

Samuel Cody School

Equality Policy 2023-2024

Introduction

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Employment Equality Policy.

National and Legal Context

We recognise that we have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the school community to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (applicable only to staff), disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, maternity and pregnancy, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership (as applicable).

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, and in particular we do this by developing good relations across different cultures and community groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

School Context

Samuel Cody School is a school for students with Moderate Learning Difficulties, Autism and Social, Emotional and Mental Health in Farnborough. The school caters for children aged 4

to 16 years old. The school accepts pupils and students from the whole of Hampshire and thus it has a diverse school population which includes children with a wide range of religious and linguistic diversity including migrant and refugee families, forces communities and widely ranging socio-economic groups. The biggest equality and diversity issue that the school faces is one of inclusion for children who have special educational needs and disabilities. This is a primary focus of the school in its educational delivery in order to enable all to fulfil their potential.

Principles

To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

1. All pupils, families and staff are of equal value

We see all pupils/students, potential pupils/students, their parents and carers, and staff as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their sex
- Whatever their gender identity
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age
- Whether or not they have a connection with the forces community
- Whether or not they have refugee / asylum status
- Whether or not English is their first language

2. We recognise and respect difference

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate

but and will seek to overcome the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils/students may face in relation to their protected characteristics. Additionally we aim to celebrate diversity and recognise the uniqueness of every individual at our school:

- Disability – We proactively work to make any reasonable adjustments that enable every individual to participate fully and equally in our school whatever their needs.
- Sex – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs.
- Gender reassignment – we recognise an individual has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their gender.
- Gender Identity – We will accept and respect the gender identity of all individuals.
- Religion and belief – we support all reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice and encourage the sharing of important religious dates, events and celebrations.
- Ethnicity and race – we appreciate that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds.
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers.
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of this.
- Marriage and civil partnership – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have.
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, students, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes and interaction between individuals, groups and communities different from each other

- an absence of harassment, victimisation, prejudice and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics and more widely

3. We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights and fair treatment. We also take into account aspects applicable to particular groups as appropriate, such as the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff or job applicants.

4. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

5. We consult and involve to ensure views are heard

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils/students who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils/students, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

6. We aim to foster greater community cohesion

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

7. We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current

equality information can be found in Appendix A to this policy statement. We maintain internal data about demographics that is reviewed regularly by SLT and the school governing body to ensure that we are operating in a way that is in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, promoting Diversity and Inclusion. Due to the small size of the school and GDPR we do not publish this data annually.

8. We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives

We develop and publish internally specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in Appendix B to this policy statement and take into account both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them. This is in the form of our SEF and SIP.

Application of the principles within this policy statement:

The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil/student progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils/students, their families, parents/carers and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil/student behaviour, discipline, suspensions and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents, families and carers
- Our contact with the wider community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying

The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils/students are recorded and dealt with appropriately. Please see our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

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

All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons
- support pupils/students in their class who have additional needs

Date approved by the Governing Body:

Date for policy review: September 2025

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We have considered how well we currently achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion or belief and sexual orientation).

We have also involved staff, pupils, students, parents/carers and others in the following ways:

- parent questionnaires
- involvement of the student council
- staff survey
- contact with parents representing pupils/students with particular protected characteristics
- contact with the local community and disability organisations

Pupil-related data

- Pupil attainment – pupil achievement levels are below average for the general population as all pupils have a statement of educational needs for learning difficulties
- Pupil progress- pupil progress levels are high when compared to those in similar schools (using average GCSE points and end KS3 point scores)
- Attendance levels – attendance levels are good
- Suspensions, exclusions, consequences and rewards – suspensions are rare occurrences and are usually a result of violent or prejudiced behaviour
- Extra-curricular provision takes place two to three times a week. A menu of opportunity is published each half term with many pupils/students attending at least one club.

- The school council has one representative from each tutor group who meet at least half termly to advise on school provision and improvement
- An option system operates for year 10 and 11 pupils
- 2022 parent feedback via Ofsted showed exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with the school.

Staff data

Due to the small size of our school we are not required to publish data about staff.

Qualitative information

The school has published various policies on the school's website (www.samuel-cody.hants.sch.uk). These policies evidence the school's commitment to the principles outlined in this policy and the public sector equality duty.

Equality Objectives:

Having referred to and analysed our equality information, we have set ourselves the following objective for the year:

Objective:

Intent

Promote students understanding and respect for differences

To maintain high levels of respect and equality within the school

Implementation

Enhanced educational programme linked to protected characteristics

Impact

Increased tolerance and understanding for students with protected characteristics

Improved school community

Reduction in suspensions relating to inappropriate language linked to protected characteristics

Due to an increased number of incidents aimed at staff and students around their protected characteristics, the school has decided to embark upon an enhanced education programme, taking advice from external agencies where applicable. This will increase the tolerance and understanding of our students to improve the environment in our school community. We will consider ourselves successful in this endeavour with a reduction of incidents of this nature by 50%. This will be included in the SIP and reviewed at TLP and FGB

Date of publication of this appendix: March 2023

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