

Equalities Policy

Introduction

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010, and believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their full potential regardless of background, identity and circumstance. We are committed to creating a school community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and cooperation.

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

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, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, sexual orientation and marital status (applicable only to staff). This policy also incorporates the school's statutory duty to produce a Single Equality Scheme. In **May 2014** the Department for Education produced a non-statutory, advisory document for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities. It was produced to help schools to understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act. It was updated to include information on same-sex marriage.

School Context

The Surrey Teaching Centre (STC) is a medical PRU providing education for children and young people based at The Children's Trust. The Trust provides rehabilitation for children or young people with an acquired brain injury and medical facilities for children requiring long term palliative care or short breaks.

Principles

Equality of opportunity at the STC is about providing equality for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the centre's community—pupils, staff, management committee and parents. It is based on the following core values:

- Growth
- Respect
- Curiosity

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

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- Our trauma informed approaches
- 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 staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

Ethos of STC

The STC opposes all forms of racism, prejudice and discrimination. The centre supports diversity which is recognised as having a positive role to play within the centre. Clear procedures are in place to ensure that all forms of bullying, including religious, racist, sexist and homophobic, are dealt with promptly and consistently and are in line with LA policies and guidance. All incidents of bullying are recorded and dealt with in line with relevant school policies. The school's anti-bullying policy is reviewed annually by all staff.

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 note 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 note that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we note 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
- Age as a protected characteristic does not apply to pupils in schools who remain free to admit and organise children in age groups and to treat pupils in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development without risk of legal challenge, even in the case of pupils over the age of 18
- 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
- Marriage and civil partnerships – 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

Unlawful behaviour

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

1. Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people.
2. Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic.
3. Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.
4. Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act, for example, making an allegation of discrimination.

Special provisions disability

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction – that is to say, it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities

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).

A Cohesive Community

- At The Surrey Teaching Centre (STC) we are responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. We therefore endeavour to prepare the pupils to make positive contributions to the society in which they belong.
- The curriculum of STC promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and of society and helps to prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

Community from the Surrey Teaching Centre's perspective

- The teaching centre's community – the pupils, their families and the centre's staff including therapists
- The immediate community – the residential and medical staff
- The community within which the centre is located – the local area
- The centre's school networks
- The community of Britain
- The global community

Roles and Responsibilities

The management committee is responsible for:

- making sure the school complies with current equality legislation
- making sure this policy and its procedures are followed

The headteacher is responsible for:

- making sure the policy is readily available and that the management committee, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it
- making sure its procedures are followed
- producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary
- making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination

All school staff are responsible for:

- modelling good practice, dealing with discriminatory incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- promoting equality and avoiding discrimination against anyone
- keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking training and learning opportunities

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with the headteacher and a nominated member of the management committee:

- coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents)
- monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of pupils

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.

Appendix One

Equality Objectives 2025-26 :

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken in order to ensure we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.

Our Equality Objectives are:

Advancing equality of opportunity: To produce resources to support schools in meeting the needs of learners with an ABI on their return to education.

Ensuring inclusive practices: To review STC's Personal Pathways curriculum to ensure that is inclusive and continues to meet the needs of all learners.