



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

This policy is informed by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public-Sector Equality Duty 2011. Details of these pieces of legislation are provided within this policy to ensure all stakeholders understand the duties of the school in this regard.

Equality Act 2010 The Equality Act is the single piece of legislation which came into force in 2010, replacing several pieces of legislation to cover discrimination, including Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It outlines nine 'protected characteristics' as follows:

Race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity and gender reassignment.

Protected characteristics

This provides protection for people discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic. These characteristics are detailed below:

Race

Race means a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin, and a racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

Disability

A physical and/or mental impairment that has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [his or her] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' This can include: arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs, dyslexia, autism, learning difficulties including Down's syndrome, and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia.

Sex

A person's sex refers to the fact that he or she is male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men and/or boys or women and/or girls.

Age

A person's age, which may be referred to as a group within an age band.



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Religion or Belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief. To be protected under the Act, the belief must be genuinely held and must be a belief, and not an opinion or viewpoint based on information available now, it must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour, it must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance, it must be worthy of respect in a democratic society and it must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation means the attraction that a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines with whom he or she forms intimate relationships or to whom he or she is attracted. Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation, such as someone's appearance, the places that he or she visits or the people with whom he or she associates.

Pregnancy and Maternity

A school must not discriminate against a pupil because of her pregnancy or maternity, or because she is breastfeeding. This means that it is unlawful for a school to restrict the education, benefits, facilities, or services available to pregnant or breastfeeding pupils, or to restrict the options available to them. Schools should avoid making assumptions about the educational and career aspirations of teenage mothers.

Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) that involves a person moving away from his or her birth sex to his or her preferred gender and thus expressing that gender in a way that differs from, or is inconsistent with, the physical sex with which he or she was born. The equality issues that schools need to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with nine different protected characteristics are set out in the Public-Sector Equality Duty.

Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 (PSED)

The Public-Sector Equality Duty came into force across Great Britain on 5 April 2011. It means that public bodies must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. This duty has three elements for schools:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.



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Our Principles

At Minerva Academy, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to achieve their full potential. All staff have due regard to advancing the equality of opportunity by consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of our process of decision making. Having 'due regard' to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined as the need to: 1. Remove or minimise disadvantages 2. Take steps to meet different needs. 3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low.

The school's response will be proportionate and involve a reasonable adjustment. Risk assessments will be made on an individual basis. Minerva Academy aims to identify and remove the barriers that groups of children, young people and adults may face in becoming included, valued, self-confident and achieving learners within and beyond their local community.

The school is committed to meeting every child's need on an individual basis, to create an optimal learning environment for all children. This is positively reflected in areas such as arrangements made for school trips, staff training, timetabling of staff support, physical access arrangements, involvement of outside agencies and communication with parents and carers. We monitor the progress and attainment of pupil groups. At present these include those with protected characteristics (race, disability, gender, age), pupils with identified SEN, English as an Additional Language, and higher attaining pupils. This monitoring then informs our improvement plans in each Key Phase of the school. Annual published data about groups of pupils, such as that included in our Raise-online report also informs our School Improvement Plan. This plan includes objectives relating to the attainment and progress of these groups. These will also be published separately on our website.

Key Responsibilities

- To report annually to Governors on the impact of the plan, progress made and any changes needed.
- To ensure no person with disabilities is treated less favourably.
- To take all reasonable steps to avoid putting people with disabilities at a disadvantage.
- To facilitate equal access to all aspects of the school community for parents/ carers.
- To seek the opinions of all stake holders in the consultation process in drawing up the plan and keep them informed of developments. ☒
- Minerva Academy will undertake to meet these responsibilities by developing the following areas: -
 - 1. Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;**
 - To regularly assess and improve the impact that delivered curriculum has upon pupils with disabilities.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of short term planning in identifying the range of reasonable adjustments being made.
 - To deploy appropriate adult/ peer support and resources.
 - To create a curriculum that supports awareness of and positive attitudes towards, disability.

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- To seek and follow the advice of outside agencies, including health professionals, Hearing and Visually Impaired Service, Physical Disability Support Service, Key Learning Centres, Autism Outreach, Ethnic Minorities Support Service, District SEN/ Inclusion Team, and the LEA.
 - To provide training for key staff as appropriate.
 - To support staff of extended hours' provision to provide equal access and to encourage all children to attend.
- 2. Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities, and services provided**
- To audit existing facilities and identify possible improvements needed to make the school more accessible to people with disabilities.
 - To consider how different impairments can be best catered for in the school environment.
 - To consider ways of providing suitable aids and resources to meet these needs.
 - To follow advice from the LEA, outside agencies and other schools.
- 3. Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils;**
- To look at the way we inform and to improve accessibility where appropriate.
 - To work with other schools, LEA, and external agencies to source necessary materials.
 - To include parents and pupils in the choice of the most suitable media for the person with disabilities.
 - To be aware that we may need to make changes on an individual basis to enhance access.

4. Our Provision

The Head Teacher, SENCO and the Senior Management Team will maintain an ongoing programme of monitoring, evaluation, support, and review of individual children's barriers to learning, intervention strategies and their impact. This includes: -

- Analysis of school pupil group progress and attainment data each half term compared with published local and national data.
- Professional 1-1 conversations with teaching staff every term to identify barriers to learning, agree accelerated progress targets and plan interventions.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of teaching, intervention strategies and additional resources on progress and attainment throughout the year.
- An emphasis on early intervention with a programme of frequent reviews to constantly challenge the effectiveness of provisions.
- Provision of resources that inspire independent learning, particularly reflecting increased use of ICT.
- Parental involvement, which is recognised as being crucial to success. Activities such as parent learning sessions are provided.
- Pastoral and emotional support through the Pupil Support Manager, including recording, reporting, and following up any incidents of discrimination or victimisation.
- Equal access to enrichment activities. These are important in raising motivation and self-esteem, leading to greater engagement and success in learning. PHSE curriculum includes 'Difference and Diversity'.
- Ensuring that provision is the best it can be, through research and knowledge of current developments.



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Reporting

The school will publish this Equality Policy on the school website, to be reviewed annually and updated every two-three year, demonstrating compliance with the Equality Duty. The school will publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives on the website, to be updated every 2/3 years. The Head teacher will report to the Chair of Governors on the progress and provision for identified pupil groups. This Governor will ensure that the Equality Policy, and Equality Objectives are reviewed annually, updated every two-three year, and published on the website for parents.

Outcomes

- All decision makers have due regard to the Equality Act and Equality Duty, assessing whether their decision or action has implications for people with protected characteristics.
- The school is advancing the equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics, including accessibility for disabled pupils and adults.

Review

The governing body reviews this policy once every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.