

Stepgates Community School



Equalities Policy

Mission Statement

At Stepgates Community School everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow together, as independent, enthusiastic and confident learners, in a creative, healthy and safe environment.

This policy is based on our Mission Statement, Vision and Aims for our school.

Introduction

Stepgates Community School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The recruitment and appointment of staff, school policies and procedures always consider the safeguarding of children as the first priority.

This policy reflects the Single Equality Act 2010. The Single Equality Act combines the existing three duties into one new Equality Duty that covers all nine of the equality strands: sex, age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and marital status. In this school we will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of the school community and its life, everyone will be treated equally. This Equalities Policy is supported by our Single Equality Scheme (published annually), which is linked to our School Development Plan, and includes targets for promoting equality.

The school also publishes an Accessibility Plan for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

What sort of school are we?

Stepgates is one of the oldest schools in Chertsey and our building stems from the late nineteenth century with modern additions. We have approximately 200 children including an on-site 20 place Specialist Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Centre. The majority of children come from the Chertsey area mostly within 3 miles of the school, which is one of the more socially deprived areas in Surrey. Children in the SLCN Centre are from across NW Surrey and are brought to school by taxis. The majority of children are White/British although we have an increasing number of children with English as an Additional Language across the school. We have a very high level of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), this is partly due to our on-site Specialist SLCN Centre, though our mainstream SEN is still well above the national average. Approximately 10% of our children are from traveler families, mainly fairground who are based with us and travel for varying lengths of time. Approximately 20% of children are known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and Pupil Premium funding. We have a number of vulnerable children in the school whose families are involved with Social Services, some of whom are on the Child Protection Register for a variety of reasons.

School's Aims and Values

At Stepgates Community School we believe we are an inclusive school where we promote equality in our policies and procedures, and most importantly in our day-to-day practices and interactions with the whole school community.

Our School Values are concerned with mutual respect, cultural diversity, social inclusion and community cohesion and contribute to the establishment of a positive climate for teaching and learning: Respect, Collaboration, Resilience, Integrity, Compassion, Courage, and Pride.

Our school Aims are based on our Mission Statement and Values.

We aim for everyone in our school community:

- To be healthy, happy and active people.
- To stay safe and know how to make the right choices.
- To believe in ourselves and achieve more than we thought possible.
- To make a positive contribution to our family, school local and global community.

We aim for our school:

- To encourage enquiring, creative and responsible learning.
- Be healthy, happy and active people.
- Stay safe and know how to make the right choices.
- To be prepared for life in the 21st century as responsible citizens.
- To embed our school values in all that we do.
- To have a whole school ethos that promotes respect and pride in our school and community.
- To have a creative and inspiring curriculum based on innovative practice in teaching and learning.
- To embed parental involvement in their children's learning and learning through school activities and after school activities and clubs.

The Governing Body of this school is firmly committed to pursuing equality and excellence for all staff, children and the wider school community, within a community where children are well prepared for life in a diverse and pluralist society.

Relationship to other documents & policies

This policy links to other specific policies and action plans that the school produces including:

- Single Equality Scheme
- Accessibility Plan
- School Development Plan
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Display Policy
- Ending Bullying and Harassment Policy

- Inclusion Policy
- Induction Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Self Evaluation Policy
- Policy Against Bullying
- PSHE Policy
- RE Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

Our objectives are:

- To ensure that all learners have equal access to a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- To advance equality of opportunity by ensuring that teaching, learning and the curriculum promote equality, celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion by fostering good relations.
- To eliminate any discrimination, harassment and victimisation. To ensure that no-one is unfairly or illegally disadvantaged as a consequence of their sex, age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and marital status.
- To recognise and celebrate diversity within our community whilst promoting community cohesion.
- To ensure that this policy is applied to all we do
- To ensure that pupils and parents are fully involved in the provision made by the school.
- To ensure that within the school budget, adequate funding is provided to underpin this policy and that intervention, positive and preventative action is funded where necessary.

Through the Equalities Policy, the school seeks to ensure that no child, staff, parent, carer or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be legally justified.

We acknowledge that it is very important for us all to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible, and in providing a high quality learning experience for all our children. We actively encourage a culture of consideration and respect for others. We promote equality by recognising and celebrating differences between people. This should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community, children, staff, governors, parents and community members.

We consciously work and aim to:

- develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to participate fully in school life. We will seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination against children and staff by adhering to our duties as an employer under the current legislation;
- to offer all our children equal access to an inclusive, broad and balanced curriculum, which will enable them to fulfil their potential, regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, cultural or home background or disability;

- to identify and remove barriers to disabled children in every area of school life. We will make reasonable adjustments to make sure that the school environment is as accessible as possible;
- actively tackle and eliminate discrimination and bias against any member of the school;
- promote appreciation and respect for each other including promoting good relations between people of different groups;
- create an atmosphere and ethos that fosters a positive attitude to diversity;
- work with parents, carers and the wider community to tackle discrimination and to follow and promote good practice;
- build community cohesion not only within the school but by establishing links with other schools and the wider community;
- involve the whole school community in the development and implementation of this policy;
- encourage, support and help all children and staff to achieve more than they thought possible;
- enrich the linguistic experiences of all children and recognise and celebrate the linguistic diversity of British society.

GOOD PRACTICE

- We strive to achieve a cohesive community and expect that children respect one another and behave with respect to one another, and that their parents feel fully engaged in the school.
- We aim to enhance a wider sense of community locally, as well as in the context of the UK and the World communities.

Through our policies and actions, we undertake to ensure that every child and young person is healthy, safe, is able to enjoy and achieve in their learning experience, and is able to contribute to the wider community.

- We consider it prudent and sensible to maintain the practice of logging racist incidents and reporting them to the local authority. We monitor and log incidents that discriminate against children and young people or adults in our school with protected characteristics, eg homophobic bullying. We also monitor and log bullying incidents, particularly those directed towards those with special educational needs.

STRATEGIES

- Monitoring, evaluation and review carried out by the Leadership Team will ensure that procedures and practices within the school reflect the objectives of this policy.
- Parents and governors will be involved and consulted about the provision being offered by the school.
- Teachers will ensure that the teaching and learning takes account of this policy.
- The diversity within our school and the wider community will be viewed positively by all.
- Diversity will be recognised as a positive, rich resource for teaching, learning and the curriculum.

- Professional development opportunities will be provided for staff to provide them with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to meet the requirements of this policy.
- Contributions will be sought from parents and others to enrich teaching, learning and the curriculum.
- The positive achievements of all pupils will be celebrated and recognised.

OUTCOMES

This policy will play an important part in the educational development of individual pupils.

- It will ensure that all pupils are treated equally and as favourably as others.
- The school will make all reasonable adjustments to promote equal opportunity and equal treatment of all members of the school community.
- We are committed to meeting the individual needs of each child and will take full account of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation in accordance with the requirements of The Single Equality Act 2010

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE

- The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.
- Our equality objectives are based on our analysis of data and other evidence. Our equality objectives focus on those areas where we have agreed to take action to improve equality and tackle disadvantages.
- We will regularly review the progress we are making to meet our equality objectives.

Equality objective 2022 – 2026

Identify opportunities in the curriculum to look at other cultures/countries, study famous people from ethnic minorities and with a variety of abilities and to celebrate diversity. Use collective worship as an opportunity to celebrate festivals of a range of cultures and countries. Use events like World Cup, Olympics as an opportunity to explore other cultures.

Review due: Autumn 2026

Appendices:

Appendix A: The latest Legislation – The Equality Act 2010

Appendix A:

Explanatory note about the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brought together previous discrimination legislation to provide one legislative scheme preventing discrimination because of "protected characteristics" in certain circumstances.

"Protected characteristics" are:

- Gender (including transsexual status)
- Race (including colour, ethnic origin, ethnicity, nationality and national origin)
- Sexual orientation (heterosexuality, homosexuality or bi-sexuality)
- Religion or belief (including being of no religion or belief)
- Age
- Disability (see further below)
- Pregnancy and maternity status
- Marriage and civil partnership status

Circumstances in which discrimination must not occur include employment, the provision of facilities and services and education (although age is not a protected characteristic for the purpose of education). Unlawful discrimination may occur not only if a person has one of the protected characteristics, but if they are perceived to have that characteristic, or if they associate with a person who has that characteristic. So for example it would be unlawful to discriminate against a pupil because they have gay parents, or against a staff member who is perceived (incorrectly) to be of a particular religion.

All aspects of employment are covered, including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices such as dress codes and disciplinary procedures.

There are certain exemptions which are relevant to schools, in particular permitting competitive sporting activities to be carried out separately by gender, and allowing proportionate positive action to be taken to address disadvantage experienced by a group who share a protected characteristic (for instance additional classes to support an underachieving gender or racial group).

Unlawful discrimination can be:

- Direct discrimination (less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic). There is can only ever be potentially justified in the case of age discrimination.
- Indirect discrimination (having an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice which puts people with a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and which cannot be shown to be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim). A potential example of indirect discrimination would be a requirement that members of staff work full time. This will put women at a particular disadvantage (because of childcare responsibilities women are statistically less able to work full time than men). Whether this would be unlawful would depend on whether it could be justified.
- Harassment

- Victimisation (treating someone unfavourably because they have previously raised a concern about discrimination, or supported someone else in doing so). Protection from victimisation also specifically extends to a pupil whose parent or sibling has made a complaint of discrimination.

Disability discrimination

Disability is defined very widely under the Equality Act, and covers anyone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term (which means lasting or likely to last for 12 months or more) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The adverse effect must be more than trivial. As well as all of the types of unlawful discrimination already described, there is a positive duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees/applicants for employment, pupils and service users. A failure to make reasonable adjustments is in itself a form of unlawful disability discrimination.

Indirect disability discrimination includes discrimination arising from disability *arising from* disability which occurs when a person is treated unfavourably because of something arising "in consequence of" his/her disability and it cannot be demonstrated that this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, dismissing an employee because he takes more time off work than colleagues because he is suffering from depression is likely to meet the test for discrimination arising from disability unless the employer can put forward a defence of justification.