

# Freegrounds Infant School Equality Policy



## 1. Introduction

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Employment Equality Policy.

## 2. National and Legal Context

We recognise that we have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the school community to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (applicable only to staff), disability, race, gender (including issues of transgender), maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual orientation and marital status (applicable only to staff).

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## 3. School Context

Freegrounds Infant School is located in Hedge End to the north of Southampton. It shares a site with Freegrounds Junior School. The school opened in 1969 and rapidly expanded to three form entry to meet the demands of the growing catchment.

Since opening, the school has consistently provided a high standard of education and was delighted to be awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark in June 2016. The school was upgraded to Centre of Excellence Status in September 2017, a status which was once again verified in July 2023. In June 2023 the school also received the Silver award for Rights, Respects and Responsibilities. In 2023, the school was inspected by Ofsted and was graded as "Good".

The school's success is based on our commitment to providing a broad and balanced education which promotes high standards of achievement for every child. We aim to kindle the joy of learning and the excitement of discovery, and we ensure that each child has time to explore, investigate, ask questions and share ideas.

## 4. Principles

To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

### 4.1 All pupils, families and staff are of equal value

We see all pupils, potential pupils, their parents and carers, and staff 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 and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age

### 4.2 We recognise and respect difference

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we understand that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs
- Religion and belief – we acknowledge that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we appreciate that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

#### **4.3 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 and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

#### **4.4 We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff**

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

#### **4.5 We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

#### **4.6 We consult and involve to ensure views are heard**

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

#### **4.7 We aim to foster greater community cohesion**

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

#### **4.8 We base our practices on sound evidence**

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information can be found in Appendix A to this policy statement.

#### **4.9 We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives**

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in Appendix B to this policy statement and take into account both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

### **5. Application of the principles within this policy statement:**

The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance

- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

## 6. Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

The headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons
- support pupils in their class who have additional needs

## 8. Equality Objectives

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

- *eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under 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*

We have also involved staff, pupils, parents and others in the following ways:

- *focus groups*
- *parent questionnaires*
- *involvement of the student council*
- *staff survey*
- *contact with parents representing pupils with particular protected characteristics*

We have considered how well we currently achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

Having referred to and analysed our equality information, we have updated the objectives on the School Accessibility Plan. Please scroll down to read Appendix A Equalities Information

**Date of publication:** February 2023      **Date for review and re-publication:** February 2026, May 2025

Next review: May 2028

<b>Version control Changes:</b>	
V.2 - 12/3/2024	Update to Point 3 school context to acknowledge the school receiving Unicef RR award at Silver Level and Ofsted taking place in March 2023. Update of Appendix Item A to reflect current school attainment data. Removal of Appendix B – Equality Objectives – and reference made to the Accessibility Plan where these targets are recorded and actions identified to achieve them. Date of Publication and Date of review and republication amended to reflect current 3 year policy review window. Footer changed to reflect the new policy window of 2024-2027
V.3 – 19.5.2025	Removal of Appendix A which contains equality information which is duplicated in Accessibility Plan.