

The Oaktree School Single Equality Plan

Policy Responsibility: Headteacher

If you would like this information in an alternative format that would better suit your needs eg: easy to read, large print, Braille, audio tape or if you would like the Scheme to be explained to you in your language please contact:

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Next Review: Autumn 2022



Single Equality Plan

Foreward

This Single Equality Scheme brings together the school's approach for promoting equality in our policies and procedures and, most importantly in our day-to-day practices and interactions with the whole school community.

Our scheme includes our whole school – pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers and all those within our extended school community, such as neighbouring schools and learning organisations.

We acknowledge that it is very important for us all to work together in achieving our aim of being fully inclusive and accessible and ultimately in providing a quality learning experience for our children and young people.

What is the Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan?

Our Single Equality Scheme (SES) and action plan covers a three-year period from 2019 to 2021. It integrates our statutory duties in relation to race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, age, marriage and civil partnerships and promoting community cohesion. The duties cover staff, pupils and people using the services of the school such as parents and community and includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

Our Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan enables us to achieve a framework for action which covers all six equality strands and ensures that we meet our responsibilities of the public sector duties in an inclusive way.

We will continue to meet our statutory duties by reporting annually (see Section 14) on the progress of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan. This will be reviewed by our Governing Body and will cover activity undertaken in relation to the seven equality strands and promoting community cohesion.

1. Mission statement

At The Oaktree School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, gender re-assignment, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At The Oaktree School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

We respect diversity. We know that treating people equally is not simply a matter of treating everyone the same. We believe the process of taking necessary steps to ensure that every young person is given an equality of opportunity to develop socially, to learn and to enjoy community life. This means that we do our best to make reasonable adjustments for disability, recognise and celebrate cultural differences, and understand the different needs and experiences of boys and girls.

We know that equalities is not simply about protecting the potentially vulnerable. We believe that all children may be disadvantaged by the holding of prejudicial views, and seek to promote good relationships between all groups, and positive attitudes towards disabled people, people from different ethnic or cultural groups or faith backgrounds and people of different gender or sexual orientation. We are proactive in our efforts to identify and minimise existing barriers or inequalities

We value staff for their ability and potential to help us make the best possible provision for the children in our school, regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious belief, national origin, gender or sexual orientation. We seek the views of all groups affected by the policies and work of our school,

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and try to involve them in policy review. We recognise our role in promoting community cohesion, and actively encourage the participation in public life of all learners in our school.

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways.

Teaching and learning

The Oaktree School is an inclusive school. We use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those it serves and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil her or his potential. We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- 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, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Wellbeing (Behaviour) Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at The Oaktree School.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Equality and the law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Disability Equality Duty (2005) and Equality Act (2006).

The action plan at the end of this Equality Plan outlines the actions The Oaktree School will take to meet the general duties detailed below.

4a. Race Equality

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This section of the plan reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equality Plan which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these pupils;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such pupils, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

4b. Disability

This section should be read in conjunction with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and Accessibility Strategy. Our Accessibility Plan ensures that we plan for our disabled pupils over time to:

1. Increase access to the curriculum
2. Make improvements to the physical environment of the school to increase access
3. Make written information accessible to pupils in a range of different ways

We must ensure that disabled pupils do not receive less favourable treatment and to do this the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;

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- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Disability Equality Scheme identifying our disability equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4c. Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male pupils and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an Equality Plan which covers the requirements for a Gender Equality Scheme identifying our gender equality goals and actions to meet them;
- Review and revise this Scheme every three years.

4d. Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for pupils and treatment of pupils.

4e. Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between pupils from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. Consultation and involvement

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent-school forum meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting;
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school,
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this plan and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.

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- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

The role of the Headteacher

- It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Plan and she is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

- All staff will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Plan.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the headteacher.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headteacher where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

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Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:

‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’.

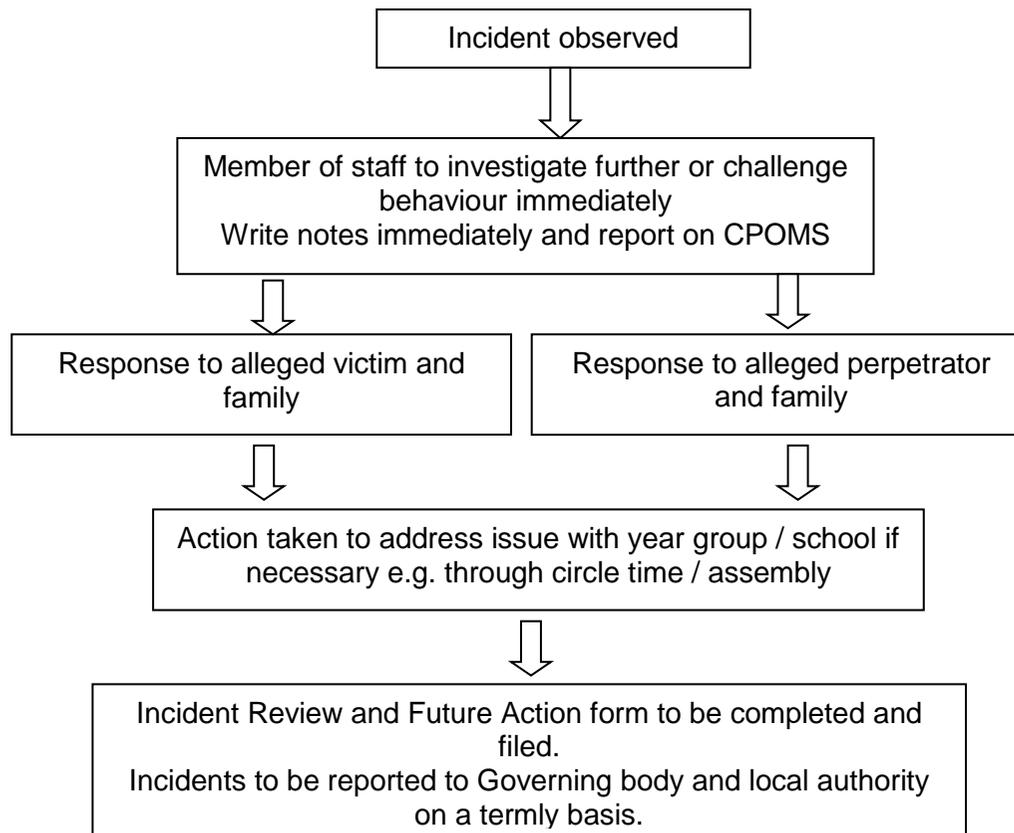
Types of discriminatory incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim’s race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Discrimination via electronic media.

Responding to and reporting incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.



8. Review of progress and impact

The Plan has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Plan annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three year cycle.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

9. Commissioning and Procurement

The Oaktree School is required by law to make sure that when we buy services from another organisation to help us provide our services, that organisation will comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in selection during any tendering process.

10. Publishing the plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

- Publish our plan on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, Annual Report to Parents, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.

APPENDIX A

What we have achieved so far:

Race equality

We have had two racist incidents in school during 2018-19 where; one child refused to hold hands with another child with a different skin and another incident in which a child told another child that they did not like the colour of their skin. Both incidents were dealt with as per this policy.

Disability equality

- Currently we have no disabled pupils or staff with accessibility problems. All pupils and staff are fully involved in the life of the school and have full access to all we offer.
- We do have parent with accessibility issues and we have been working closely with this parent to ensure we overcome any barriers. We have replaced the disability ramp at the entrance to the Foundation Unit to make easier access and widened the path around the school to make it more wheelchair friendly.
- If we foresee that mobility could be an issue for staff or a pupil, action will be taken. We recognise that the steps into the hall are not conducive to independent access for a wheelchair user.

Attainment

Ofsted 2008 said:

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well given their capabilities. This is due to very careful tracking and effective interventions to support those not making enough progress, good teaching which fully engages pupils in their learning, and high quality care.

In addition we believe that The Oaktree School can also celebrate the following good practice:

Community cohesion

In addition to the detailed description given above, we also undertake the following:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – Our curriculum is fully accessible to all children. Parents are regularly informed of the learning to take place both in newsletters and through open meetings. We feel our curriculum has a global perspective, enabling children to see themselves in context of the wider world community. Our older children, through the PSHE and RE curriculum, have a sound understanding of difference and how different is neither better or worse – it is something to be celebrated.
- Engagement and extended services. All our children have access to a range of extended services. The PSA ensures hard to reach families are included.

Age

We feel that some elements of a child's involvement in school discussions is developmental, however there is representation on our School Council from children of all ages. The School Council meets regularly and is supported by a member of staff. They disseminate discussions and decisions via whole school assemblies and class discussions.

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As children progress through the school they begin to gain responsibilities. These encourage children to become fully involved in the life of the school and to gain an understanding of what it means to be an active member of a community.

Religion or belief

In the foundation stage and in Key Stage 1, pupils are taught about the major festivals of the world religions, and about Christianity, Islam and Judaism in detail. Factual information is given about the different religions, but more importantly children are taught to respect faith and belief. Worship and prayer are explored in the context of all religions and we try to impart on children how important faith, belief, worship and prayer are to some people.

Even though The Oaktree School is not a denomination school, we have very close links to the local church. The clergy often lead our assemblies and we as a school community, celebrate key services in the church throughout the year. All children are encouraged to attend – and participate at their own level. We respect parents right to withdraw from RE and Collective Worship.

Collecting and Analysing Employment

The Oaktree School is committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

The Oaktree School also aims to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and governing body that is able to provide a service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of our local population.

The school workforce census enables us to collect data on staff relating to gender, race and disability. All staff vacancies are filled using the Local Authority application forms which contain requests for information relating to ethnicity, gender and disability. Applicants however can choose to indicate they do not wish to give this information.

- All information relating to staff is kept on the school's central database – SIMS.

We collect and analyse the following profile information for our staff and governors:

Information Gathering (Staff and Governors)

- Applicants for employment (via local authority recruitment forms)
- Staff profile
- Attendance on staff training events
- Disciplinary and grievance cases – if any
- Staff appraisals/performance management

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We have been mindful of the Laws relating to confidentiality when devising this Plan and Action Plan. Although there is a statutory duty to share information about the school's single equality scheme, we recognise that care must be taken when sharing or publishing statistics, data or information to ensure that any information published cannot be used to identify individuals.

In respect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, any analysis of sensitive information is undertaken by a senior member of the school staff .

We have identified the following issues from this information-gathering exercise:

- Low disclosure rates in respect of disability – currently only one member of staff admits to having a disability as defined by the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act 2005. We need to ensure any information we hold is accurate and staff feel able to disclose information freely without any fear of prejudice.
- Governing body profile is not collected.

Actions to address the issues identified have been prioritised over the three year life span of our scheme and have been included in our Action Plan, as shown in Appendix B

6. Consultation and involving people

We involved pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers, and our wider school community in creating the Single Equality Scheme and action plan. This helped to ensure that the views of all groups, but especially potentially disadvantaged groups, were fully incorporated in the development of this Scheme and action plan. Examples include:

- Discussion at School Council
- Contact with parents/carers
- Discussions at staff meetings
- Discussions at governing bodies
- Discussion with local schools including The Hermitage School.

During discussions, the following good practice was identified:

- Disabled access/toilets
- Staff well trained on the needs some children have
- Friendly and approachable staff – with male and female role models
- Procedures in place to meet any medical needs children may have in conjunction with School Nursing team and in line with the school's Medical Policy
- Good record of pastoral care
- Admission form criteria includes information on disability

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- Key policies in place
- Individual SEND Support Plans in place for children with specific needs

Discussions also identified the following needs:

- Ensure easy access to the Equality Scheme when complete – for all in our school community. Share the findings equally and easily
- Ensure all in the school community understand the definition of ‘Disability’ as stated by the 2005 Disability Act
- Ensure children are taught about differences and tolerance – as part of the PSHE curriculum
- Create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect where persons involved with the school feel confident about disclosing any disabilities they may have. Also to feel comfortable with being open about ethnicity/religious beliefs
- Ensure community views are sought in a variety of ways – rather than just questionnaires, to ensure equality of ability to participate in any information gathering
- To invite representatives of various charities and organisations relating to race, disability and gender to school to give advice/support and assist with curriculum development (lead assemblies, etc)
- Improve areas of the school to ensure they are fully accessible to all in our community – including those with physical disabilities, hearing and visual disabilities