

## **Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy July 2016**

### **The Aims of this Policy**

#### **Rationale**

This policy aims to ensure that Steiner Academy Bristol is an educationally inclusive school where the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and the well being of every pupil matter. It is fundamental to Steiner Waldorf education that each child is valued equally and accepted as a unique being with her or his distinctive qualities and aptitudes.

This school uses the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum. Teachers endeavour to develop a methodology within this that is inclusive and differentiated. The teachers seek to apply the curriculum creatively in order to meet the needs of all the pupils, including those with disabilities, gifted children and those with special educational needs, as well as those from all cultural backgrounds and pupils with English as an additional language.

As an inclusive school, our aim is for all pupils to have the opportunity to access the teaching and learning which takes place in the school, according to their capacities. Learning diversity is recognised and planned for. Any barriers to learning and participation will be challenged and removed if at all possible subject to what is reasonable for the school's resources.

We aim to consult parents and involve and inform them when special educational provision is made for their child.

It is our intention that all pupils be valued and respected, irrespective of academic ability or any particular physical or emotional attributes, gender or cultural, religious, ethnic, racial or socio-economic background.

Incidents of racial, religious, gender, disability or other discrimination including related bullying are recorded and dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with our ethos, policy guidance and statutory requirements. Sanctions and remedies arising from serious or repeated incidents may include advice or counselling, disciplinary measures and, if necessary, the temporary or permanent removal of children from the class or from the school.

#### **Legal Framework**

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and replaced existing legislation (such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in terms of making the workplace a fair environment and to ensure compliance with the law. The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. These are now called 'protected characteristics'.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector equality duty; the general duty came into force on 5th April 2011. A public body must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty.

### **The Prevent Duty**

The Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (HMG 2015) came into force on 1 July 2015. The Prevent Duty sets out the need for 'British Values' to help everyone live in safe and welcoming communities where they feel they belong. It places duties on schools and registered childcare providers around keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. In particular, the Prevent Duty requires providers to *'have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'*.

### **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2014)**

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act, published in 2014, relates to provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. These provisions were outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, which came into effect on 1 September 2014.

At the heart of the reform is the aspiration for the equal participation of children, young people and their parents in decisions being made about local services, and a focus on improving education and outcomes for children and young people.

The Code (5.1) states that *"all children are entitled to an education that enables them to: achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes"*.

### **Purpose**

Steiner Academy Bristol strives to foster a community in which equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all aspects of its provision. This policy responds to the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and all other relevant legislation.

We have regard for the revised Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014) and ensure that we comply with associated duties in the:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015).

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to participate fully in school life and to be free of discrimination, harassment and bullying whilst doing so. Through this policy, we prioritise removing barriers to both participation and opportunities, whilst celebrating and promoting the diversity of the school community.

### **Recognising and respecting difference and diversity**

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them the same. Our policies, procedures and activities promote equality and we challenge discriminatory behaviour and language. Nevertheless they take into account differences of life experience, background and individual needs including the types of barriers and disadvantages that people may face. We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, children and families and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

### **Admissions and transitions**

As a Free School our admissions policy is in line with the majority of state maintained schools. We do not discriminate against any child and will make reasonable adjustment to facilitate places for all children. We aim to fully support all transition phases and understand that different children and their families will need different levels of support to achieve smooth transitions.

### **Communication and Information**

We value and respect all communication, with children, parents/carers, staff and other professionals. We endeavour to listen and schedule meetings at accessible and convenient times. We aim to make information accessible to families using a range of formats including verbal and visual information, clear written information (including electronic) and translated materials where appropriate. We aim to ensure that all staff, parents, carers and children (where appropriate) know the content of this policy and are aware of our complaints procedure.

### **Resources, activities and the environment**

We aim to promote an inclusive ethos and offer children a range of relevant resources that positively reflect diversity, as well as suitable activities that reflect their interests. We make reasonable adjustments to ensure planning reflects equality of access to resources and activities for all children, including those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. We encourage children who speak English as an additional language to also speak their home language and understand the value that this has in contributing to a positive sense of identity, learning and general linguistic development.

### **Broad Guidelines - staff are expected to:**

1. Co-operate and comply with this policy to ensure equality of opportunity.
2. Encourage everyone in the school community to work toward an ethos where there is no victimisation, discrimination, either direct or indirect, against anyone on account of their protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation; or other circumstances).
3. Not discriminate in the course of their duties nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so.
4. Recognise and record students' strengths and successes to encourage a positive self-image.
5. Make provisions so that all children can access the class curriculum and feel part of the class group.
6. Be familiar with the school's SEND policy, the requirements of the Statutory Codes of Practice for SEN, Disability and Race and they must ensure that the codes underpin all aspects of their work.
7. Contribute to ensuring that the legislation and policy requirements within the protected characteristics of equality and diversity are implemented into all working practices.

### **Staff development and training**

We ensure that all staff, including support staff and those involved in governance, receives appropriate training and opportunities for professional development to enable them to develop anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices. We ensure that staff are confident and fully trained to meet the individual needs of children.

### **Employment and Staffing**

Posts are advertised and all applicants are judged against explicit and fair criteria. Applicants are welcomed from all backgrounds and we aim for staffing to represent the diversity of the community.

All job descriptions include the promotion of equality as part of their specifications. All interviews include at least one equalities question.

### **Designated roles and responsibilities**

Our setting has a Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCo) – Name: **Rae Lynch**. The SENDCo coordinates the provision for children with SEND within the setting, works in partnership with parents, staff and external agencies and ensures appropriate record keeping procedures are in place.

### **Practice**

1. The School does not discriminate against applicants for admission. We recruit, develop and retain the most talented people regardless of gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.
2. Our school embraces what is unique about individuals and draws on our different perspectives and experiences so we add value to our work and our community.
3. The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are at the heart of Steiner education
4. The Steiner Waldorf curriculum incorporates substantial elements which bring an awareness and appreciation of different cultures, e.g. in world religions, mythology, history, music, geography etc.
5. The ethos, curriculum and mode of teaching supports teachers in getting to know each pupil in depth and allows them to differentiate on a daily basis between pupils with different capacities and needs.
6. Lessons are multi-faceted in their presentation, allowing a wide range of responses or routes to learning.
7. Pupils with special educational needs or with difficulties that may impede their learning are brought to the attention of the wider teaching group in weekly Kindergarten and Primary School meetings. In this way wider support and understanding is gained and pupils can be helped and monitored.
8. Pupils who are seen as gifted/talented in any area of learning will be discussed at a teachers' meeting. This will be to ascertain if and how the school is meeting their needs and any improvements to the provision to be made or explored. Any special measures put in place will be discussed with parents of the child.
9. Teachers routinely review the progress of all pupils. (Not only for concerns) Assessment in the is primarily formative, supportive, positive and individualised.
10. Teachers will access support from the SENDCo to assist individual pupils or smaller groups and will maintain and review Individual Education/ Care/Behaviour Plans as needed.
11. The School has a strong ethos of fostering close and co-operative relationships between pupils and with parents, maximising the potential of individual support strategies.
12. Our discipline procedures aim to retain pupils, supporting them to find suitable ways to improve and access the education.

**Addressing prejudice-related incidents**

We are opposed to all forms of prejudice and will take action against discriminatory behaviour (including that of staff, parents/carers, children and any visitors to our setting). We aim to foster a culture where prejudice related incidents are proactively dealt with and reported.

**Meeting the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010:**

We acknowledge our commitment to the specific duties under the Equality Act 2010. We publish equalities information about our setting on our website and in our Parent Handbook.

**Monitoring and review**

We continually review our practices to ensure that we fully implementing our policy. We review our Equalities and Inclusion Policy regularly on an annual basis in consultation with staff and parents/carers.

## **Definitions**

### **Equality**

A revised term for 'equal opportunities'. It is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. Equality protects people from being discriminated against and gives people fair access to opportunities, for example, all pupils have the same right of access to services and resources to meet their specific needs. To ensure equality of opportunity some individuals and/or groups may be treated differently in order to meet their different needs.

### **Diversity**

The range of visible and non-visible differences that exist between people. Managing diversity effectively recognises, celebrates, and takes into account individuals' different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences to create a productive educational community, in which everybody feels valued and talents are fully utilised.

### **Inclusion**

The overarching context encompassing equality, diversity and human rights which focuses positively on enabling access to and engaging individuals and/or groups with opportunities, services and facilities. An inclusive ethos is one which encourages full participation to ensure that there is no place in the community where people feel uncomfortable, excluded or not valued.

### **Protected Characteristics**

These are aspects of individuals' and groups' identities which are protected from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in employment, education, training, and in the provision of goods and services. For example, age, disability, gender.

### **Direct Discrimination**

Treating a person less favourably than another in comparable circumstances because of a protected characteristic. In the case of pregnancy and maternity direct discrimination can occur if a person has the protected characteristic without needing to compare treatment to someone else.

### **Discrimination by Association**

Direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person with a protected characteristic. This may include, for example, carers of disabled people and elderly relatives, or someone with a partner from another country. Applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex.

### **Discrimination by Perception**

Direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic (even if they do not). For example someone is treated unfairly as they are assumed to be gay.

**Indirect Discrimination**

Putting in place a policy or practice that has a differential (positive or negative) impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared to someone without one, when this cannot be objectively and legitimately justified.

**Discrimination arising from disability**

Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be objectively justified. For example, prohibiting an employee from taking time off for medical treatment.

**Failure to make reasonable adjustments**

Employers and service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and service users to enable fair access. This duty is anticipatory and must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure adjustments made are appropriate. Failing to do so is direct disability discrimination.

**Harassment**

Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic. The Equality Act offers protection to people who do not have a "protected characteristic" but find behaviour offensive, even if not directed at them.

**Victimisation**

Treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or are supporting someone who is doing so.

**Reviewed by:** Angela Browne

**Reviewed:** July 2016

**Next review:** July 2017

**Related Policies:** Safe Recruitment Policy, Admissions Policy, Curriculum Statement, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Exclusion Policy, SEND Policy.