



The West Somerset Academies Trust



Equal Opportunities & Accessibility Policy

All children and staff will have the same protection regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity. We are committed to antidiscriminatory practice and recognise the additional needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.

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Date:	October 2018	
Approved by Academic Board:		
Review date:	March 2021	
Reviews:	Date:	By:
	March 2021	Paul Rushforth

1 Introduction

1.1 The West Somerset Academies Trust is committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of children's varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.

This Equal Opportunities Policy extends to adults: staff, parents and carers in all WSAT schools.

1.2 This policy is in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all previous legislation in relation to equal opportunities. In line with that legislation, it seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with 'protected characteristics', in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 We aim to act positively and have due regard to the need to challenge and eliminate unlawful discrimination – within both our schools and our community.

2.2 We aim not to discriminate against anyone, be they staff, child or parent, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, level of educational need or background.

2.3 We aim to promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some children differently.

2.4 We seek to ensure that all children have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the schools.

2.5 We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups of children.

2.6 We aim to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

2.7 We aim to challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

2.8 We value each child's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school communities, and showing respect for all minority groups.

2.9 We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are often caused by poor self-image and also aware of the relationship between that and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

3 Racial equality

3.1 In our schools and nurseries we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion;

- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
- seek to educate children in a manner which promotes community cohesion in a multicultural society.

3.2 We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school and nursery behaviour policies.

3.3 We endeavour to make our schools welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the schools.

4 Disability non-discrimination

4.1 Some children in our schools may have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not disadvantaged compared with non-disabled children.

4.2 The WSAT is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning.

4.3 Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, ensure access, modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

4.4 Each Individual school will have an Accessibility Policy/Action Plan which is reviewed every 3 years which shows commitment to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all children, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs.

5. Gender equality

5.1 We recognise that nationally, there is an unacceptable discrepancy in the achievement of boys and girls. We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of children making the best progress possible in our schools.

5.2 We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of the boys, in literacy in particular. These may include:

- ensuring that early literacy skills are promoted in all activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- removing gender bias from our resources and ensuring, for example, that fiction books capture boys' interest;
- employing a variety of activities, and include a kinaesthetic element;
- making sure that our school environment promotes positive male role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- minimising male stereotyping;

- providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate boys.

5.3 If our analysis of pupils' attainment data indicates areas where girls achieve less well than boys, for example in mathematics or science, we will take measures to address this discrepancy. These may include:

- ensuring that boys do not dominate certain lessons, for example by answering the teacher's questions more readily;
- ensuring that mathematical and scientific subject matter is relevant to real life situations and problems;
- beginning lessons by clarifying the learning intentions, and giving the 'big picture';
- minimising female stereotyping and learning about female role models, for example, in the realms of science, technology and sport;
- using praise and celebration of girls' achievements in those areas where they may traditionally achieve less well than boys.

5.4 We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to the relative achievement of boys and girls. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group does not do so at the expense of the other.

6 The role of the class teacher

6.1 Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices but do their best to ensure that all children are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.

6.2 When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.

6.3 We seek to implement this policy when planning lessons, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

6.4 All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. Staff record any incidents on Epraise and draw them to the immediate attention of the Headteacher.

7 The role of the WSAT Leadership Team (CEO, COO, Headteachers, Human Resources and Payroll Manager)

7.1 WSAT Leaders should be implementing this policy at a school level by:

- ensuring that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;

- ensuring that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;
- promoting the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for children, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- promoting respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school. Respect is of the key Christian values adopted by the school.
- managing all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due seriousness, and in line with this policy.

8 The role of Governors and Trustees

8.1 All Governors and Trustees must recognise their commitment to equal opportunities and accessibility, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

8.2 The Governors and Trustees collect, analyse and evaluate a range of school data. It's main role is to monitor extent to which children are making the best possible progress and that no group of children is underachieving. To do this they monitor:

- the individual schools self-evaluation and development plan;
- admissions;
- attainment and progress of all children but including gender differences, vulnerable children including SEND, Pupil Premium qualifying children and Children Looked After.
- performance for all sub groups of children against national data;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parents' and children's' questionnaires.

8.3 The Governors and Trustees seek to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010 (see section 1.2 above) are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The Governors and Trustees welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group a child may come from.

8.4 The Governors and Trustees take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

9 Monitoring and review

9.1 It is the responsibility of the WSAT Leadership Team (CEO, COO, Headteachers, Human Resources and Payroll Manager) and relevant Local Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. They will do this by:

- monitoring the progress of children from minority groups, vulnerable groups and gender differences comparing it with the progress and attainment made by other pupils in the schools and nationally;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or children regarding equal opportunity;

- monitor the school's reward and sanction systems and Behaviour Policy, including the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that children from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board every two years or sooner if needed in response to any concerns.