



***‘Improving the quality of family life’***

## **Equality Policy & Objectives**

### **Introduction**

Snowflake School welcomes pupils, staff, workers, parents, visitors and trustees from all different ethnic backgrounds and creeds and fully respects the diversity of every part of our school community.

At Snowflake School we believe that valuing diversity means actively recognising the strengths, talents and needs of every individual and every community. We nurture the potential, and maximise opportunities, for all.

We know that despite government legislation, discrimination still exists, and it is our responsibility as a school to address this, when and if it does occur. Every member of the school community should expect to be treated fairly and have equal entitlements to any other member.

### **Background**

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to the protected characteristics of **age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.**

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Kerry Sternstein

We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or a member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have any of these protected characteristics.

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

As an independent school, there is no statutory duty for Snowflake School to publish an equalities policy. However, school leaders and trustees are committed to the principles of equality and diversity, and ensuring these are promoted within the school environment.

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To heighten awareness of, and address, any discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To provide an environment in which all our children/adults feel comfortable and at ease about their gender, age, sexual orientation, race, culture, religion, social class, disability, special educational need and/or background.
- 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.
- To ensure members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are made aware of any issues which contravene the policy in order that the Head, or member of the SLT can tackle the issue appropriately.

### **Our Approach**

Our specific equality objectives are attached to this Policy in Appendix 1. In addition to these specific objectives, the school takes a whole-school approach to equality, community cohesion and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

## **Teaching and Learning**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement possible. We also aim to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. To do this, we will:

- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, the local community and the wider population in terms of the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture, and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider; by giving them access to materials that are matched to their needs, visual aids and social stories
- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.
- All teaching and resources are individualised so that each pupil can access this at the level that meets their needs.

## **Admissions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on any of the protected characteristics. All pupils attending Snowflake School do require an Education, Health and Care Plan, as well as a primary diagnosis of autism.

Please see the school's Admissions Policy for further information.

## **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 pupils and staff.

## **The roles and responsibilities within our school community**

The Trustee Board is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. A member of the Trustee Board has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

- Our Trustee Board will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy and its objectives.
- The Head teacher is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of this policy, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given the necessary training and support. The Head teacher will also report progress to the Trustee Board.
- Our SLT is responsible for raising awareness of this policy and dealing with complaints. All SLT should take due responsibility for their Line Managed areas.
- Our staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, and maintain a good level of awareness of equality issues.
- Our pupils learn about their individual differences, strengths and weaknesses and the importance of treating one another equally through their individualised programmes.
- All members of the school community have the right to feel valued. They have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, and to speak out if they witness, or are subject to, any inappropriate language or behaviour.
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to school adhere to our commitment to equality.

## **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.

We would also prevent 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. Snowflake School is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes employees and trustees 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. Nor do we 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.

Our staff team undertake annual training to help them understand their equality duties, and/or the differing needs of those with protected characteristics within our school community.

## **Breaches to the policy**

All staff are expected to be aware of this policy and procedures related to it. Any member of staff is expected to challenge and report inappropriate behaviour to the SLT, who will follow this up.

Any issues which contravene this policy, or which an individual does not feel has been properly addressed by the SLT, can be reported using the steps in the Whistleblowing Policy.

See Whistleblowing Policy for further information.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Equality Objectives:**

1. To provide access to our pupils of a wide range of faith and cultural opportunities
2. To ensure our workforce have equalities training, are confident to raise and challenge any elements of discrimination within the school community
3. To ensure we continually monitor our recruitment procedures to encourage applications from a diverse background.