CARWARDEN HOUSE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Equalities & Discrimination Policy

Author:	Headteacher
Reviewed by:	SPC (bi-annually)
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Signed:	Chris Hamilton (Chair of Trustees)

Version: 2.0	Date of change: 23.10.2024	Changes made in line with the duty to prevent sexual harassment effective from 26.10.2024 and the EHRC's Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work Guidance. Changes have been to sections Policy Statement (formally Introduction), Scope of this Policy, Forms of Discrimination, Recruitment and Selection, Grievances, disciplinary procedures, dismissals and redundancies (formerly Termination of Employment), Characteristics or Sexual Harassment, and additional section titled How we monitor whether this Policy is working has been added.

Objectives of this Policy

This policy outlines how Carwarden House School creates equal opportunities for all and values all members of our school community equally. 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 recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Equality Act 2010 (see link) was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students & staff or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

All learners & staff are of equal value. Whether or not they have a special educational need or disability, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious beliefs or affiliations and whatever their sexual orientation, all learners are of equal value.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which members of our community may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation.

We believe diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit our school.

We foster positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

We foster a shared sense of belonging and cohesion. We want all members of our school community to feel a strong sense of belonging within the school and the wider community. We want them to feel respected and that they are able to participate fully in school life.

We observe good equalities practice for our staff. We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development.

We have the highest expectations of all our students. We expect all students to make progress and support them in being the best they can be.

We work to raise standards for all students. We believe that improving the quality of education raises standards across the whole school.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions; the way we provide education for our students and the way we provide access for our students to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled students – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled students and stop disabled students being placed at a disadvantage compared with their non-disabled peers.
- We ensure that transgender parents, staff and children are welcomed into our school community and that any discrimination towards them will be challenged.
- The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day-to-day life of the school. We make a record of each specific equality consideration and this is available for review if required.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through assemblies, the curriculum (including PSHE lessons), our school values and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- We challenge any prejudicial or discriminatory language used towards or about any individuals or groups of people.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent and we do not discriminate against students by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

- We adhere strictly to our school's Anti-Bullying Policy when dealing with issues of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, relating to gender, race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously, in terms of identifying, assessing, recording and dealing with incidents.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements, as well as provide specific support for vulnerable groups.
- We work in partnership with parents and carers to identify the disability or any other potential equality concern of students through our admissions procedure.
- We collect data and monitor the progress and outcomes of different groups of students, then use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps.
- We are aware that legislation relates mainly to current, but also to future students – we would, for example, ensure we were sufficiently prepared for a child joining our school with any potential equality related concerns.
- We avoid language that runs a risk of placing a ceiling on students' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners.
- We use a range of teaching strategies to ensure we meet the needs of all students.
- We provide support for students at risk of underachieving.
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.
- We ensure equality of access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

What we are doing to foster positive attitudes and relationships

- We prepare our students for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our learners.
- We actively teach about differences and diversity and the impact of stereotyping prejudice and discrimination through PSHE, assemblies and the wider curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect a diverse society, in terms of race, gender, sexuality and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide students with opportunities to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We provide opportunities for students to listen to a wide range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to our school to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Board of Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

Headteacher and Leadership Team

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Senior Leadership Team has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. They will have informed and have expert knowledge of the Equality Act.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver a curriculum and lessons that reflect the school's values
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all students
- support different groups of students in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

Key contacts

Staff member responsible for equalities: Claire Lenaghan (Assistant Head)

Lead governor: Karen Cummings

Equal Opportunities for Staff

This policy applies to the school's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not employees but who work at the school (collectively referred to as "staff" in this policy).

- We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.
- All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and are in compliance with the law.
- We are also concerned wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- We ensure that all staff members, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

This policy applies to all aspects of the school's relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes:

- job advertisements;
- recruitment and selection;
- training and development;
- opportunities for promotion;
- conditions of service;
- pay and benefits;
- conduct at work;
- capability, disciplinary and grievance procedures; and
- termination of employment.

The composition and movement of staff at different levels will be reviewed from time to time to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels within the school. Where appropriate the school will take steps to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

The school's conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It is provided for guidance to all members of staff at the School who are required to familiarise themselves, and comply, with its contents.

Disability Discrimination

If a member of staff is disabled, or becomes disabled, in the course of their employment with the School, they are encouraged to tell us about their condition. This is to enable the school to support the member of staff appropriately.

If a member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they may wish to contact their Line Manager / member of the SLT to discuss any reasonable adjustments to their working conditions or duties which they consider to be reasonable and necessary or which would assist in the performance of their duties.

The Line Manager / member of the SLT may wish to consult with the member of staff, their medical adviser(s) and our occupation health providers (Team Prevent) about possible adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where reasonable, practicable and proportionate in all the circumstances of the case.

Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it would not be reasonable for the school to accommodate a particular adjustment and in such circumstances, it will ensure that it provides the member of staff with its reasons and will try to find an alternative solution where possible.

The school will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled staff, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff.

Where reasonably practicable and proportionate the school will take steps to improve access for disabled members of our community.

Fixed-Term Employees, Agency & Temporary Staff

The school will monitor its use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service to ensure they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The school will also, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Part-Time Workers

The school will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities.

Complaints of Discrimination, Victimisation and Harassment on the Protected Characteristics

The school will treat all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation related or connected to any of the protected characteristics made by its staff, students or third parties seriously and will take action where appropriate.

Any member of staff who considers that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, victimised or harassed within the meaning of this policy should discuss the matter in the first instance with their Line Manager or, if they do not consider this to be appropriate, with a member of the SLT. In some cases, it may be possible to resolve the matter informally and reach a satisfactory resolution.

If a member of staff wishes to make a formal complaint they should raise the matter through the School's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and will be investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure and the member of Staff will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation for their actions.

Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. If the school concludes that the allegations are false or have been made maliciously or in bad faith, it will deal with the matter in accordance with its disciplinary procedure. Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The school takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Disseminating this Policy

This policy is available:

- on the school website
- in the staff handbook
- as part of induction for new staff and visitors (such as students)

We ensure that the whole school community knows about this policy through training days, staff meetings, assemblies, school newsletters and the school website.

Links with other school policies and practices

This Policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Conduct Policy
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Admissions Policy
- SEN Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by Trustees bi-annually. The School reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.