



The North & South West Durham
LEARNING FEDERATION

Equalities Policy

Approved by:	School Committee	Date: 5 th December 2022
Signed:	Chair	
Last reviewed on:	October 2022	
Next review due:	Autumn 2026	

Equality Policy Statement

Introductory notes

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced fully in April 2011 and revised in May 2014. There was a further update in June 2018 relating to gender separation in schools.

There is no longer a requirement that schools should draw up and publish equality schemes or policies. However, it is still good practice for a school to make a statement about the principles according to which it assesses the impact on equality of its policies and practices, and according to which it establishes specific objectives.

This policy document is designed to show how the schools within the North and South West Durham Learning Federation comply with the public sector equality duty.

Aims

We must under the general duty of public sector equality duty, in the exercise of our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- ✓ Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- ✓ Consult and involve those affected in the decisions the schools take to promote equality and eliminate discrimination

These aims apply to all pupils, staff and others using the facilities across all three schools.

The protected characteristics for the schools' provisions are:

- Age (applicable to staff, governors, parents, carers)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (applicable to staff, parents, carers)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Age and marriage and civil partnership are NOT protected characteristics for the schools' provisions for pupils.

Eliminating discrimination

The North & South West Durham Learning Federation 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.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction.

The schools have Coordinators of Equality and Diversity and a federation equality link governor who meet regularly to monitor equality issues. It is their responsibility to make senior leaders and the wider governing body aware of any issues raised.

Advancing equality of opportunity

We will have **due regard** to advancing equality of opportunity including making serious consideration of the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share protected characteristics that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

We will take into account the six Brown principles of 'due regard'

- **awareness** – all staff know and understand what the law requires
- **timeliness** – implications considered before they are implemented
- **rigour** – open-minded and rigorous analysis, including parent/pupil voice
- **non-delegation** – the PSED cannot be delegated
- **continuous** – ongoing all academic year
- **record-keeping** – keep notes and records of decisions & meetings

We welcome the opportunity to be transparent and accountable. To this end we fulfil the specific duties of the Act by:

- ✓ publishing our equality information

- ✓ publishing our equality principles

We aim to make the information accessible, easy to read and easy to find

Legislation and guidance

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.

We recognise these duties are essential to reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Public Sector Equality Duties 2010.

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. (updated May 2014)

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.
We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value. We celebrate difference and foster individuality.
Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.
Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.
The pupils at our schools have a very wide range of educational, emotional

and social need. This means that our curricula, rewards and consequences and teaching and learning approaches need to be adapted for individual learners

*There are some areas where a school with a religious character can make exceptions on some certain prescribed grounds. These are discussed at the end of the document.

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 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, girls, women and men, and those who identify as non binary. We have zero tolerance toward sexual, homophobic and transphobic harassment.
- positive attitudes and understanding of those women pregnant or taking maternity leave. Also those staff taking paternity or adoption leave

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development. We endeavour to foster community cohesion between pupils and the adults supporting them.

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

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

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve all sectors of the school community.

Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit

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.

Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence

We aim to publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality.

Principle 9: Objectives

Every year we review evidence that has been collected from a range of sources such as prejudice related evidence, analysis of pupil, staff and parent questionnaires and formulate objectives to address any issues that have arisen. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

The curriculum

In each school we keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the nine guiding principles.

Ethos and organisation

We ensure the guiding principles apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- pupils' progress, attainment and achievement
- pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching styles and strategies
- admissions and attendance *
- staff recruitment, retention and professional development *
- care, guidance and support
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The schools are opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties.

There is guidance in the staff handbook on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with and staff receive

information about what to do if they become aware of an incident. Incidents are reported to Governors termly.

We take seriously the importance of recording the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with. We also investigate potential patterns and trends of incidents. We review and update our recording paperwork and procedures in response to incidents and trends.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the schools in the federation, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least every year.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Heads of School or their named senior leader.

The equality link governor will:

- Meet with the Coordinators of Equality and Diversity at Evergreen, Croft and The Oaks on a twice `yearly basis to discuss any issues and how these have been addressed.
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document.
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training.
- Report back to the full governing body regarding any issues.

The Executive Headteacher and Heads of School will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils.
- Monitor successes in achieving the objectives and report back to governors.

The Coordinators for Equality and Diversity will:

- Support the Heads of School in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils.
- Meet with the equality link governor every term to raise and discuss any issues.
- Support the Heads of School in identifying any staff training needs.

All staff are expected to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Respond to prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Incorporate the principles of this policy into the curriculum

- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

We will ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents and carers.

All staff and governors will be signposted towards a selection of resources which discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion in appropriate detail.

Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and aim to comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Staff development and training

We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development around equalities through staff meetings and briefings.

Breaches of the policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the schools' disciplinary policy.

Monitoring and evaluation

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

We collect, analyse and use data in relation to achievement, relevant and appropriate to the profile of the school.

Equality considerations in decision-making

The North & South West Durham Learning Federation ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made.

The schools consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups.

The schools keep a record (known as an Equality Impact Assessment) to show we have actively considered our equality duties and asked ourselves relevant questions.

Monitoring arrangements

The Coordinators of Equality at all three schools will update the equality information at least every year.

This document will be reviewed by The North & South West Durham Learning Federating Community Committee.

This policy was updated by:

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– Coordinator of Equality at Evergreen
–Coordinator of Equality at The Oaks
– Coordinator of Equality at Croft

October 2023