

Selworthy Special School

Equalities information and objectives

Ratified by Governors
Date: March 2020

Selworthy School welcomes a diverse population of both learners and staff. In order to consolidate and build upon this diversity, it is essential that equality of opportunity and the absence of unfair discrimination be at the core of all the School's activities.

The School recognises the link between equality and quality and will not unfairly discriminate in the recruitment or general treatment of staff or learners on the basis of any factor which is not relevant to academic achievement.

The School is committed to promoting and developing equality of opportunity in all its functions and will seek to do this by:

- communicating its commitment to equality and diversity to all members of the community;
- communicating where responsibility lies for equality issues;
- providing training for decision-makers and briefings for staff and students;
- maintaining mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review;
- treating acts of discrimination as a disciplinary offence;
- consulting with trade unions, interested groups and individuals, internal and external.

The Local Governance Committee and Trust Board have responsibility for ensuring that the School operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the School. Discriminatory issues are dealt with by the appropriate committee.

In addition, each member of the School community is responsible for preventing unfair discrimination or harassment or victimisation which it is within their control to prevent; and challenging or reporting such in appropriate behaviour if it occurs.

In order to meet this duty the school will:

- Establish with all staff an overall vision of the duty to promote equality of opportunity for all
- Advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and nondisabled people, women and men, and between different racial and minority ethnic groups
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of disability, gender, race or ethnicity. It is the Responsibility of the school's Leadership Team to meet the duty:
- Raise awareness through training for all staff & governors, and through promoting the Equality Statement to all parents and pupils.
- Ensure that all policies and practices within the school are impact assessed against the aims above.
- Monitor, report and act on any incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Provide appropriate resources and a curriculum that promotes good relations and understanding of equality and diversity.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introductory notes

Since the Equality Act 2010 came into effect in April 2011 there has no longer been a requirement that schools should draw up and publish equality schemes or policies. It is still good practice, however, for a school to make a statement about the principles according to which it reviews the impact on equalities of its policies and practices, and according to which it gathers and publishes information, and decides on specific objectives.

Legal framework

1. 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, ethnicity, gender (including issues of transgender, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, and sexual identity.
2. We welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion.
3. We recognise that these duties 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.

Guiding principles

4. In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by seven principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.

We see all learners and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity.

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, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background
- sexual identity.

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 and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.

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:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

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 between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- people of all gender identities.

Principle 6: We consult and involve 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. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled

- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- people of all gender identities
- With people whatever their sexual identity

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 of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- people of all gender identities
- people, whatever their sexual identity.

The curriculum

5. We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the principles set out in paragraph 4 above.

Ethos and organisation

6. We ensure the principles listed in paragraph 4 above apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- learners' progress, attainment and achievement
- learners' personal development, welfare and wellbeing
- 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 parent carers and guardians
- working with the wider community.

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

7. The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties referred to in paragraphs 1–3:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, for example antisemitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

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

9. We keep a record of prejudice-related incidents and, if requested, provide a report to the local authority about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how they are dealt with.

Roles and responsibilities

10. The local governance committee is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

11. The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

12. The HR and Facilities Manager has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy.

13. All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the principles in paragraph 4 above
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Information and resources

14. We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all learners and their parent carers.

Religious observance

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

Staff development and training

16. We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Breaches of the policy

17. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the executive headteacher and local governance committee.

Monitoring and review

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