

Title	Equality Policy
Purpose	This policy reflects the Single Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces previous legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
Relevant to	All directors and staff
Responsible Officer	Provision Manager
Introduced	9/2018
Modification History	-
Related Policies	Health and Safety Radicalisation and Extremism Safeguarding
Date due for review	9/2021
Agreed at meeting of Directors on	tbc
Filed as	OBRPol.6-Equality-0918

OVERVIEW

This policy reflects the Single Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces previous legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975.

The Single Equality Act combines the existing three duties into one new Equality Duty that covers all seven of the equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Oakbridge Special Education will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of our provisions everyone will be treated equally. This Single Equality Policy summarises our approach in ensuring equality for all.

OBJECTIVES

- To prepare students for life in a diverse society and world.
- To meet the diverse needs of the students by ensuring that all learners have equal access to a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, whilst recognising that this can only be achieved by personalisation of provision
- To make Oakbridge Special Education a place where everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin or citizenship, feels welcomed and valued.
- To ensure that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained.
- To respect and value linguistic, cultural and religious diversity in the community.
- To develop each student's sense of personal and cultural identity.
- To encourage students to be confident, open to change, receptive and respectful towards other identities.
- To eliminate any discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To ensure that no-one is unfairly or illegally disadvantaged as a consequence of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, disability or religious beliefs.
- To ensure that issues related to equality and prejudice are recognised across all areas of provision activity.
- To ensure that equality is an integral part of all planning and decision making within the provision.
- To ensure that students and parents are fully involved.
- To ensure that within budgetary constraints adequate funding is provided to underpin this policy and that intervention, positive and preventative action is funded where necessary.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:

- All provision policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities.
- The directors and provision manager set a clear ethos, which reflects the commitment to equality for all members of the community.
- The provision works in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity, oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.
- Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of students and appropriate breadth of content.

The Directors will:

- Ensure the aims of each provision indicate a commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- Strive to ensure that its own membership reflects the communities, which each provision serves, in terms of ethnicity, gender and class.
- Ensure they receive up to date training and instruction in fair employment practices and procedures.
- Ensure fairness when issuing funds.
- Liaise with the Provision Manager regarding the way in which the equality issues are addressed and make recommendations and decisions as appropriate.

Staffing: Safer Recruitment and Professional Development:

The Directors:

- Are committed to equality for all in the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff, and in all dealings with students, parents and carers of the provision.
- Recognise the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Together with the Provision Manager will operate at all times within the requirements of anti-discrimination legislation and will promote equality positively in its staffing decisions.
- All decisions, including advertising of vacancies, shortlisting, selection, induction, appraisal, training, development, promotion, terms and conditions of employment, dismissal and pay will be based on an objective and fair assessment of requirements.
- The only personal characteristics, which will be taken into account, will be those, which are necessary for the requirements and proper performance of the work involved. There will be no generalised concepts or assumptions about the characteristics of groups.
- All staff have the right, through the agreed procedures, to challenge any decision or action taken which they believe to be in breach of these principles. Any member of staff

who deliberately and knowingly contravenes this policy will be liable to formal disciplinary action.

Statutory Requirements:

The Directors are bound by law not to discriminate against certain groups. The Equality Act 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one and sets out the 'protected characteristics' that qualify for protection from discrimination as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex and sexual orientation

There are some exemptions from this legislation in situations where the essential nature of a job calls for a man, woman or person from a religion or racial group. The Directors would not normally seek to use exemptions from the above acts.

The Directors will: -

- Give sympathetic consideration for requests for time off or for religious observance from staff who are active members of religions or beliefs, although such time off will be unpaid and will be considered only subject to the operational requirements of the provisions.
- Wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to recruitment processes, working conditions or the working environment, including terms and conditions of employment, to help overcome practical difficulties created by applicants and members of staff who have a disability.
- Acknowledges these areas of regulation and confirms its commitment to enforce these statutory requirements in the school.

Positive Action

The Directors recognise that the avoidance of discrimination is not sufficient to ensure equality. The Directors will therefore give full consideration to measures of positive action, which may assist in achieving the aims of this policy. This action is designed to encourage or facilitate the employment or training of minority or disadvantaged groups. The Directors will not discriminate in favour of individuals from specific groups (positive discrimination) but it will take positive action, which enables members of those groups to compete on an equal basis

Harassment and Grievance Procedures:

Harassment has the effect of destroying dignity and undermining the confidence of employees. It can take many forms, including physical contact, bullying, threatening or ignoring someone. It can be a series of offensive remarks or a single incident. It can be behaviour that staff find offensive even if not directed towards them or harassment because of perception or association.

The Directors are committed to the principles of dignity at work for its entire staff. This includes the right to be treated with respect by all managers and colleagues.

The Directors will consider any acts of harassment including those on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, as totally unacceptable and outside the ethos and culture of Oakbridge Special Education. Any such act by a member of staff against any adult or child will be treated as a disciplinary offence, and action taken accordingly.

The company has procedures to resolve grievances and for the handling of complaints of harassment and bullying at work. Directors are committed to investigate any such complaint. These procedures will be followed carefully and promptly in response to any such complaint.

The first point of contact for any such complaint should be the Provision Manager or in the case of a grievance against the Provision Manager, the Directors. In addition, staff have the right to approach their profession association or trade union representative for support.

STRATEGIES

- Monitoring, evaluation and review carried out by the Provision Manager will ensure that procedures and practices reflect the objectives of this policy
- Teachers will ensure that teaching and learning takes account of this policy.
- The diversity within our provision and the wider community will be viewed positively.
- Diversity will be recognised as a positive, rich resource for teaching, learning and the curriculum.
- Professional development opportunities will be provided for staff to provide them with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to meet the requirements of this policy.

Contributions will be sought from parents and others to enrich teaching, learning and the curriculum.

The positive achievements of all students will be celebrated and recognised.

OUTCOMES

This policy will play an important part in the educational development of individual students. It will ensure that all students are treated equally and as favourably as others and that all students are helped to make personal, social and academic progress that meets or exceeds expectation, to the best of their ability.

Oakbridge Special Education will make all reasonable adjustments to promote equal opportunity and equal treatment of all members of the community.

The company is committed to meeting the individual needs of each student and will take full account of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation in accordance with the requirements of The Single Equality Act 2010

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to publish specific and measurable equality objectives. Our equality objectives focus on those areas where we can take action to improve equality and tackle disadvantages.

We will regularly monitor the progress we are making to meet our equality objectives.

Equality Objectives 2018-2021:

- Narrow attainment gaps and promote positive outcomes for all groups in our learning community.
- Ensure that personalised learning plans are in place for all students to maximise their access to learning, recognising that treating people equally does not always involve treating them the same.
- Ensure that the academic progress of young people in receipt of FSM matches or exceeds that of all other students in the provision.

POLICY REVIEW

The Board of Directors, as part of its monitoring cycle, will review this policy every three years. Next review is due by September 2021.