



Howden le Wear Primary School

Gender Equality Policy

INTRODUCTION

At Howden le Wear Primary School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for staff, pupils and all those receiving services from the school, irrespective of gender. The achievement of all pupils and students will be monitored on the basis of gender and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

We will aim to provide our pupils with a firm foundation which will enable them to fulfil their potential, regardless of gender or stereotypes. We will seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination against pupils and staff by adhering to our duties as an employer under the legislation. At Howden le Wear Primary School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

This policy outlines how we will promote the gender equality duty in our school and sets out our priority areas and action plan for the next 3 years.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

We understand that despite thirty years of individual legal rights to sex equality there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood.

THE GENERAL DUTY

In accordance with our school's values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, Howden le Wear Primary School has due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality
-

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator.

We understand 'sex' to refer to the biological differences between males and females

and 'gender' to refer to the wider social roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognise and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We understand the three parts of the duty to be different, but that they should normally support each other. However, we are aware that achieving one may not lead to achieving all three.

In taking due regard we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance. By this we mean that the weight we give to gender equality will be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. The greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater regard we will pay to it.

THE SPECIFIC DUTIES

We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our school's functions and services. In order to do this we:

- Consult all staff, pupils, parents and relevant local communities
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap

We will:

- Report on progress and set further objectives where necessary
- Review and revise the Policy and Action Plan at least every three years

RESPONSIBILITIES

All governors, staff, volunteers, pupils and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Gender Equality Policy.

The Head Teacher works with the SLT to ensure that –

- the Policy is implemented
- staff recruitment, training opportunities and conditions promote gender equality

- all staff, pupils and their parents are consulted regarding, and are aware of the school's responsibilities to meet, the Gender Equality Duty
- existing and planned policies are assessed for the ways in which they impact on gender equality
- curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities take account of the need to promote gender equality
- incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to our Behaviour/Anti-Bullying/Cyber Bullying policies
- visitors to the school, or those who use the premises, are aware of the Gender Equality policy and action plan via the school website.

All staff have a responsibility to deal with incidents of sexual harassment or bullying; help eliminate unlawful discrimination; prepare and/or help deliver a curriculum, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities (including work with parents) that take account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality.

Pupils and parents have a proportionate responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the policy, as do visitors to the school.

These and other responsibilities are outlined in detail in our Gender Equality Action Plan which is attached to and forms part of this policy.

We believe that, even having the Equal pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, there is still widespread discrimination and gender inequality in society. We believe that having this gender equality policy and action plan will:

- support us in our decision-making and policy development
- give us a clearer understanding of the needs of staff, pupils and their families
- enable us to provide better quality services which meet varied needs
- help us target our resources more effectively
- help promote increased confidence in our school
- make more effective use of our workforce

We recognise that both sexes can suffer from sexual stereotyping and that sometimes the same policies and practices can impact differently on men and women and boys and girls. We will make appropriate adjustments if this is found to be the case with any of our policies and practices.

We also recognise that girls and boys, and women and men, can experience different forms of discrimination depending on, among other things, their ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age or disability and we will take this complexity into consideration.

In these ways we will strive to improve the situation for, and the relationships between, men and women and boys and girls within our school and wider community.

SINGLE SEX PROVISION (WHERE RELEVANT)

Where we provide for one sex only, this is to help meet the different needs of boys and girls (men and women), needs often arising out of historical and current stereotyping and unjust gender discrimination, or where there is an issue of physical intimacy or embarrassment to be considered.

We do not provide activities, classes, facilities, benefits or services for one sex only if this would amount to less favourable treatment of the other sex, or where it would promote gender stereotyping and gender inequality. We do not deny one sex the same opportunities as the other and where we provide for one sex only we ensure there are equivalent and proportionate facilities, benefits or services for the other sex.

We do not offer different curriculum choices to boys and girls, and where there are curriculum options we ensure that these are not offered in such a way that boys and girls are steered into making choices based on gender stereotypes. If requests for additional single sex activities, facilities or provision which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities come from pupils, families or the community, these will be considered and legal advice sought.

BREACHES OF THE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

We understand that eliminating gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change.

Where possible, breaches of the policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes.

More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying and harassment procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

Where safeguarding issues based on sex and gender come to the attention of the school these will be dealt with according to our child protection within safeguarding procedures.

Copies of this policy are available in the office and on request.

We will continue, to develop awareness of what constitutes unlawful gender discrimination and harassment, and of the need to eliminate this and to promote gender equality.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Date: February 2017

Review date: February 2019