



## BACKWELL SCHOOL EQUALITY POLICY

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### 1 Introduction

Backwell School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and employee and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We believe that 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 which pays due regard to Children and Families Act (2014) Part 3 which links to the SEND code of practice 0-25 years (2015).

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

- (i) All learners and employees are of equal value. Whether or not they have a disability, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- (ii) 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 people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, sex, gender reassignment status\*, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- (iii) We nurture positive attitudes and relationships. We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.

\*Gender reassignment is defined in the Equality Act as applying to anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes. This definition means that in order to be protected under the Act, a pupil will not necessarily have to be undertaking a medical procedure to change their sex but must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender, or proposing to do so. Source - Department for Education (DfE), The Equality Act 2020 and schools, May 2014, para 3.4

- (iv) We nurture a shared sense of cohesion and belonging. We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- (v) 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
- (vi) We have the highest expectations of all our children. We expect that all students can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential.
- (vii) We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable. We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

## **2 Purpose of the policy**

The Equality Act 2010 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 or employees or treat them less favourably because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, marital status or pregnancy or maternity.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties.

## **3 The Public Sector Equality Duty or “general duty”**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## **4 Two “specific duties”**

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish Equality objectives at least every four years which are specific and measurable.

This policy describes how Backwell School is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations  
Appendix 2 shows the school's Equality Objectives for 2016-2021 in an Equality Action Plan.  
Appendix 3 is the School's Accessibility Plan for 2016-2021.

## **5 Development of the policy**

When developing the policy we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and also the Ofsted inspection framework 2012, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that Ofsted has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for students with a disability and those who have special educational needs.

## **6 Links to other policies and documentation**

Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in other school documents as appropriate.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the way we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy and the LSP's Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **7 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 students to facilities and services. We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for students with a disability – designed to enhance access and participation to the level of other students and stop children with a disability being placed at a disadvantage compared to their peers.

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 today life of the school. We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.

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

## **8 Behaviour, Exclusions and Attendance**

The Backwell School Policy on Behaviour - Rewards, Sanctions and Exclusions - takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for students with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of overrepresentation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

## **9 Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying**

Backwell School challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs;
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, prejudice towards the Traveller community, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum;
- prejudices around gender reassignment and identification, including transphobic attitudes including the deliberate incorrect use of a preferred pronoun;
- prejudices around sexual orientation, for example homophobia or biphobia.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a report to the governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action to reduce incidents.

## **10 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. We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our student admissions meetings. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills. We collect, analyse and publish data:

- on the school population by sex and ethnicity;
- on the % of students identified as having a special educational need and/or disability;
- by year group – in terms of ethnicity, sex and proficiency in English;
- on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to ethnicity, sex and disability and proficiency in English.

We analyse the standards reached and progress made by different groups at the end of each key stage. We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current but also to future students. We avoid language that runs the risk of placing a ceiling on any students' achievement or that seeks to define their potential as learners, such as "less able". We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all students. We provide support to students at risk of underachieving. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, sex, disability, gender reassignment and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example:

- students with a disability and those without
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys

We ensure equality of access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary. We also implemented an Accessibility Plan 2017 - 2021 designed to increase the extent to which students with disability can participate in the curriculum; improve the physical environment and; improve the availability of accessible information to students with a disability.

## **11 Positive Action**

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet our Equality Objectives.

## **12 What we are doing to foster good relations.**

We prepare our students for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students. We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, including the Black Lives Matter campaign, through the statutory RSE curriculum citizenship and across all subject areas. We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, age, sexual identity, gender reassignment status and disability, avoiding stereotyping. We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we: review relevant feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent-school forum and/or focus meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children, from the school council, RSE lessons, whole school surveys on children's attitudes to self and school; analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans/Personalised Provision Maps, mentoring and support; ensure that we secure responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and from the governing body's working groups.

## **13 What we are doing to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability.**

In addition to its inclusion within the PSED equality objectives, schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability. The DfE non-statutory guidance states that this duty can be summarised as follows:

- Where a student with a disability is placed at a disadvantage compared to other students then the school must take reasonable adjustments to try and reduce/remove the disadvantage.
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a student with a disability when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces in comparison to other students.
- Schools are not subject to the other reasonable adjustment duty to make alterations to physical features because this is already considered as part of their planning duties.

## 14 Reasonable adjustments

Factors a school may consider when assessing the reasonableness of an adjustment, may include the financial or other resources required for the adjustment, its effectiveness, its effect on other students, health and safety requirements and whether aids have been made available through the Special Educational Needs route. Cost will play a major part in determining what is reasonable.

Students with a disability may have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or have been allocated additional Top Up funding to help fund these adjustments. In other cases, auxiliary aids may be provided by the Local Authority. If the student does not have access to these lines of support and funding then the duty to consider reasonable adjustments and provide such auxiliary aids will fall to the school (after the relevant provisions come into force). The reasonable adjustments duties on schools are intended to complement the accessibility planning duties and the existing provisions which are part of education legislation, under which Local Authorities have a duty to provide auxiliary aids to students with a special educational need. In addition to the duty to consider reasonable adjustments for particular individual students with a disability, schools will also have to consider potential adjustments which may be needed for students with a disability generally.

## 15 Accessibility planning

Backwell School has carried out accessibility planning for students with a disability (see Appendix 3). These are the same duties as previously existed under the Disability Discrimination Act and have been replicated in the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility plan is aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which students with a disability can **participate in the curriculum**;
- Improving the **physical environment** of schools to enable students with a disability to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improving the availability of **accessible information** to students with a disability.

## 16 Increasing the extent to which students with a disability can participate in the curriculum

The curriculum covers teaching and learning and wider provision embracing after school clubs; leisure, sporting and cultural activities; and school trips. Planning for improved access to the curriculum includes consideration of school and classroom organisation and support, timetabling, curriculum options, deployment of staff and staff information and training. Curriculum audits can support the school to review patterns of achievement and participation by students with a disability in different areas of the curriculum, e.g. the inclusion of children with a physical disability in PE, and then to identify action to increase participation.

## 17 Improving the physical environment of schools

This strand of the planning duty covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education or work. The physical environment includes steps, stairways, kerbs, exterior surfaces and paving, parking areas, building entrances and exits (including emergency escape routes), internal and external doors, gates, toilets and washing facilities, lighting, heating, ventilation, lifts, floor coverings, signs, interior surfaces, room decor and furniture. Improvements to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops, communication aids, well designed (passive) room acoustics and way-finding systems. The provision of 'quiet' areas and improvements to the physical

safety of the environment, indoors and outdoors, may also enhance access for children with learning disabilities. Improved access in existing buildings can often be achieved by rearranging room space, removing obstructions from walkways, changing the layout of classrooms, providing designated storage space or reallocating rooms to particular subject specialisms.

Physical aids to access education cover ICT equipment, desks, chairs, writing equipment, science equipment and the like. E.g. through enlarged computer screens and keyboards, concept keyboards, communication aids, switches, photocopying enlargement facilities, specialist desks and chairs and portable aids for children with motor co-ordination and poor hand/eye skills such as extra robust scientific glassware and specialist pens and pencils.

## **18 Improving the availability of accessible information to students with a disability or staff**

This part of the duty covers planning to make written information normally provided by the school to its students – such as handouts, timetables, textbooks, information about school events – available to those with a disability (including those with significant low reading acquisition levels). This might include alternative formats such as large print, the use of ICT and the provision of information orally, through lip speaking or in sign language. The information should take account of students' disabilities and views expressed by students or their parents about their preferred means of communication. The school should consider how all information normally provided in a written format including work sheets, timetables, school examination papers, newsletters, information about school events, trips and extracurricular provision could be made accessible to all those with a disability.

## **19 Publishing Equality Objectives (see Equality Action Plan)**

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups. We produce Equality data Analysis which inform our discussions about the Equality Objectives.

## **20 Our Equality Objectives for 2017-2021 are:**

- 70%+ of all students meet their reference grade in each subject
- Ensure that SEND students make at least the same progress as other students.
- Identify and refine successful strategies for underachieving boys
- Achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the % of fixed term exclusions for students with protected characteristics
- Increase participation by pupil premium students and students in a protected group in after school clubs

We produce an Equality Action Plan that shows how we will achieve our objectives. These form part of our school development plan.

## **21 Monitoring and reviewing objectives**

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them. We involve and consult staff, students, governors and parents and carers.

## **22 Roles and Responsibilities**

We expect all members of the school community and visitors 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.

## **23 Governing body**

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. The governing body has a governor responsible for Equality.

Every governing body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's Equalities Work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

The governing body actively promote governorship to protected groups with a view to ensure that the membership is representative of the diversity of our community.

## **24 Headteacher and Leadership team**

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the 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.

**A senior member of staff** has day-to-day responsibility for co-coordinating implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes. They will have expert and informed knowledge of the Equality Act.

## **25 Teaching and Support Staff**

All teaching and support staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- challenge prejudice and discrimination throughout the school
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, sex and disability
- 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 aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

We will provide training and guidance on Equalities for all staff new to the school as part of the induction procedure. We will reiterate the principal expectations and duties of the Equality Act at a whole staff meeting at the start of the school year.

## **26 Visitors**

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information on the school website to enable them to do this.

## **27 Equal Opportunities for staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff. 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 in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure 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.

## **28 Monitoring and reviewing the policy**

We review the information about equalities in the policy annually and make adjustments as appropriate.

## **29 Disseminating the policy**

This Equality Policy along with the Equality Objectives and data is available on the school website. We ensure that the whole school community knows about the policy, objectives and data through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications. We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and special educational needs.

## APPENDIX 1

### Check list for school staff and governors

- The school collects information on race, disability and sex with regards to both students and staff, e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training. This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides.
- The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties.
- The school analyses student achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need.
- The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable students and monitors progress on reaching these objectives.
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes.
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all students to understand and celebrate diversity and difference.
- All groups of students are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the school council.
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of students in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern.
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community Minority ethnic, students with a disability and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies.
- The school takes part in events to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and sex.
- The school environment is increasingly accessible to students, staff and visitors to the school.
- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered.
- The accessibility needs of parents, students and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information.
- The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves. Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who have protected characteristics.

**APPENDIX 2**

**Backwell School Equality Action Plan 2017-2021**

Public Sector Equality Duty	Equality Objectives	Actions	How will the impact of the action be monitored?	Who is responsible	Time Frame	Progress
Eliminate discrimination	Training for Awareness Raising of Disability and other protected characteristic issues	Provide training for governors, staff, students and parents. Discuss perception of issues with staff to determine the current status of school.	Whole school community aware of issues relating to Access Society will benefit by a more inclusive school and social environment	BH	Sept. 2017	
	Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum	Provide training for staff.	Increase in access to the National Curriculum	BH	Nov. 2016	

Improving equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics	All out-of-school activities are planned to ensure the participation of the whole range of students	Review all out of-school provision to ensure compliance with legislation.	Increase in access to all school activities for all students with a disability	MS	Sept. 2017	
	Identify and refine successful strategies for underachieving boys	Identify where sex gaps truly (three-year trends) exist and research and implement strategies to reduce the gaps.				
Consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions the school takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination	Raise the awareness of adults working at and for the school on the importance of good communications systems.	Arrange training courses.	School is more effective in meeting the needs of students.	BH and BEG group	Sept. 2018	

### APPENDIX 3

#### Backwell School Accessibility Plan 2017-2021

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Training for Awareness Raising of Disability and other protected characteristic issues	Provide training for governors, staff, students and parents. Discuss perception of issues with staff to determine the current status of school	Whole school community aware of issues relating to Access	September 2017	Society will benefit by a more inclusive school and social environment

Training for teachers on differentiating the curriculum	Undertake an audit of staff training requirements	All teachers are able to more fully meet the requirements of the needs of students with a disability with regards to accessing the curriculum	November 2016	Increase in access to the National Curriculum
All out-of-school activities are planned to ensure the participation of the whole range of students	Review all out-of-school provision to ensure compliance with legislation	All out-of-school activities will be conducted in an inclusive environment with providers that comply with all current and future legislative requirements	September 2017	Increase in access to all school activities for all students with a disability
Classrooms are optimally organised to promote the participation and independence of all students	Review and implement a preferred layout of furniture and equipment to support the learning process in individual class bases	Lessons start on time without the need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of individual students	September 2017	Increase in access to the National Curriculum

### Improving the Delivery of Written Information

Target	Strategy	Outcome	Timeframe	Achievement
Availability of written material in alternative formats	The school will make itself aware of the services available through local LAs for converting written information into alternative formats.	The school will be able to provide written information in different formats when required for individual purposes	April 2017	Delivery of information to students with a disability improved, Delivery of school information to parents and the local Community improved.

Review documentation with a view of ensuring accessibility for students with visual impairment	Get advice from Hearing and Vision Support Service on alternative formats and use of IT software to produce customized materials.	All school information available for all	September 2018	Delivery of school information to students & parents with visual difficulties improved.
Raise the awareness of adults working at and for the school on the importance of good communications systems.	Arrange training courses.	Awareness of target group raised	September 2018	School is more effective in meeting the needs of students.

## Improving the Physical Access

Item	Activity	Timescale	Progress Review
Accessible car parking	Bays to be marked and signed	2016	Completed
Doors	Anti-glare film to be applied to the doors	By 2021 and ongoing	Fitted to most internal doors
Staircases	Colour-contrasted handrails to both sides of staircases	By 2021 and ongoing	Completed
Accessible toilet	To provide one unisex accessible toilet in each building	Ongoing as money allows.	Provided in Arc. 6 <sup>th</sup> form, sports hall, reception. Lower school, Sedgemoor and History.
Improve Reception facilities	The counter is lowered to a maximum height of 800mm, with knee space under.	Ongoing when money allows.	Completed
Adapted wash basins to be at wheelchair height with space under for wheelchair to allow user to get close to wash basin.	Wash basins to be moved to wheelchair height, as money allows.	Ongoing as money allows.	In place in all accessible toilets.