

Working in collaboration.....

Whitelocke Infant and Nursery School and The Palmer CE [Aided] Junior School Gender Equality Policy

Whitelocke Infant and Nursery School and The Palmer CE [Aided] Junior School Context

Both schools pride themselves on being inclusive schools. We value each individual, their uniqueness and the contribution they can make to our schools community. We provide a safe, caring, enjoyable and challenging learning environment. Both schools have a Resourced Unit for pupils with physical disabilities.

The schools serve the Norreys Ward in Wokingham. Pupils come to the school from a very mixed socio-economic background. Cohort data is kept for each year group and the demographic information available is based on Acorn Types [CACI] and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation [IMD] as well as first hand knowledge of families in school. The majority of children live in owner-occupier homes. However, the designated area has been identified as including a pocket of deprivation and the percentage of free school meals has increased over the last 4 years to 24% on average.

Legislative Context

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality. This Policy ***follows the guidance from the statutory Code of Practice produced by the Equal Opportunities Commission www.eoc.org.uk***.

Social Context

We believe that, even having the Equal pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, there is still widespread discrimination and gender inequality in society. Even after thirty years of individual legal rights to sex equality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood, challenged and overcome.

Key Values

Our aims are shared by all involved in the schools and they reflect the Christian ethos and values by which we work. The gospel values shape policies, practices and procedures to ensure:

- a) The whole child is being cared for, educated and prepared for life in a technological, multicultural society.
- b) Staff are valued and given opportunities to develop professionally for their own fulfillment and the school's continuing development.

Both schools have a committed and experienced governing body which supports the teaching staff and the headteacher in ensuring the school continues to make progress. The relationship between the Governing Body, headteacher, staff and parents aims to strengthen the effectiveness of the school. The pupils in the school come from diverse backgrounds; Inclusion for all is considered one of the greatest strengths of the schools and has been praised by the Traveller education service and other professionals.

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The General Duty

In accordance with our school's mission statement and values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, Whitelocke and Palmer Schools have due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator. *Our school's Behaviour Management/Anti-Bullying policy does not tolerate name calling of any kind and other associated behaviours.*

We understand 'sex' to refer to the **biological** differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider **social** roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We understand the three parts of the duty to be different, but that they should normally support each other. However, we are aware that achieving one may not lead to achieving all three.

In taking due regard we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance. By this we mean that the weight we give to gender equality will be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. The greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater regard we will pay to it.

The Specific Duties

We welcome the responsibility to think and act more strategically about gender equality. To meet the specific duties, and guided by the Code of Practice prepared by the Equal Opportunities Commission, we have prepared, published and implemented, and will maintain, a Gender Equality Action Plan which contains our current objectives. This is attached to and forms an essential part of this policy.

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We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our schools' functions and services. In order to do this we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area
- Consult all staff, pupils, parents and relevant local communities
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Publish and implement the Action Plan with our proposed objectives and actions

We will:

- Set out the results of reviews, consultations and impact assessments
- Report on progress annually and set further objectives where necessary
- Review and revise the Policy and Action Plan at least every three years

Responsibilities

All governors, staff, volunteers, pupils and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan.

In addition: The Governing Bodies of both Whitelocke Infant and Nursery School and the Palmer CE [Aided] Junior School are responsible for ensuring that the Schools prepare, publish, implement, report on and review a Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan and in particular the employment implications of meeting the Duty.

The Headteacher works with the SLT of both schools to ensure that –

- the Policy and Action Plan are implemented
- staff recruitment, training opportunities and conditions promote gender equality
- all staff, pupils and their parents are consulted regarding, and are aware of the school's responsibilities to meet, the Gender Equality Duty
- existing and planned policies are assessed for the ways in which they impact on gender equality
- curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities take account of the need to promote gender equality
- incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to the schools' Behaviour/Anti-Bullying policy
- visitors to the school, or those who use the premises, are aware of the Gender Equality policy and action plan

All staff have a responsibility to deal with incidents of sexual harassment or bullying; help eliminate unlawful discrimination; prepare and/or help deliver a curriculum, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities (including work with parents) that take account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality.

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Pupils and parents have a proportionate responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the policy, as do **visitors** to the school.

We believe that having this gender equality policy and action plan will:

- support us in our decision-making and policy development
- give us a clearer understanding of the needs of staff, pupils and their families
- enable us to provide better quality services which meet varied needs
- help us target our resources more effectively
- help promote increased confidence in our school
- make more effective use of our workforce

We recognise that both sexes can suffer from sexual stereotyping and that sometimes the same policies and practices can impact differently on men and women and boys and girls. We will make appropriate adjustments if this is found to be the case with any of our policies and practices.

We also recognise that girls and boys, and women and men, can experience different forms of discrimination depending on, among other things, their ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age or disability and we will take this complexity into consideration.

In these ways we will strive to improve the situation for, and the relationships between, men and women and boys and girls within our school and wider community. [Read this policy in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy.]

Single Sex Provision or activities

Where we provide for one sex only, this is to help meet the different needs of boys and girls (men and women), needs often arising out of historical and current stereotyping and unjust gender discrimination, or where there is an issue of physical intimacy or embarrassment to be considered. We do not provide activities, classes, facilities, benefits or services for one sex only if this would amount to less favourable treatment of the other sex, or where it would promote gender stereotyping and gender inequality..

We do not deny one sex the same opportunities as the other and where we provide for one sex only we ensure there are equivalent and proportionate facilities, benefits or services for the other sex. We do not offer different curriculum choices to boys and girls, and where there are curriculum options we ensure that these are not offered in such a way that boys and girls are steered into making choices based on gender stereotypes.

If requests for additional single sex activities, facilities or provision which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities come from pupils, families or the community, these will be considered and legal advice sought.

Breaches of the Gender Equality Policy

We understand that eliminating gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change. Where possible, breaches of the policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes. More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying and harassment procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

Where safeguarding issues based on sex and gender come to the attention of the school these will be dealt with according to our child protection procedures.

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Consultation; publishing; staff, pupils and parent development

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and members of our local community. These consultations have contributed to developing the awareness among governors, staff, pupils and parents of the ongoing need to eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination and harassment and to promote gender equality. We have also drawn upon earlier consultations *e.g. in preparation for the SEF, consultation on staff policies*

Copies of this policy are available in the school offices and on our websites. A summary will be printed occasionally in our newsletters. A brief summary of the main points of the policy is made available in age-appropriate ways to our pupils.

We will continue, as outlined in our action plan, to develop awareness of what constitutes unlawful gender discrimination and harassment, and of the need to eliminate this and to promote gender equality.

Date agreed by the Governing Bodies : June 2007

First report to staff, pupils and parents: May 2007

Gender Equality Policy review date: March 2010

Gender Equality Action Plan follows & attaches to this policy