



Equality Policy

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Member of staff reviewing policy: Priya Mistry
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1. INTRODUCTION

Lighthouse School is a pioneering, dynamic, and progressive school. We strive for unequivocal excellence in everything we do, and as such, our aim is to be recognised as a sector leader at a national level for students who have a diagnosis of autism. Our vision is to deliver transformative experiences, that are destination led, for all of our students and their families.

Our Core Beliefs

We expect all staff, governors and volunteers to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others, which reflect the school's core beliefs of:

Ambition; Taking risks, having adventures, and aspiring to achieve great things.

Versatility; Exemplifying individualised and adaptive teaching and learning.

Compassion; Showing empathy and understanding of others' needs.

Innovation; Striving for creative solutions, challenging perceptions, and inspiring positive change.

Happiness; Taking joy from developing and succeeding together.

Devotion; Being dedicated to our people, our jobs, and our school community.

Optimism; Realising our limitless destinations, now and in the future.

Respect; Embracing uniqueness, equality, and ensuring all contributions are valued.

The School aims to create a culture of diversity within its community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution. Our aim is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices within the school community.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It replaces all previous UK anti-discrimination laws and regulations and provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. The Act defines nine 'protected characteristics' in relation to a person's identity, as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership apply to the School as an employer, but NOT in relation to provision for pupils.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Lighthouse School aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

In order to meet these general duties, Lighthouse School will annually:

- Publish equality information, ensuring it does not identify specific individuals, to demonstrate how we are complying with the general duties
- Publish and review Equality Objectives – which should be formally reviewed every 4 years at a maximum

3. DEFINITIONS

The Equality Act 2010 defines different kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, discrimination by association, harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people.

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.

Discrimination by association occurs when someone discriminates against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Harassment 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”.

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 Equality Act 2010.

A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information. Although not specifically covered by the Equality Act in the context of students within education, at Lighthouse School we also consider socio-economic factors, caring responsibilities and age as part of our focus on equality, diversity and community cohesion.

These factors are also part of our wider responsibilities to our staff.

4. CORE PRINCIPLES

In fulfilling our statutory duties, we are guided by seven core principles:

Principle 1: All members of the school and wider community are of equal value

We see all members of the school and wider community of equal value:

- Whether or not they have disabilities
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or socio- economic circumstances
- Whatever their gender and sexual identity
- Whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or background
- Whatever their age

Principle 2: We recognise and respect diversity

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made;
- Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- Gender and sexual orientation so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men, people who identify as LGBT+ are recognised;
- Religion, belief or faith background;
- Sexual identity; and
- Age (where appropriate).

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- Positive attitudes towards people with disability, good relations between those with/without disabilities and an absence of harassment of people with disability;
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, or national origin, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents;
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, women and men, people who identify as LGBT+ and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment; and
- Positive intergenerational attitudes and relationships.

Principle 4: We will ensure that the recruitment, retention and ongoing development of staff is undertaken in a fair and equitable manner to support our school's vision and values

Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- Whether or not they have disabilities;
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, or national origin;
- Whichever their gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity; and
- Whatever their age

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- People with and without disability;
- People of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Girls and boys, women and men;
- People who identify as LGBT+; and
- Age (where appropriate).

Principle 6: We consult widely

We engage with a range of groups and individuals to ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. Where possible we consult and involve:

- People from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Both women and men, and girls and boys;
- People who identify as LGBT+;
- People of different ages and generations
- People with disability

Principle 7: We feel that the community as a whole should benefit from our actions.

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- People with disability as well as people without disability;
- People of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Both women and men, girls and boys,
- People who identify as LGBT+; and
- People of different ages and generations.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**The Governing Body will:**

- Ensure that the equality information as set out in this statement and objectives are published and communicated throughout the School, including to staff, students and parents/carers and that:
 - This document is reviewed every year
 - Equality objectives are updated at least once every four years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Principal
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues

The Principal will:

- Implement the school's Equality Plan with support from the governing body
- Ensure all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations
- Ensure that all appointment panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities

- Promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promote respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life
- Treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including those which are prejudice-related incidents, with due seriousness.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will:

- Ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility
- Familiarise themselves and ensure compliance with the Single Equality Policy strategies and procedures
- Ensure that no one is subjected to unfair or unequal treatment or discriminatory practices and actively challenge cases of discriminatory practice
- Provide information and guidance for members of staff with regards to the Single Equality Policy, strategies and procedures
- Ensure that information on equal opportunities is incorporated into all induction processes for new or temporary staff and is supported by on-going training

All Staff will:

- Be vigilant in all areas of the School establishment for any type of harassment, prejudicial treatment, discrimination, incidents related to hate and bullying
- Deal effectively with any incidents of unfair or unequal treatment or discriminatory practices, examples may include overt name-calling or more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos throughout the School establishment with due regard for equality and positive working relationships
- Promote an inclusive curriculum and ethos which reflects our diverse society
- Keep up to date with equality legislation and developing practice by attending relevant CPD and induction programmes as well as accessing information from appropriate sources
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action to address cases of discriminatory practice and appropriately manage any reported incidents of hate, harassment or bullying
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping through the curriculum

Students will:

- Be involved in the on-going development of equality policy, procedures and strategies through student voice activities, and will understand how it relates to them, as appropriate to age and ability
- Be expected to act in accordance with the Equality Policy and report any incidents of harassment, hate or bullying incidents or discriminatory behaviour or practice
- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos and culture throughout their School establishment with due regard for equality and positive relationships
- Show respect for others in their language, culture and actions

Parents/carers will:

- Have access to information in appropriate, accessible formats
- Be informed of any incident or breach of this Policy, which may directly affect their child

6. ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

Lighthouse School is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination in all aspects of education and welfare:

Recruitment, Retention and Development of Staff

- All job adverts and job descriptions include a short statement with regards to equal opportunities.
- Selection criteria, including job descriptions and post holder specifications should be kept under review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.
- The aim of selection is to appoint the most suitable candidate in relation to the job requirements. Thus, selection criteria will relate to qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the post and any tests or exercises will be carried out in circumstances similar to the normal job environment.
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are appropriately trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Each interview panel consists of at least one member who has received Safer Recruitment training.
- All members of staff receive continuous professional development with regards to their duties under the Equality Act 2010. New members receive this as part of their induction training

Student Admissions

- Our admissions procedures will ensure that all students and their parents/carers receive comprehensive pre-entry guidance and opportunities to take part in activities which facilitate transition. Admissions procedures will be welcoming, professional and free from bias.
- The School will respond positively to disability legislation by ensuring that students with a SEND and any additional needs beyond autism are appropriately supported through the admissions process, that steps are taken to understand and plan to meet their needs, and that priority is given to physical access to buildings and learning facilities. (For further details refer to the School SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan).
- All students will have a planned induction process to identify their specific needs which is designed to prepare and plan for transition into their new learning environment.

Teaching and Learning

- Learning resources will be free from discriminatory and prejudicial assumptions, stereotypes, images and language. The only exception to this is where materials are used to promote positive discussion with regards to equality issues. Within legislative requirements the curriculum will be designed to be inclusive and to promote accessibility and progress.
- We are committed to achieving the highest standards in teaching and learning. We will seek to develop inclusive, personalised learning strategies to meet the needs of individual students to help them to achieve the best possible outcomes and qualifications for the next stages of their life and education. All students should develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that they need in order to participate in our multi-cultural and diverse society, in modern Britain and in the wider context of an inter-dependent world.
- All students will receive support appropriate to their individual needs, age and setting. School establishment members of staff will adopt an inclusive, personalised approach which recognises individual student needs.
- All students will be supported to develop a strong sense of self and belonging, through access to a curriculum that promotes self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Students will be exposed to a broad and balanced curriculum and enrichment activities that promote tolerance, acceptance of difference, celebration of diversity and respect, and respect for individual identities.

7. ADVANCING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

As set out in the Department of Education 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
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities

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

- Publish attainment data each academic 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 publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own students

8. FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- Positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- Mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

9. MONITORING THE IMPACT OF THIS POLICY

The impact of this policy will be measured through:

- Student surveys of the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and community cohesion
- Parents and carers surveys on the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and community cohesion

In addition, we will monitor other indicators on an ongoing basis, such as:

- Attainment and progress of students
- Sanctions and rewards
- Incidents of bullying and harassment
- Participation rates in trips, visits and extra-curricular activities
- Membership of the governing body
- Staffing
- Parent and carer engagement

10. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

In accordance with the Equality Act (2010) and our Equalities Policy, we have published a series of Equality Objectives. To view our current objectives please refer to the document named E&D Action Plan.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Child Protection Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEN Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy