

BREDHURST CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

January 2024

(Review Date: January 2026)



BREDHURST VISION

To learn and grow through the guidance and love of God

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

At Bredhurst CE Primary we value diversity and promote equality of opportunity for all.

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10)

It will help educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together.

OUR VISION

Our Vision is inspired by Matthew 13 : 31-32, The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Jesus said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 - It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. 32 - Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

The theology behind this parable is embedded across all our learning

OUR ETHOS

At Bredhurst, we aim to be proactive in helping each child to achieve the key elements to well-being in childhood and later life. These are:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well being

OUR CORE VALUES

The 'Spirit of Bredhurst' encompasses our core Christian values

- **S**elf control
- **P**erseverance
- **I**nclusion
- **R**espect
- **I**nspiration
- **T**rust

These are displayed in each classroom, the entrance, the hall and the playground and are referred to regularly in Worship and in class lessons.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The policy relates to pupils, staff and others using the school's facilities.

The 'protected characteristics' referred to in this policy apply to the following (in line with the Equality Act 2010):

- Age
- Sex
- Race– ethnicity including nationality/citizenship
- Disability/ability
- Religion and belief
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment including transgender
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Accessibility for disabled pupils
- HIV/AIDS
- Part time workers
- Rehabilitation of offenders

How these specifically apply in each instance will vary, depending upon the context, and whether it is concerning pupils, staff or those using the school's facilities. Proportionality and due regard will apply when giving due consideration to what is required.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Accessibility Plan and any other relevant policies.

For pupils, staff and others using the school facilities, the school is committed to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010,
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The school is committed to giving all pupils every opportunity to achieve the highest standards by:

- taking account of their varied experiences and needs;
- offering a broad and balanced curriculum;
- having high expectations of all pupils

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Equality statement
- Accessibility Plan
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policies
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Sex & Relationships Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The school does not unlawfully discriminate against anyone, whether pupil, parent, staff or visitor, on the grounds of, or related to, any of the protected characteristics (detailed in section 1.3).

The school promotes the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that it provides in the school.

The school seeks to ensure that, wherever possible, all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the schools.

The school strives to constantly identify and remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups by regularly assessing the impact of its policies and practices.

The school ensures that recruitment, employment, promotion and development opportunities are open to all.

The school challenges personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur. The school is aware that prejudice and stereotyping can be caused by misconception and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's point of view, the school aims to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

The school values each pupil's worth, celebrating both people's individuality and the diversity of the community centred on the school and shows the utmost respect for everyone.

The school and its staff strive to be proactive in tackling prejudice and unlawful discrimination.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN RECRUITMENT

The school will ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against on the grounds of the protected characteristics and will proactively monitor and review this over time and make changes where required to address any imbalance.

Recruitment and selection procedures and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure that no individual is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly, paying particular attention to the protected characteristics.

In accordance with the spirit of this policy statement, employees are given an equal opportunity to progress within the organisation, and this will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the school, with changes made where necessary to address any imbalance.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CURRICULUM

Every pupil has an equal entitlement to the National Curriculum and, subject to entry requirements, to all other areas of the curriculum, regardless of language, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity, or gender dysphoria.

Pupils should have equal access to the curriculum regardless of academic ability. Consequently this policy should be read in conjunction with the Special Educational Needs Policy.

Staff will actively encourage the breaking down of any traditional gender stereotyping regarding subject choices.

The school will monitor any work experience placements to ensure equal opportunities

All forms of individual and subject support, guidance, amenities and facilities, including extra-curricular activities, will be equally available to all pupils, with particular attention given to equality of opportunity across the protected characteristics.

Behavioural expectations and disciplinary sanctions will be free of any bias in relation to the protected characteristics. Monitoring arrangements will be established to determine this position.

Teachers will assess all materials and resources used for teaching and take appropriate action whenever possible to ensure that they reflect concepts, themes and information which seeks to address stereotypes in relation to the protected characteristics, and remove discrimination. Teachers will try to ensure that all pupils feel that their language and culture is both acknowledged and valued.

The school actively encourages an ethos in which all pupils feel secure and valued.

RACE

The term 'Race' refers to a person's ethnicity, race, nationality or national origin.

The school will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The school will not tolerate any form of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures and reported to the Authority's Schools Service (see Appendix 3).

The school endeavours to be welcoming to all minority groups. The celebration and understanding of cultural diversity is promoted through the topics studied by the pupils and is reflected in displays, resources and events.

Cultural diversity and respect for others are celebrated and reflected across the whole curriculum. The curriculum will enhance pupils' understanding of Welsh, British and world society and history, including the contributions of minority ethnic groups.

The school will give pupils the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and reject racial discrimination.

GENDER / SEX

The school will constantly examine its curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality.

The school will encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid sexual stereotypes presented by, for example, the media, and will try to ensure that resources include non-sexist books which value the achievements of both women and men.

The school is committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. The school will endeavour to provide all pupils with experience in subjects traditionally considered to be suitable for a single sex e.g. rugby, football, netball, cooking, woodwork, etc.

The school tries to ensure:

- that teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes;
- that teachers consider the difference in preferred 'learning styles' often displayed between boys and girls, and design lessons that provide opportunity to appeal to both genders;
- that all pupils have opportunities for working with pupils of both sexes;
- that the traditional sexual stereotypes are broken down (for example by not asking boys to move furniture whilst girls tidy up);
- that pupils have opportunities for examining their own pre-conceived ideas of gender roles;
- that pupils are encouraged to pursue less conventional subjects and interests, for example girls to read more non-fiction and boys more fiction; girls to develop mechanical interests and boys creative skills.

DISABILITY

The term disability applies to a person when:

- they have a physical or mental impairment;
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Equality Act, these words have the following meaning:

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

The school is committed to meeting the needs of pupils with disabilities, as it is to meeting the needs of all within the school. The school endeavours to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which specifies due regard should be given to consider the barriers that may exist to a pupil's access to education and how to remove them. All reasonable steps will therefore be taken to ensure that disabled pupils are not placed at any disadvantage compared to non-disabled children. The Equality Act also determines that where significant disadvantage exists, disabled people will be treated more favourably to address the imbalance. This will be taken into account when considering any necessary improvements.

The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled pupils full access to all areas of learning or associated services provided for, or offered to, pupils at the schools, including educational visits and other off-site activities e.g. swimming.

Teachers will modify teaching and learning as appropriate for pupils with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities or modify teaching materials or offer alternative activities where pupils are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

RELIGION AND BELIEF

The school respects the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, parents and visitors and will comply with all reasonable requests relating to the accommodation of a recognised religion or belief's observance and practice. This includes respect for lack of religion or belief, as in humanism and atheism.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The school will make no assumption about the sexual orientation of any of the members of its community, including its pupils, teaching staff or those who use the schools facilities.

In the curriculum, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. Whilst heterosexual relationships are the most common in our society, we acknowledge that some pupils may develop a homosexual or bisexual orientation and that during development many will be still questioning their sexual orientation. Pupils' questions will be answered as they arise, honestly, factually and non-judgementally.

Derogatory name-calling (of any sort) is unacceptable under any circumstances. Matters arising in relation to name calling which relates to a pupil's sexuality or perceived sexuality will be taken seriously and action taken where necessary to remove this behaviour from the school environment.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

As well as normal practice arrangements in terms of maternity leave and employment protection, staff who become pregnant will be supported through pregnancy and maternity leave, with reasonable adjustments made where appropriate and necessary.

Staff who have a pregnancy that ends will be supported through that process, for instance, by being offered compassionate leave.

Staff who have a baby born prematurely or with health issues will be supported through that process.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

The school will ensure that equality of opportunity is provided for people applying for positions at the schools, regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.

Respect and dignity towards children whose parents who are in a civil partnership will be upheld by pupils, teachers and other school staff.

Parents of pupils who are in a civil partnership will be treated with dignity and respect.

TRANSGENDER

The school will be supportive of any young person undergoing gender reassignment and will support them to continue effectively with their education during that process.

The school will ensure that learners undergoing gender reassignment are protected from bullying or harassment relating to this and will work with the young person and their parents/guardians to manage this, including how, what and when to inform other learners and the approach taken.

AGE

The school will put procedures in place to ensure that no-one is denied a job, an equal chance of training or promotion or suffers from harassment or victimisation because of their age.

BULLYING (TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SCHOOL'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY)

The school is committed to identifying and tackling all forms of bullying, which can have a significant negative impact upon a pupil's well-being and academic achievement.

The school will take 'identity based' bullying relating to the protected characteristics particularly seriously, where a pupil's identity or perceived identity is being used as the basis for the bullying.

The school will address and take seriously cases of 'cyberbullying', whereby bullying occurs through the use of information and communication technology, in particular, through the use of social media, such as Facebook, twitter, or other social networking websites or text messaging. Where content is considered to be illegal, the Police will be informed.

Staff, pupils and parents will be encouraged and supported to report all incidents of bullying and cyberbullying.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

The governing body has responsibility for the duties which arise in relation to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the associated regulations for Wales encompassed within the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

In this policy statement the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

The governing body will ensure that no-one is unlawfully discriminated against whilst in the school on account of the protected characteristics.

THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER

The headteacher will ensure that the school's policy on equal opportunities is implemented, and is supported by the governing body in so doing.

The headteacher will set aside their own prejudices and ensure that all pupils, fellow colleagues and those using the school's facilities are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of the school's policy on equal opportunities and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The headteacher will ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy so that no-one suffers discrimination.

The headteacher will promote the principles of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and in providing opportunities for training.

The headteacher will promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in assemblies, for example, respect for other people will be a regular theme as it will also be in displays around the school.

The headteacher will view all incidents of unfair treatment with due concern.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

Class teachers will set aside their own prejudices and ensure that all pupils, colleagues and those using the school's facilities are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

The school will address both direct and indirect discrimination against any child/young person, parent or visitor and will actively seek to identify and remove it. Ignorance of what constitutes discrimination is not lawful protection against an allegation and will therefore not be considered a defence.

When selecting classroom materials, teachers will strive to provide resources which give positive images and which challenge stereotypical images in relation to the protected characteristics.

When designing schemes of work, teachers will pay cognisance to this equal opportunities policy, both in the choice of topics to study and in how to approach sensitive issues. For example, history topics should include examples of the significant contribution made by women; in geography, attempts should be made to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia for example and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

All teachers and support staff will challenge any incidents of discrimination and draw them to the attention of the headteacher.

THE ROLE OF PUPILS

Pupils will be made aware of this policy and will be encouraged and supported to draw any incidents of discrimination to the attention of the class teacher and/or headteacher.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents will be made aware of this policy through the school prospectus and home-school agreement and will be encouraged and supported to draw any incidents of discrimination to the attention of the class teacher or headteacher.

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS MADE

The school will take all allegations of discrimination very seriously, and will commit to investigating them properly and fairly. The outcome of any investigation will be determined under the school's disciplinary procedures. The school will also foster a 'safe environment' where pupils or parents can feel confident to raise these issues, and be fully supported and protected throughout the procedures which may follow.

The school will take 'false allegations' of discrimination seriously, and this will be dealt with in the appropriate manner by the schools under its disciplinary procedures. It is hoped that this will be rare and will normally only be determined following a fair and thorough investigation.

THE ROLE OF VISITORS / CONTRACTORS

All visitors and contractors are required to adhere to the school's policy.

The governing body is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process so that no-one applying for a post at the school is discriminated against;
- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with its reporting in relation to the Equality Plan for the school;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from pupils, parents, staff or visitors regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's pupil behaviour policy, and the number of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if it is considered necessary.