

Equality and Cohesion Policy – September 2021





(A copy of this policy can be provided in an alternative format e.g. in large print or audio if needed, on request from the school office.)

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate how West Lea School promotes and advances equal opportunities and community cohesion, and tackles inequalities and discrimination. We are committed to the Equality Act 2010 which is about ensuring inclusion and equality for all so that no policies or practices result in unfair or less favourable treatment of pupils or adults.

As migration and economic change alters the shape of our local and national communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion and inclusion.

Definitions

- Equality:** Treating people fairly and according to their needs. Equality of opportunity, rather than equality of treatment. People have similar life opportunities in so far as they are able to fulfil their own potential.
- Inclusive:** Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.
- Diversity:** Recognises that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
- Cohesion:** People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
- Community:** From the school's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings:
-  The school community – the students we serve, their families and the school's staff.
 -  The community within which the school is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and/or work in that area.
 -  The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it.
 -  The global community – formed by European and international links.

Scope

This policy applies to and aims to benefit all staff, Governors, pupils, parents/guardians and carers.











Our Values and Commitment

It is our belief that every school, irrespective of its intake and location, is responsible for educating young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of age, culture, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, nationalities, sex/gender, gender identify, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic backgrounds. We have high expectations of all our staff and learners.









All individuals within the schools are entitled to learn, teach and work within a non-threatening and supportive environment in which the development of self-esteem and confidence is enhanced. We want everyone in the school community to be proud of who and what they are, as well as their school community.

We believe the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

We believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. The school's ethos is centred around a commitment to:

-  Celebrating diversity.
-  Promoting and advancing equality and inclusion.
-  Meeting people's needs.
-  Encouraging participation.
-  Promoting cohesion, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
-  Tackling discrimination and disadvantage.
-  Tackling bullying.
-  Encouraging, supporting and striving to enable all pupils and staff to reach their potential.
-  Working in partnership with parents and the wider community to establish promote and disseminate good practice.
-  Ensuring that this policy is followed.

West Lea School will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics (age, race, gender, gender preference, sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity,) within the school community. This means:

-  We will take reasonable and necessary steps to meet students' needs by using a variety of approaches and planning reasonable adjustments for disabled students, enabling our students to take as full a part as possible in all the activities of the school.
-  We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the school environment and its activities are as accessible and welcoming as possible for students, staff and visitors to the school. We are also committed to ensuring all staff have equality of opportunity.
-  We will actively encourage positive attitudes towards students and staff and expect everyone to treat others with dignity and respect.
-  We will regularly consider the ways in which the taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
-  We will regularly consider the ways in which our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
-  Where relevant / appropriate, we will monitor the progress and achievement of students by the relevant and appropriate protected characteristics.
-  We will collect and analyse information about protected characteristics in relation to staff recruitment, retention, training opportunities and promotions to ensure all staff have equality of opportunity. We will make reasonable adjustments such as providing auxiliary aids for our disabled staff.
-  Staff will ensure the curriculum is accessible to all students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those for whom English is not their first language. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided for them, where reasonable adjustments are required. By planning ahead, staff will ensure that all students are able to take part in extra-curricular activities and residential visits, and the school will monitor the uptake of these visits to ensure no one is disadvantaged on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

- ✚ We will seek the views of advisory staff and outside agencies and partnerships with other schools where this is needed. In planning the curriculum and resources the school will take every opportunity to promote and advance equality.
- ✚ Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents will be carefully monitored and dealt with effectively.
- ✚ We expect that all staff will be role-models for equal opportunities, deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents and be able to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- ✚ Throughout the year, the school will plan on-going events to raise awareness of equality and diversity. This may include a focus on disability, respect for other cultures, religions and beliefs, LGBTQIA+, gender equality, developing community cohesion and an understanding of the effects of discrimination.
- ✚ We will ensure appropriate consultation is regularly sought in the development and review of this policy.
- ✚ We will regularly seek the views of stakeholders to ensure that the school environment is as safe and accessible as possible to all school users. We will regularly review our accessibility plans.
- ✚ The school welcomes a diverse range of candidates and encourages those who are currently under-represented to join if they are the best candidate for the vacancy.
- ✚ We will ensure that all staff are aware of their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the different forms of discrimination and what 'reasonable adjustments' mean in practice.
- ✚ When drawing up policies the governing body will consider to what extent a new/revised policy, practice or plan meets the Public Sector Equality Duties (eliminates discrimination, advances equality and fosters good relations for all the protected characteristics).
- ✚ We are bound by the SEND Code of Practice 2015: 0-25. We ensure that children, young people and parents are actively involved in decision making and that we provide them with the information, advice and support necessary to enable them to participate in discussions and decisions about their support, in accessible forms (SEND CoP 2015, 1.9). We believe that special education provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less (SEND CoP 2015, 1:25).

Our Legal Duties

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010. Legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education. Employers (schools) are liable for acts of employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

- ✚ **Age** - A person of a particular age or a range of ages. However, age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- ✚ **Disability** - A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions.
- ✚ **Gender reassignment** - A person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male).
- ✚ **Marriage and civil partnership** – Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- ✚ **Pregnancy and maternity** - Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the

employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.

- ✚ **Race** - A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people.
- ✚ **Religion and belief** - Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum-based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- ✚ **Sex** - A man or a woman.
- ✚ **Sexual orientation** - A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian until later, promotion of sexual orientation equality is still relevant in a primary school environment. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'coming out' when they are older.

It is also unlawful to discriminate because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the student is associated. So, for example, a school must not discriminate by refusing to admit a student because his parents are gay men or lesbians.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful):

- ✚ **Direct discrimination** - Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- ✚ **Indirect discrimination** - A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- ✚ **Harassment** - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context. Harassment because of gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion and belief in relation to the provision of education does not apply but such acts may constitute direct discrimination.
- ✚ **Victimisation** - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.
- ✚ **Combined (dual) discrimination** - Discrimination because of two protected characteristics such as age and sex/gender. Not yet effective.
- ✚ **Discrimination arising from disability** – Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) and failure to make reasonable adjustments.
- ✚ **Gender re-assignment discrimination** (allows reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave).
- ✚ **Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination** – unfavourable treatment because of a girl's/woman's pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman because she is breastfeeding.
- ✚ **Discrimination by association or perception** - For example, discriminating against someone because they "look gay", or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Schools are allowed to treat disabled students more favourably than non-disabled students, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with students without disabilities.

Public Sector Duties (applies to schools):

A school must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

- ✚ Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
- ✚ Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
- ✚ Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding). In practice, 'due regard' means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty, so decision makers in schools must have due regard when making a decision, developing a policy or taking an action as to whether it may have implications for people because of their protected characteristics.

Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Plans

Schools are required to:

- ✚ Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature, for example steps and lifts.
- ✚ Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- ✚ Provide information in an accessible format.
- ✚ Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Accessibility Plans which will:
 - ✚ Increase disabled students' access to the school curriculum
 - ✚ Improve the physical environment
 - ✚ Improve provision of information.

The duty is *anticipatory* and a continuing one that schools owe to disabled students generally, regardless of whether the school knows that a particular student is disabled or whether the school currently has disabled students. The school will need to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments that it may need to make, working with the relevant admissions authority as appropriate.

Responsibilities

Governing Body:

- ✚ Ensure that the school complies with equality and cohesion legislation.
- ✚ Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the CEO.
- ✚ Ensure all other School policies promote equality and cohesion.
- ✚ Give due regard to the Public Equality Sector Duty when making decisions

Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leaders:

- ✚ Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- ✚ Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- ✚ Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.
- ✚ Ensure that all staff understand their duties regarding recruitment and providing reasonable adjustments to staff.
- ✚ Ensure that all staff and students are aware of the process for reporting and following up bullying and prejudice-related incidents

All staff:

- ✚ Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- ✚ Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- ✚ Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- ✚ Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality and cohesion legislation.
- ✚ To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.
- ✚ To ensure that pupils with physical and / or learning disability needs are met.

Specific Staff:

- ✚ PSHE co-ordinator to ensure diversity issues are addressed in the implementation of the PSHE and citizenship framework throughout the school.
- ✚ RE co-ordinator/Enrichment Team ensure that RE is in line with national guidance and stereotypical views of particular faith groups or beliefs are not perpetuated.
- ✚ Access co-ordinator to maintain and monitor access to every aspect of school life.
- ✚ Visitors (eg parent helpers, contractors) - To be aware of and comply with West Lea's Equality and Cohesion Policy.

Pupils:

- ✚ Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

All staff and governors will exercise their safeguarding responsibilities in relation to equality matters and ensure that any bullying or challenging of Human Rights is addressed immediately. All staff and governors will have access to training and a selection of resources which discuss and explain the concepts of equality, diversity and community cohesion. We value the opportunity to take a holistic approach in fulfilling our Equality Duties.

Communicating and Promoting this Policy

All staff and governors, including supply teachers and visitors are made aware of this policy and any subsequent updates or amendments.

A copy will be:

- ✚ Displayed on the school website.
- ✚ Available at Parent Review Days, where the child's progress and targets are discussed.
- ✚ Included in the folder of public documents available to any parent on request.

For more information download guidance from the DfE:















[Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61222/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools.pdf)

Or, The Equality and Human Rights Commission at:

[Home Page | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/)


Appendix: Checklist/audit for school staff and Governors in relation to the Equality Act (2010)

(Possible/Suggested evidence is in italics)

1. Where possible, necessary and relevant, and in accordance with data protection legislation, is information collected on protected groups with regard to both students and staff? Is this information used to improve provision of services? Are auxiliary aids and services provided for disabled students?
 -  *The school gathers this information and uses it to understand the school context in relation to protected characteristics*
 -  *You may have collected information in relation to gender, race, disability/SEN and free school meals. For other protected characteristics such as sexual information, other methods of information gathering may be required -such as anonymous surveys*
 -  *Data is collected and monitored in relation to bullying and prejudice-related incidents*
 -  *Information regarding the auxiliary aids and services provided are logged*
2. Is student attendance monitored by protected characteristics? Are there any trends or patterns which may require additional action?
 -  *Data regarding attendance is collected and analysed by protected characteristics.*
 -  *This is monitored and evaluated by Governors so that any differences between groups with protected characteristics can be recognised and addressed.*
3. Is student achievement monitored by protected characteristics? Are there any trends or patterns which may require additional action?
 -  *Data regarding achievement is collected and analysed by protected characteristics.*
 -  *This is monitored and evaluated by Governors so that any differences between groups with protected characteristics can be recognised and addressed.*
4. Is the curriculum equally accessible to all protected characteristics?
 -  *Teachers are mindful of children's specific needs, such as partial sight or hearing, or those with restricted mobility, when considering classroom organisation, lesson planning and practice.*
 -  *In planning the curriculum, account is taken of the needs of the pupils, including disability, cultural background and linguistic needs, and appropriately differentiated work produced.*
 -  *In school, there is a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils, removing barriers to learning and wider activities and reducing unjustifiable difference in outcomes for different groups of pupils.*
 -  *Our teaching and the curriculum provision support individual's standards of attainment, promotes common values, and helps students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping where appropriate*
 -  *Staff receive continuing professional development to ensure that everyone understands and implements all aspects of the Equality and Cohesion policy. Through this training, staff will recognise that their expectations directly affect their achievement, behaviour and self-esteem of learners. They will understand that it is their responsibility and duty of care to challenge prejudice and discriminatory behaviours in and out of the classroom*
 -  *Staff use opportunities within the curriculum and across the school day to discuss equality issues, to encourage learners to value and respect others and to challenge inappropriate attitudes and behaviours.*
 -  *Science and sex and relationship education lessons (SRE) provide opportunities for issues relating to gender and sexual matters to be addressed as appropriate for the age of the children.*

- ✚ *Specific matters around religion, belief and culture are directly addressed in class or during whole school activities at selected times of the academic year e.g. Christmas, Chinese New Year.*
 - ✚ *Where appropriate within certain curriculum areas:*
 - ✚ *pupils are given opportunities to explore issues of identity, equality, and racism, including the use of language;*
 - ✚ *learn about and celebrate festivals and traditions of different cultures;*
 - ✚ *learn about world development issues, global issues and our interdependence on each other.*
5. Are all students encouraged to participate in all aspects of school life?
- ✚ *Audit and analysis of students taking part in different school activities*
 - ✚ *All pupils are encouraged to participate in all areas of school life*
 - ✚ *Lists of representatives/participants at school events are kept – including assemblies and the school council*
6. Are the reporting systems for bullying and prejudice-related incidents understood and followed by all students, staff and visitors? Is this information used to make a difference?
- ✚ *Use of new reporting system, analysis of bullying and behaviour report/logs and evidence of swift action taken by staff.*
 - ✚ *Evidence that Governors analyse the data identifying any trends and taking appropriate action*
7. Are protected characteristics portrayed positively in school books, displays and discussions?
- ✚ *Audit of resources*
 - ✚ *PHSE and RE curriculum*
 - ✚ *Assemblies*
8. Does the school actively raise awareness of equality and diversity alerting pupils to discrimination and its effects?
- ✚ *Taking part in annual events such as Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month, Black Lives Matter*
 - ✚ *Audit of school curriculum demonstrating how it fosters good relations between people, tackles prejudice and promotes understanding*
9. Is the school environment as accessible as possible to students, staff and visitors to the school campuses/sites?
- ✚ *School Accessibility Plan is up-to-date*
 - ✚ *External review of premises by external building consultants to ensure compliance with latest building bulletins and DDA.*
10. Is information available to parents, visitors, pupils and staff in formats which are accessible if required?
- ✚ *Stakeholders are made aware that information can be available in different formats, for example, large print and translations*
11. Are staff aware of the Equality Act and their responsibilities to comply with the Act? Are they aware of the term “reasonable adjustments” and what this means in practice?
- ✚ *Evidence of on-going staff training*
 - ✚ *Use of reasonable adjustments is evident within classrooms*
 - ✚ *Equality policy adopted and implemented*

12. Are the recruitment, promotion and training opportunities monitored for staff with protected characteristics?
- ✚ Evidence of questions asked at interview are kept
 - ✚ Staff recruitment, promotion and training are monitored by the Governing body
13. Are procedures for the election of parent governors open to all candidates? How are protected characteristics represented on the Governing body and does this broadly reflect the diversity within the community?
- ✚ Procedures for election are accessible to all protected groups
 - ✚ The recruitment procedure actively encourages membership from protected groups
14. Are equality objectives in place i.e. has the school identified objectives, drawn up a plan based on information collected on protected characteristics and consulted with pupils, parents and staff? Does the plan (which forms part of the school improvement plan) show how the work supports equality?
- ✚ Audit and consultation
 - ✚ Agreed objectives – evidence in governing body cycle, agendas and minutes
 - ✚ Objectives form part of school improvement plan with clear processes and timelines for monitoring and evaluation
 - ✚ Clear feedback mechanisms to ensure all stakeholders are informed about outcomes of equality objectives
15. Is a system in place to ensure that all new and reviewed policies are routinely checked to ensure that they do not have the potential to disadvantage people because of a protected characteristic?
- ✚ Reviews of policies and documents are diarised for Governors on a rolling programme
 - ✚ Clear records are kept of Equality Impact Assessments - these are a way of facilitating and evidencing compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty – and are seen in minutes of governing body meetings
 - ✚ All policies have a dated statement to show when the policy was reviewed and also that it was assessed for impact on protected characteristics
16. Does the governing body have clear and transparent systems which demonstrate how SEN funding (Pupil Premium etc.) is spent and what impact it has on those groups with the relevant protected characteristics?
- ✚ Clear financial systems with clear lines of accountability
 - ✚ Terms of reference and minutes of finance meetings
 - ✚ Clear strategic planning with regard to separate streams of funding
 - ✚ Governing body monitors and evaluated the impact of funding on protected groups and can evidence that the funding has a direct impact on school improvement
17. Has the school set up a system e.g. an equality page on its website, to show how it is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Equality Act (2010)
- ✚ Website page
 - ✚ Equality policy is published
 - ✚ Minutes of Governor meetings demonstrate that equality issues have been discussed and addressed
 - ✚ A calendar of events demonstrates that the school is raising awareness and understanding of people with protected characteristics
 - ✚ Reference to the curriculum

 *Reference to other policies – anti-bullying etc.*

Reference is Equality and Human Rights Commission (ERHC) guidance for schools:

<https://www.equalityours.org.uk/ehrc-equality-guidance-for-schools/>