

THE CHARTER SCHOOLS

EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The Charter School Bermondsey

Equality Policy

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| Reviewed by: | | | |
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| Approved by: | M Huntley (Principal) | Date: | 04/09/23 |
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1. 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.

2. The General Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and Academies.

The previous separate three equality duties (covering issues of gender, race and disability) are combined, and the scope of the duty extended to additional *protected characteristics*. The characteristics protected under the Act are:

- Race
- Disability
- Sex
- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Gender Reassignment
- Marital or Civil Partnership Status

The School is subject to the need to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act: by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics or those they are perceived to possess.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

All the above apply to the first 8 protected characteristics. The final characteristic of marital/civil partnership status is only covered by point 1 above.

Compliance with the PSED may involve the School in treating some people more favourably than others, but the School will not take steps prohibited by or under the Equality Act.

3. Having “due regard”

Having “due regard” means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty.

- Decision makers in the School will be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- The School will consider equality implications before and at the time that it develops policy and takes decisions, and not as an afterthought. The School will keep them under review on a continuing basis.
- The PSED will be integrated into the carrying out of the School’s functions, and the School will analyse the relevant information seriously, rigorously and with an open mind, to ensure that the School is complying with the PSED.
- The School will not delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to external organisations.

The School will ensure that, whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, thought is given to the equality implications.

4. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act: by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every September.

The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and an equality link governor. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

5. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have or are perceived to have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying).

Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times).

Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school enrichment activities).

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

Evaluate attainment and pastoral data each term year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing.

Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and share this information with the Standards Committee.

Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying).

Draw to governors' attention further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils.

The School will analyse the available data and publish information about the steps it has taken in response. After an appropriate period, the School will also publish data about the changes as a result of the steps taken.

6. Foster good relations between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.

Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.

Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community.

Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds.

Encouraging all pupils to participate in the school's activities, such as enrichment clubs.

We will also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

We will develop links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach.

Providing opportunities for student to interact with pupils from other schools and exchange experiences with children from different backgrounds.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school will consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example:

- Determining exclusions
- Planning school trips - consideration of religious holidays, accessibility to pupils with disabilities

Where appropriate, the school will keep a written record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions.

8. Equality objectives

Objective 1: Monitor recruitment data and trends with regard to race, gender and disability by July of each year, and report on this to the Pay Committee of the governing board.

Why we have chosen this objective: To ensure there are no structural barriers to those with protected characteristics gaining employment at CSS and to understand the extent to which our staffing body is reflective of our community.

To achieve this objective, we plan to: Implement “blind” recruitment procedures. Analyse available recruitment data from each academic year. Use current staffing data to create demographic report and compare with the student profile

Progress we are making towards this objective: Review December and July

Objective 2: Have in place positive support structure for pupils and staff identifying as LGBTQ to meet their needs better and ensure that any discrimination they experience is addressed.

Why we have chosen this objective: Charter School Bermondsey is committed to ensuring a safe and harmonious environment where pupils and staff feel valued. We know that a number of pupils openly identify as LGBTQ+ and wish to be active in shaping our provision.

To achieve this objective, we plan to: Work within an equalities award framework to develop and implement a whole school strategy.

Progress we are making towards this objective: Review December and July

Objective 3: Have in place positive support structures for pupils and staff experiencing mental health challenges.

Why we have chosen this objective: We are committed to the holistic development of staff and pupils and are aware that many are affected by mental health challenges and, in the climate in which we work and pupils learn, there are increased pressures on staff and pupils that impact on well-being.

To achieve this objective, we plan to: Work within a mental well-being award framework to develop and implement a whole school strategy. Provide targeted external support aimed at girls. Collaboration with CAMHS. Establish a staff well-being squad to develop a strategy.

Progress we are making towards this objective: Review: December and July

Objective 4: Implement an anti-racist strategy in response to the black lives matter agenda.

Why we have chosen this objective: The death of George Floyd has brought the fore our awareness of racial injustice in society. Our exploration of these issues with staff and pupils indicate there is a strong desire for the school to be actively anti-racist so we contribute to shaping a society that is free from racism.

To achieve this objective, we plan to: Establish a Diversity Squad for staff and pupils. Work with the Southwark Teaching School Alliance to provide training to support the delivery of our black lives matter strategy. The strategy includes review of HR procedures, policies, curriculum and commitment to on-going dialogue with staff and pupils.

Progress we are making towards this objective: Review: December and July

9. Monitoring arrangements

The Principal will update the equality information we publish annually.

This document will be reviewed by the governing board at least every 4 years.

This document will be approved by governing board.

10. Specific Duties

The specific duties on the School are:

- to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- to prepare and publish the School's Equality Objectives.

The School will update the published information at least annually and publish objectives at least once every four years.

The roles and responsibilities related to the Equality Plan are included in Appendix A.

As the School has fewer than 150 employees, it is not required to publish data about employees. However, the School may make public some employee-related statistics if this would demonstrate that it is complying with the General Duty, subject to the School's obligations under the DPA.

The School is obliged to publish student-related data but will take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals are not able to be identified through the publication of data. In line with DfE practice, the

School will not generally publish information which relates to fewer than 3 [students **OR** people (School staff or students)].

To demonstrate compliance with the General Duty the School publishes the following information:

- Achievement data
- Policies on Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Equal Opportunities, Pay & Recruitment on its website
- Equality schemes in relation to specified protected characteristics
- Details of staff training on the Equality Act

Appendix A

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors:

A named governor (to be updated) will take the lead; the governors as a whole are responsible for:

- Making sure the School complies with the relevant equality legislation
- Monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting annually.

The Principal will:

- Implement the School's stated equality objectives
- Ensure the equality objectives and access plans are written, and that they are readily available to governors, staff, students and parents
- Ensure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice-related incidents
- Enable reasonable adjustments to be made in relation to disability in regard to students, staff, parents/carers and visitors to the school.

All staff within the School will:

- Advance equality in their work
- Foster good relations between groups and deal with prejudice-related incidents
- Be able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Take up training and learning opportunities.

Visitors and contractors are also responsible for following relevant School policies.

Appendix B

Protected characteristics: definitions

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32-year-olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18-30-year-olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Further guidance www.gires.org.uk/mglossary.php

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth and this includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristics of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live it to be included in the definition.

Sex: A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation – protected whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.