

Equality Policy

Background

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies.

As an independent school, Step by Step is not obliged to follow this guidance. However, School Leaders and Governors agree that it is good practice to observe the advice set out below.

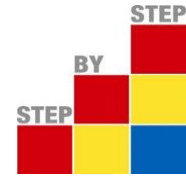
Key characteristics of our school are:

- 2 out of 28 pupils are female
- 6% of staff are male
- 60% White British, 19% White (any other background), 21 % Black and Minority Ethnic

Organisations which are exempt from the requirement to publish information on their employees may still need to collect workforce information to be able to understand the impact of their policies and practices on their workforce. They may also need to publish some information about the impact of their employment functions on people with the different protected characteristics in order to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to **have due regard to the need to:**

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- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation** and other conduct prohibited by the 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

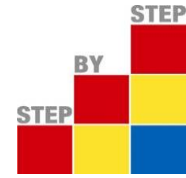
Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as outlined above i.e.:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action which may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality before and at the time that they develop policy and take decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep it under review on a continuing basis.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.



The role of the governors

School governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that the school meets the requirements of the new equality legislation. Essentially this means that governing bodies must:

- ensure the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that its employees do not carry out unlawful discriminatory actions or behaviour
- support and guide the school to have 'due regard' for equality in all its functions

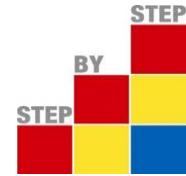
This Equality Policy for Step by Step brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and well-being outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies. It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation.

Within our school we have a diversity of backgrounds, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins amongst our staff and pupils. However, we have a much higher proportion of female staff and male pupils. All of our pupils have 'special educational needs'.



Overall aims of our Equality Policy

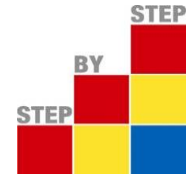
- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.
- To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- **Shared Humanity** - Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.
- **Valuing difference and diversity** - We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- **Interdependence, interaction and influence** - We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- **Social cohesion within our school and within our local community**
- **Excellence** - We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world.
- **Personal and cultural identity** - We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- **Fairness and social justice** - We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.



Our vision statement about Equality

Step by Step seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

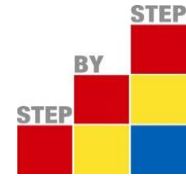
We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- preparation for entry to the school
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school activities and off-site visits
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school

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- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Head Teacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish key information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our governing body will:

- Ensure robust monitoring and evaluation procedures of the policy and objectives
- support the Head Teacher in implementing any actions necessary
- evaluate and review the policy bi-annually and the objectives every 4 years

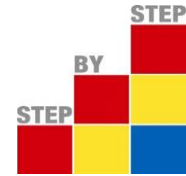
Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Head Teacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy

Our pupils will:

- as far as possible, be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability through the use and implementation of social stories
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

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Our parents/carers will:

- be made aware of the Policy review and be invited to make comments
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

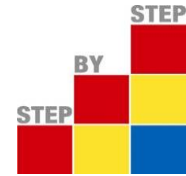
- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Policy review and development

We will involve the whole of our school community in the process of monitoring and reviewing this Policy. We will consider contributions from people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010 and keeping the dialogue open to ensure that people feel free and able to share their views at any time.

We will give careful consideration to gathering the views of:

- **Our pupils**
 - Accessing their views through appropriate/accessible means – i.e. social stories
- **Our staff**
 - Ensuring all staff members are able to make a contribution
 - Our school governors
 - Involving governors in the process
 - Parents/carers
 - Accessing all parents/carers and encouraging them to contribute



Our community

- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups and supporting their engagement
- Contacting local, relevant community and voluntary groups

How we developed our Policy - Using information

We have used data and other information about our school as a common sense measure to determine the effects of a policy, practice or project on different groups. This information helps us to analyse whether what we are planning potentially has a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). They help us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. They help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

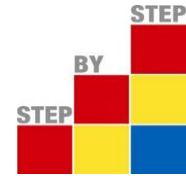
We know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves. For example, we record information relating to the age, gender, faith and ethnicity of our pupils, staff and Governors on a bi annual basis, in line with updating the policy. In addition, we carry out a self-evaluation framework to monitor the make-up and needs of our pupils and staff and identify our strengths and those areas requiring action.

OFSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We monitor the levels of incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender and report any incidents to the governing body as part of our school monitoring procedures.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us by staff, pupils or parents/carers, less formally or even anonymously.

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.



Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects all of our staff from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We recognise that our workforce is drawn from a certain geographical area and may not always reflect our student population. Step by Step is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes employees and governors from diverse backgrounds.

In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

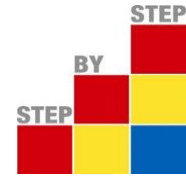
Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

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We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

See Anti-bullying Policy.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy will be actively promoted and disseminated.

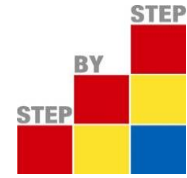
Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report bi-annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

Equality Objectives

Through analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed every 4 years.

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Policy	Equality
Statutory requirement?	No
Approved	November 2018
Responsible Officer	GA/SM
Responsible Governor/s	CJ
Date of previous version	November 2016
Frequency of Review	Every 2 years