physical abilities or those with different features. Discrimination does not need to be deliberate; it can be an assumption of doing things the way they have always been done that leaves out or disadvantages one group. Equality and diversity

concern not only the school community but the attitudes children take into the wider community when they leave the school. Celebrating diversity helps pupils to feel positive about themselves and hold positive views towards others, now, and in the future.

Woodside Academy upholds its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") not to discriminate directly or indirectly in any of its activities against employees or applicants for employment on the grounds of the protected characteristics.

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender re-assignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race (which includes ethnic origin, nationality and ethnic or national origins);
- Religion or belief;
- Sex; and
- Sexual orientation

It further includes fulfilling its Public Sector Equality Duty, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

While not all forms of difference are protected characteristics under the Equality Act, the school is committed to fairness and dignity for all.

## **Policy Statement**

The governing board is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity and community cohesion where the diversity of different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued.
- Promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

We expect all staff, volunteers and other workers to share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

The governing board recognises the value of and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. We are committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective and which promotes equality of opportunity. Selection will be on the basis of merit and ability, assessed against the qualifications, skills and competencies required to do the job.

We will uphold obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief.

An equality statement will be provided to all applicants for jobs. The school may, where appropriate, apply positive action to encourage applications from particular groups where they are underrepresented in the workplace. In exceptional legitimate circumstances the school may apply a genuine occupational qualification to particular role.

The school:

- Will take positive steps to create a culture through its governing board, managers and other employees, workers and volunteers, in which everyone can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and respect.
- Aims to create a work environment in which all individuals are able to give their best; where all decisions are based on merit and which is free of harassment, victimisation and bullying.
- Will provide appropriate training and support to employees to secure understanding of, and compliance with, its aim and expectations.
- Will ensure that equality issues are considered and regularly reviewed, including assessing implications for people with particular protected characteristics as an integral part of our policy development and decision-making processes.
- Will remove the possibility of any initial unconscious bias, to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of employment, such as recruitment and promotion.

Behaviour or actions by members of staff against the spirit and/or the letter of the law or this policy, including but not limited to acts of discrimination, bullying or victimisation against employees or others in the school community will be considered disciplinary matters and will be dealt with under the school's Discipline and Dismissal Procedure and may, in some cases, lead to dismissal.

### **General Principles**

Our general principles of equality and diversity are:

- We value every individual
- We treat children according to their needs and value adults according to the skills they offer and the contribution that they make
- We see differences between people as enriching
- We see all forms of prejudice and discrimination as totally unacceptable

### **The Life of the School**

The way the school works and the way members of the school community interact together should model for children a fair and equal society. The children observe and learn messages from this "hidden curriculum" of how the school functions and how the adults around them behave.

### **Scope of the Policy**

We want to promote positive attitudes and prevent unfair treatment of any individual or group. The following list gives the main areas of diversity and the same principles apply to all of these and to any other discrimination. Some groups are covered by specific legislation which places particular duties on us as a school, notably disability, gender and race.

- |              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| • Ability    | • Physical characteristics |
| • Age        | • Socio-economic           |
| • Disability | • Sexual orientation       |
| • Ethnicity  | • Religion                 |
| • Gender     |                            |

This includes not only children but staff, parents and carers, Governors, other volunteers and any visitors to the school.

### **Disseminating the Policy**

This policy will be available on the school website and distributed to new staff and governors. It will also be summarised in the staff handbook and school prospectus as these are reviewed. The full policy will be available on request to any parent and supplied in any case where a specific problem occurs.

### **Ability**

Although we rightly teach children according to their ability and select and promote staff according to theirs, we believe every child has a right to a broad, balanced curriculum. Children who may not yet have developed good literacy skills still need to be given access to a full curriculum. Name calling and teasing because of either low or high ability will not be tolerated.

### **Age**

Although we rightly treat children differently according to their age and maturity, we appoint staff on the basis of the experience, skills and qualifications that they offer and, in post, value their work on the basis of the contributions that they are able to make, rather than their age. We have tried to redress the disadvantage of the younger children born in the summer term by allowing them to start full time school in January.

### **Disability**

The initiatives for access and inclusion have made our school a place that can include a full range of differing abilities. We have a disabled toilet and shower in the nursery, and in the main school we have a large lift to access the upper floor. We need to be aware that a large percentage of the population will have a disability at some time in their lives. Our principles towards disability are:

- A disabled child should have as full access to the curriculum as possible
- A disabled child should be treated just like any other child as far as possible, although there will be some things a disabled person finds difficult there may be other things that can be done well. A difficulty doing one thing need not prevent a child from doing something else
- A disabled child should never be expected to tolerate any kind of name calling connected to the disability

### **Ethnicity**

For the purpose of this policy ethnicity can be regarded as including any particular national heritage, speaking a particular language, or being thought to be so because of physical features, surname or lifestyle, and in particular to include or traveller community.

*This section, together with the introduction and closing sections can be regarded as the Woodside Academy Race Equality Policy which we are required to have by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. We believe that the best way to ensure fair treatment for any group is to make clear that this is part of a broader policy of fairness for everyone. However, we need to remember that Race Equality is enshrined in law because of the number of people who are physically attacked or murdered every year for the colour of their skin. The same principles of dealing with racism can and should be applied to all forms of prejudice and discrimination.*

Purpose:

- To promote racial equality
- To promote good race relations
- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination

**All prejudice-based incidents are logged and monitored**The Context of the School

Grays and Chadwell St Mary are mainly white communities but the demography is changing and the number of families with other backgrounds is increasing. We have a growing minority of Eastern European children, and children of African heritage, usually from Nigeria and sometimes Yoruba speaking. The next group in size would be children of mixed heritage, and from time to time, a few Asian heritage and traveller pupils. Our particular context means that our priority in race equality is to make sure that our children are prepared to take their place in a broader multi-cultural society that may not be reflected by the immediate locality.

Promoting Race Equality and Good Race Relations

We will incorporate the promotion of race equality and good race relations into PSHE and other subject lessons as appropriate. We will also use displays, assemblies and other opportunities.

Tackling Racial Discrimination

Children and adults need to be fully aware that racial discrimination is wrong, it is disapproved of by the school and it will not be allowed to happen without challenge.

We need to be aware that some children may not complain about racism but suffer in silence. We need to be proactive with vulnerable children to be sure that discrimination and harassment are not taking place or are promptly dealt with. This may mean periodically asking them or their parents if there have been problems or conducting observations at playtimes. Children belonging to ethnic minority groups should not be expected to put up with name calling relating to their colour or culture.

What is Racist Behaviour?

Racist behaviour is defined as any hostile or offensive act or expression by person of one racial or ethnic origin against a person of another racial group or ethnic origin, or any incitement to commit such an act in such a manner that it interferes with the peace and comfort of the aggrieved person.

This should include any of the following:

- Physical abuse because of race
- Derogatory name calling
- Bullying because of race
- Insults and racist jokes
- Scribbling racist graffiti
- Distributing racist emails or other material
- Provocative behaviour, such as wearing racist badges or insignia or bringing racist materials in to school
- Verbal abuse or threats
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist way
- Racist comments in the course of discussion in lessons or ridicule of an individual for cultural differences e.g. food, music, dress etc.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people because of their ethnic origins

A principle established following the enquiry into the death of Steven Lawrence was that if a victim feels an attack or abuse they have suffered was racially motivated it should be investigated as such.

### Racism by Staff

Racist behaviour carried out by staff will invoke disciplinary procedures.

### Dealing with the impact on the school community

Racist graffiti or slogans whether on books or walls should be removed immediately on discovery and any damage repaired.

Racist literature, badges and insignia should be confiscated on discovery and the reason for not allowing them explained.

If the matter is of a particularly serious nature an assembly may also be used to clarify school policy.

## **Gender**

We may think that we are treating children the same but the expectations of the home and wider society may define children's activities. We need to not only make the whole range of the curriculum and activities open to every child but encourage children to take part in them in an equal way. We need to be aware of how stereotyping and dominance by one group will limit the opportunities of another even when something is apparently there for all. Use of the playground and technology equipment can be examples of this with boys edging girls out the way.

We will not tolerate sexual harassment at any level. The Equality Act 20 amends the Sex Discrimination Act to place a statutory duty on all public bodies (including schools), when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The act includes protection for those changing or who have changed gender. We will develop a Gender Equality Scheme to ensure that we are being proactive in ensuring equality.

## **Physical Characteristics**

Name calling and teasing because of any physical attribute, if ongoing, can feel as devaluing for the individual concerned as any other form of discrimination and needs to be responded to accordingly. This is the area to begin with in celebrating individual differences and building children's self-esteem.

## **Sexual Orientation**

At primary level the most common issue is the use of derogatory homophobic language as name calling, with the victims being boys who do not correspond to the typical male stereotype. This is not only very distressing for these children but creates an impossible climate for any children who, as they mature, could be recognising that they are developing an orientation to their own sex.

## **Socio-economic**

Children with less fortunate home circumstances already have huge disadvantages without also having to face prejudice and discrimination. We should not use statistical evidence of poorer performance of any group in the past to make presumptions about ability, but maintain high expectations for all children. We need to be welcoming to all members of the school community and in particular to establish good working relationships with parents whose own experiences of school may not have been positive. The national curriculum gives us a responsibility to teach children standard spoken English but at the same time we need to acknowledge there are regional differences and build the confidence of children in the way that they already speak. This principle applies both ways and children who already speak standard English should be encouraged and supported to continue to do so.

## Religion

Our teaching about religion should enable children to develop their own personal ideas and be tolerant to the beliefs of others. Some overlap with religious and racial prejudice can be seen from the way certain groups such as Muslims and Jews have been treated now and in the past.

## Implementation

Dealing with incidents:

Give a fair hearing to both victim, the alleged perpetrator and any witnesses, in order to establish the facts of the case. If, on balance, it appears that a pupil has perpetuated any of the above then continue as follows:

- Condemn action
- Explain clearly why it was wrong
- Focus on the action and not the child
- Follow behaviour policy in imposing an appropriate consequence according to the nature of the misdemeanour and the age of the child; from an apology, removal from the situation, loss of playtime or other activity, use of circle time or other restorative justice
- Support the victim by explaining how you and the school see this wrong
- Deal with the impact of incidents on the whole school community where necessary
- In the case of racist incidents record using the appropriate form (this will feed into the termly return to Thurrock Local Authority)
- Inform parents of victim and perpetrator
- Monitor against future incidents
- Depending on the seriousness of the incident, refer to a more senior member of staff at any point in the above

In the case of staff, an investigation should be conducted and then if appropriate followed through according to the staff disciplinary policy.

In the case of visitors or others, consider whether it is appropriate to refer to the police.

## The curriculum

Teaching equality and diversity should be an integral part of the curriculum rather than an add-on. In history, children may learn how our imperial past led to the multi-cultural nation we have today, how different groups were treated in the past compared to what is acceptable now and the contribution made by ordinary working, women and Black people. Study of the Second World War should include the lessons of the holocaust. RE should include the implicit Christian values enshrined in stories like The Good Samaritan and an open look at the beliefs and practices of other religions, which will encourage understanding and tolerance. Geography is an opportunity to look at and value the way different people in the world live. In English there are countless opportunities to look at people's feelings when treated unfairly and in the seemingly culture-free world of mathematics there are opportunities to look at how we use mathematical ideas of different cultures. In music, movement and art there is the chance to hear and look at the different cultural expressions of all kinds of people throughout the world.

## Monitoring

We need to keep a record of all racist incidents. These will be aggregated by Thurrock Council on a termly basis.

## Progress, Attainment and Assessment

We monitor progress and set targets for individuals with the help of various computer applications. This enables us to track different groups and pose question if there is evidence of any under achievement.

Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions

The race of each pupil is included in the monitoring form for every exclusion.

Admissions and Attendance

Ethnic details are requested when children join the school. In the case of unsuccessful admission applications these will also be recorded for monitoring purposes.

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

Staff recruitment complies with relevant legislation and good practice in avoiding discrimination through open advertising and clear specifications for each post.

Responsibilities

Every member of staff has the responsibility to act and speak in a way which is consistent with this policy and to refer or respond to incidents promptly. Senior Leadership Team members have responsibility to be proactive in encouraging equality and diversity and ensure that all other staff comply with the policy.

The Governing body, as a whole, has the duty to ensure that the school complies with Race Relations Legislation and that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. This may be delegated to the Principal but some monitoring by Governors is essential. One Governor will be given specific responsibility for racial equality. All Governors as individuals have the responsibility to comply with the policy in their dealings with the school.

The Principal must implement the policy and its related procedures and strategies and ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and that there is a mechanism for providing appropriate training and support. A named member of staff may be nominated as co-ordinator for Racial Equality.

**Training**

Training in equality and diversity issues will be provided for all staff in post and built into induction procedures. All training is evaluated.