

## Bloxham Primary School

### Single Equality Policy 2021-2024

This policy applies to all aspects of school life at Bloxham Primary School which are to do with how our school treats pupils and prospective pupils; their parents and carers; our employees and members of our community.

In line with our Mission Statement, all staff at Bloxham Primary School are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of 'protected characteristics' (defined below). We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school are encouraged to participate fully in school life and to feel proud of their identity.

#### What is the equality duty?

The Equality Act introduced a single equality duty and this is known as the public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. The Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- Religion or Belief – includes lack of belief
- Sex (referred to previously as gender and includes issues of transgender)
- Sexual Orientation
- The protected characteristics of 'Age' and 'Marriage and Civil Partnership' apply to schools as employers, but not with regard to the treatment of pupils or prospective pupils.

The Equality Duty has three aims and requires schools to show how they are meeting these by giving **due regard** to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by schools, specifically to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by children and adults who share a relevant protected characteristic that is connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of children and adults who share a relevant protected characteristic that is different from the needs of people who do not share it.
- Encourage children and adults who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Equality Duty is obligatory, which means that all three of its aims must be met. These responsibilities are built into the work our school already does. The weight given to the Equality Duty should be in proportion to its relevance. However, it is important to note that "proportionality" and

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“relevance” is not dependent on the size of the school population who experience disadvantages connected to a protected characteristic. Equality is important, even if there is no one from a protected characteristic in the school or local community. Education plays a vital role in influencing young people and developing positive attitudes to diversity.

The three aims of the Equality Duty are relevant to all school functions including:

- progress, attainment and assessment
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- pupils’ personal development, welfare and well-being
- teaching and learning
- admissions and attendance
- curriculum
- staff recruitment and professional development
- partnerships with parents and community

What this means in practice is that as a school, we:

- have a pro-active approach
- ‘mainstream’ equality by building it into existing policies and procedures
- meet all three aims of the Equality Duty

What are the specific duties?

The specific duties require schools to:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty within all their functions and to do this at least annually.
- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

To achieve the specific duties, we collect and analyse data related to the protected characteristics to determine the focus for our equality objectives.

As a school we seek to ensure that the information we publish and the equality objectives we set are easily accessible for people. In addition to publishing them electronically on our website, we make them available in other formats. We aim to ensure that the information is provided in a way which makes it easy for everyone to understand and use. We welcome and act upon feedback.

The information must be published at least annually. The school’s governing body is ultimately responsible for ensuring that we meet the duty and works closely with the whole school community to:

- Evaluate how well the school is already achieving the three aims of the general duty across all of the protected characteristics listed earlier.
- Identify where there are gaps and prioritise these for actions identifying at least 3 measurable ‘equality objectives’ to focus on over the next 3 years,
- Develop, implement and review policies, including this ‘Single Equality Policy’.

This Single Equality Policy details all protected characteristics, and makes clear the school’s responsibilities under the Act, as well as its commitment. The action plan details what it will do to achieve ‘equality of opportunity’ for the whole school community.

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It is important that policy is put into practice and therefore, it is linked to achieving the equality objectives in the action plan. This is part of the school's existing planning processes.

#### **Agreeing Equality Objectives**

The governing body's equality audit indicates priorities for improving outcomes and narrowing gaps. These are turned into equality objectives. The governing body must review progress in achieving equality objectives at least once a year.