

Introduction

This policy outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors of Balcarras to promote equality. This involves tackling the barriers that could lead to unequal outcomes so that there is equality of access and the diversity within the school community is celebrated and valued.

The various statutory requirements that apply to employment and the provision of education have been amalgamated into a single Equality Duty set out in the Equalities Act 2010. We will ensure through our functions, policies and practices that we do not discriminate in any way and in particular:

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way we provide education for pupils,
- in the provision of access to any benefit, facility or service to pupils
- in relation to excluding a pupil

Statement/Principles

At Balcarras equality is a key principle for treating all people the same, irrespective of their race, disability, marriage or civil partnership status, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment (protected characteristics). We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment that champions respect for all. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work and visit here.

We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils to enable all our pupils to maximise their success at Balcarras School. Our Accessibility Plan is aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of the education, facilities and services we provide
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

Monitoring and Review

Responsibility for co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of equality is with the Senior Management Team of the school. This group will be responsible for:

- Providing updates on equalities legislation and the school's responsibilities in this regard
- Working closely with the governor responsible for this area

- Considering equality implications before and at the time that the school develops policy and takes decisions and recording outcomes where appropriate
- Supporting positively the evaluation activities that monitor the impact and success of the policy on pupils from all protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups in the following areas:
 - Pupils' progress and attainment
 - Learning and teaching
 - Behaviour discipline and exclusions
 - Attendance
 - Admissions
 - Incidents of prejudice related bullying and all forms of bullying
 - Parental involvement
 - Participation in extra-curricular and extended school activities
 - Staff recruitment and retention
 - Visits and visitors

Our commitments

Promoting Equality: Curriculum

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed. To achieve this we will ensure:

- Curriculum planning reflects a commitment to equality;
- Curriculum delivery does not subject individual pupils to discrimination;
- The curriculum prepares pupils for life in a diverse society and uses opportunities to reflect the background and experience of pupils and families in the school;
- There will be opportunities in the curriculum to explore concepts and issues related to identity and equality;
- The promotion of attitudes and values that celebrate and respect diversity and challenge discriminatory behaviour and language wherever it occurs;
- The use of images and materials that positively reflect a range of cultures, identities and lifestyles.

Promoting Equality: Achievement

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, social background, gender, race, disability, or other inappropriate distinction. To secure the best possible outcomes we recognise that:

- Adults in the school will be expected to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity;
- It is important to identify the particular needs of individuals and groups within the school and to use targeted interventions to narrow gaps in achievement;
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils.
- All pupils are actively encouraged to engage fully in their own learning.

Promoting Equality: The ethos and culture of the school

- At Balcarras we are aware that those involved in the leadership of the school community are instrumental in demonstrating mutual respect between all members of the school community;
- We strive to achieve a feeling of openness and tolerance that welcomes everyone to the school;
- The children are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect;
- The displays around the school reflect diversity across all aspects of equality and are frequently monitored;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure access for pupils, staff and visitors (including parents) with disabilities (this not only includes physical access, but takes account of wider access to school information and activities);
- Provision is made to cater for the cultural, moral and spiritual needs of all children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and off-site activities;
- Pupils' views are actively encouraged and respected. Pupils are given an effective voice through the House Council, pupil perception surveys and there are regular opportunities to engage with pupils about their learning and the life of the school;
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils feel welcomed and included.

Promoting Equality: Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

- All posts are advertised formally and open to the widest pool of applicants;
- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination to ensure equality of opportunity.

- People from under-represented groups are welcome to apply for positions at all levels of the school;
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds;
- Equalities policy and practice is covered in all staff inductions;
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and the impact of policies are kept under regular review.

Promoting Equality: Countering and Challenging Harassment and Bullying

- The school counters and challenges all types of discriminatory behaviour and this is made clear to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- The school has a clear, agreed procedure for dealing with prejudice related bullying incidents and has a clear system for recording and monitoring incidents;

Promoting Equality: Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

Balcarras aims to work in partnership with parents/carers. We:

- Take action to ensure all parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the life of the school;
- Maintain good channels of communication, e.g. through parent forums, to ensure parents' views are captured to inform practice;
- Encourage members of the local community to join in school activities and celebrations;
- Ensure that the parents / carers of all newly arrived pupils are made welcome and are well supported in accessing school information and processes.

Uniform, Hair, Make-up

The Equality Act 2010

"The Equality Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or other aspects of appearance such as hair colour and style, and the wearing of jewellery and make-up. For example, differences in dress requirements for girls and boys are standard, and where they don't have significantly more detrimental effects on one sex or the other. It is for the governing body of a school to decide whether there should be a school uniform and other rules relating to appearance, and if so what they should be. This flows from the duties placed upon the governing body by statute to manage the school."

Balcarras School has clear rules for uniform, hair styles and make-up which are different for boys and girls. These are made clear in the school policies and the pupils' planners. These are entirely consistent with the school's commitment to promoting equality of provision.

Roles and Responsibilities

In our school, all members of the school community have a responsibility for promoting equality.

The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that:

- The school complies with all equalities legislation relevant to the school community;
- The school's Equalities Policy is maintained and updated regularly; and that equality schemes are easily identifiable;
- The actions, procedures and strategies related to the policy are implemented;
- The Governors' Community Committee will have an overview, on behalf of the governing body, on all prejudice related incidents, or incidents that are a breach of this policy and ensure that appropriate action is taken in relation to these incidents.

The Headteacher and Senior Management Team have responsibility for:

- Providing leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- Overseeing the implementation of the Equality Policy and related schemes;
- Co-ordinating the activities related to equality and evaluating impact;
- Ensuring that all within the school are aware of, and comply with, the Equalities Policy;
- Ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support;
- Taking appropriate action in response to any prejudice-related incidents.

All school staff have responsibility for:

- The implementation of the school's Equalities Policy and related schemes;
- Dealing with incidents of discrimination and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- Ensuring they do not discriminate on grounds of ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation or other groups vulnerable to discrimination.
- Keeping up to date with equalities legislation.

Parents and Pupils:

- The school will always encourage parents and pupils to challenge discriminatory behaviour and foster a community of support and tolerance.
- The school will always encourage parents and pupils to report any concerns about inequality in the provision for Balcarras pupils.

Measuring the Impact of this Policy

The Equalities Policy and all other relevant policies will be evaluated and monitored for their equality impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. The main findings from equality impact assessments will be published for the school community.

When this policy was reviewed, an equality impact assessment was conducted to ensure any changes did not have an adverse effect under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Should you have any comments regarding this policy, please contact the school.