



Meadows First School

Equal Opportunities Policy
Early Years Foundation Stage

Date: May 2023

Date of Review: May 2024

Head Teacher: S Hewitt

Chair of Governors: A Lynch

Meadows First School

Equal Opportunities Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage

Statement of intent Meadows First School understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality between different groups;
- Foster good relations between different groups; and
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our school's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our pupils. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school
- Promoting community cohesion and parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of pupils
- Regularly reviewing our equality policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following: Human Rights Act 1998, The Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of LAC and PLAC'
- DfE (2018) 'Gender Separation in mixed schools'
- DfE (2014) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy is related to the following other school policies: EYFS Policy, LAC Policy, SEND Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Behavioural Policy, Data Protection Policy, and the Complaints Procedures Policy.

Equality of opportunity requires that everyone has an equal chance to develop themselves to their full potential and be safe and free from harm. The Early Years Foundation Stage states that "children should be treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities". It includes:

- equality of access for all
- social inclusion for all
- life choices are widened, not restricted
- talents are fostered, not suppressed
- no one experiences disadvantage or discrimination in any form
- stereotypes are challenged by staff
- all forms of bullying and harassment are condemned and challenged
- individual and community needs are responded to in a sympathetic and imaginative manner
- individuals and groups are allocated appropriate levels of support to ensure that their potential is fulfilled
- the principle of equity applies

Overarching principles of the EYFS:

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- That every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- That children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- That children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- That children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities

Roles and responsibilities

The SENCo:

EYFS still states a named SENCo should be in place – at Meadows this is the same as the main school SENCo who is supported by the Foundation Stage Leader

The Role of the SENCo includes:

- Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEND and the settings approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- Advising and supporting colleagues
- Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting”
- Liaising with professionals from beyond the setting

The governing board will:

Be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.

Take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils and potential pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:

- The way the school provides and education for pupils.
- How pupils are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
- The exclusion of a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate rigour informing future plans in collaboration with the headteacher.

The Early years lead and headteacher will:

- Implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines
- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

Staff will:

- Be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities, inclusivity and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Have high aspirations and expectations for all children including those with SEND
- Early Identification and intervention – to nip issues in the bud and reduce frustration in children.
- Parents views to be at the centre of support put in place

As a school we work closely with the support from the County and Outreach Services (such as Chadsgrove) to ensure that any specialist equipment is sourced to enable the school to achieve equality for all pupils. (for example: support chairs/ physio equipment/ visual aids/ frames for toilets etc)

Data protection

The school will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.

The school will gain consent from pupils and parents before any sensitive personal data is processed.

The school will respect all pupils' right to privacy and will not disclose a pupil's trans^{1*} status or sexual orientation to any other pupils, staff members or third parties.

The school holds a Data Protection Policy containing further information

Protected characteristics

We will not discriminate against or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their:

- Sex.
- Race.
- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender, including non- binary.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

We will regularly review our school practices to ensure that they are fair with regard to all the protected characteristics listed.

Sex

For the purpose of this policy, sex refers to their biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. We understand some pupils may wish to identify with another gender or may wish to identify as non-binary. We will support pupils through their transitioning phases.

We will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to pupils of other sexes. – to achieve this,

Boys and girls will be offered an equal opportunity to undertake any activity in the school,

Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities;

Race and ethnicity

We will ensure that pupils of all races and ethnicities (including those who have EAL) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' will not be tolerated, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

Disability

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

¹ Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with a disability by implementing a rule for all pupils that could have an adverse effect on pupils with disabilities only), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for him/her to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the pupil also has SEND but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan.

We will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.

The school adheres to our containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

Religion and belief

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that pupils are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.

Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy.

EAL children and the EYFS

It is our statutory responsibility that having identified children whose home language is not English, that we take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. We must also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS: ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, teachers must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, teachers must explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay

Sexual orientation

We will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to pupils in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.

RSE lessons will be taught in accordance with our Relationships and Sex Education Policy.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

Gender reassignment

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they have undergone, or are proposing to undergo, gender reassignment, or have trans* parents, regularly checking our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of trans* pupils by external sources, e.g. charities such as Stonewall. Any such absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively to ensure the privacy of the pupil.

Pupils have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code.

We will ensure that there are suitable toilet facilities for pupils to use.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where trans* pupils can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

Looked after children (LAC)

LAC, and previously LAC (PLAC), will be given the highest priority for admissions if spaces are available.

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all LAC and PLAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

We will ensure that any SEND that a LAC or PLAC has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school adheres to our LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

The EYFS curriculum/ framework

We believe that pupils should be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds at an age appropriate level and we will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes

We will ensure equality, diversity and tolerance is taught and promoted throughout each subject area.

Promoting inclusion

We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.

Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing board and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.

Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.

Instilling in pupils an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.

Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extra-curricular activities and the curriculum.

Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.

Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.

Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.

Supporting pupils with medical conditions and SEND

We will ensure that any medical conditions related to a pupil with a protected characteristic is fully supported in line with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Our EYFS implements the school's policy, and procedures, for administering medicines. For children with complex health needs the Local Authority recommends a Health Care Plan and a Risk Assessment are put in place, in liaison with child's health professionals.

Through high quality first teaching and delivery of the EYFS curriculum and by assessing the children regularly, we ensure that each child's next steps are identified and planned for in both the inside and outside classroom.

Parents will be encouraged to support their children's learning by having daily access to staff (Open Door Policy) and by attending 'stay and play' sessions and / or by receiving regular information on the EYFS curriculum.

Identifying Children with SEND (refer to SEND Code of Practice)

The Nursery/ Reception classes will use baseline assessments along with language assessments to support identification of children with SEND. Nursery may have access to progress check at Age 2 as part of EYFS framework. Before the children start school there may be meetings with pre school nurseries attended by children. Teachers will review and assess children's development and needs in addition to the formal checks, using the Early Support Tracking Materials (which runs alongside EYFS framework) if needed.

From Nursery school will follow the GRADUATED APPROACH process, using ASSESS / PLAN / DO / REVIEW cycle (see SEND policy). If a need is identified, parents/ carers will be informed and we will work together to establish the right support to be put in place, including gaining parental consent prior to accessing external support services (EY Inclusion Team, SaLT etc.)

The Nursery teacher will complete a 'family share' form in order that parents can provide information about their child's needs prior to entry to ensure a successful transition plan is put in place.

Reception teachers will visit or contact pre schools to support the Early Years' transition Toolkit in order to identify needs and ensure that there will be a smooth transition into school and to ensure that any extra provision is in place ready for the child starting school in September. Teachers/ SENDco will plan for transition at the earliest stage, especially for those children with complex needs.

Behaviour Management

The general behaviour management strategies used within Nursery and Reception run alongside the school's behaviour management strategies (see Behaviour Management Policy). We foster positive role models and teach positive strategies for behaviour as well as recognising that younger children need to have reinforcement of instant rewards or 'sanctions'. These are all to ensure that the children understand the choices that they make and that they can keep themselves and each other safe. Behaviour management tools are to identify the underlying reasons for the behaviour and to support the child in overcoming them. Parents will be consulted with if an individualised behaviour plan is required for their child and agencies will be contacted/ signposted for further support if needed.

Funding to Support Children with SEND

For Nursery aged children, the EYSFF Inclusion Supplement is available within Worcestershire. Consent to access funding is included within the NEF (Nursery Education Funding) parental consent form. Nursery Funding will be used to support the inclusion of named children with SEND and to support the specific interventions put in place. Identified children with SEND in Reception can access funding through the 'ordinarily available' allocation (as per all year groups in school) and is dependent on the identified needs of the children, which will first and foremost be met through first class high quality teaching. (see SEND Code of Practice).

The Public Sector Equality Duty

We will meet our duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics outlined above.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

Bullying and discrimination

Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Safeguarding Policy.

It the responsibility of the DSL to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services, and/or the police, of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Procedures Policy.

Staff training

New staff/ students will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction.

Whole-school staff training for will be delivered in-house as part of safeguarding training.

Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days at an age appropriate level.