



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Equality & Diversity Policy

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the school's Equality Scheme Statement which outlines the Governing Body's general and specific duties and responsibilities in relation to the equality areas of:

- Race;
- Disability;
- Gender;
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual/Trans-Sexual Orientation.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

1. Overview:

Meadowfield School, in line with DfE and Local Authority policies, is committed to being an education provision which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on grounds of race, culture, gender, age, sexual/trans-sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or special need in both education and employment.

- I. Prejudice is primarily based on the untenable belief of inferiority due to difference in race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability or special need.
- II. Such belief may lead to discrimination which can express itself in a variety of forms such as; harassment, stereo-typing, bullying, socially exclusive behaviour and educational disadvantage related to negative expectation.
- III. Contrary to such belief, Meadowfield School views difference as a cause for celebration and a source of enrichment to its life as a community.
- IV. Prejudice and discrimination in any form occurring within Meadowfield School is not acceptable.
- V. Any incidents will be challenged and dealt with firmly and positively in accordance with whole school SEN and Equality Scheme duties and associated policies and procedures as required by current statutory obligations incumbent on the Governing Body, management and staff of the school.
- VI. Meadowfield School has a policy of inclusion that supports every student and recognizes and endeavours to meet their individual needs in accessing the curriculum as detailed in its Curriculum Policy Document.

In summary, Governors and all staff at Meadowfield are committed to an ethos of positive promotion of equal opportunities and inclusion for all as implicitly encapsulated in the school's vision statement:

It is the basic premise of this policy that **everyone has basic inalienable rights and entitlements.**

These rights and entitlements can be defined in broad areas:

1 The Whole Community

Meadowfield School is a school community where all its members and those associated with it including parents/carers and visitors are entitled to full consideration and respect.

2 Curriculum Entitlement

The pupils at Meadowfield School have a full entitlement to access the entire curriculum.

The above entitlements can be broken down into the following areas:

Physical Environment

The environment of Meadowfield School should be conducive to the health and well-being of all members of the community including parents/carers and those visiting it.

In this respect, members of the Meadowfield School community should consider:

- classroom/room accommodation, class size, and general environment;
- access to the entire building and environs for all;
- adequate ICT/technological/audio-visual resources for all abilities and needs.

Communication

Members of the Meadowfield School community should be aware of the way that communication may carry prejudices and demeaning stereotypes.

In this respect, members of the Meadowfield School community should consider and challenge:

- abusive language and derogatory statements;
- language and visual images which are intrinsically biased;
- language and visual images which reinforce demeaning stereotypes;
- prejudicial labelling of groups/individuals.

2. School Policies:

All school policies both existing and proposed:

- I. Will include an explicit aim of promoting equality in relation to race, disability, gender and religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- II. Will be subject to an impact assessment review as a means of evaluating their contribution and effectiveness in achieving this aim.
- III. Will be routinely scrutinised and assessed in accordance with whole school monitoring, evaluation and review procedures.
- IV. Existing policies in relation to Disability Equality Duty requirements particularly includes but is not limited to homework, educational trips & visits, behaviour, health & safety, anti-bullying, staff recruitment & retention.
- V. Existing policies in relation to Gender Equality Duty requirements particularly includes but is not limited to curriculum, anti-bullying, uniform, healthy schools, admissions, discipline, careers/work experience.
- VI. Existing policies in relation to Race Equality Duty requirements particularly includes but is not limited to anti-bullying, equal opportunities, complaints procedures, governance and curriculum.
- VII. Specifically in relation to race equality statutory requirements:

Meadowfield School is committed to an inclusive ethos based on respect for, and celebration of, racial, ethnic and multi-cultural diversity.

We will:

- a. Take positive action to eliminate racial discrimination and harassment.
- b. Encourage and affirm good relations between people of different racial groups.

- c. Value cultural and ethnic diversity in all aspects of school life and work.
- d. Promote race equality in all dimensions of the school's life and community.
- e. Value all ethnic and national groups represented in the school community.
- f. Prepare all students for living in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.
- g. Endeavour to recruit a workforce that reflective of our multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.

We accept the definition of racism and institutional racism included in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report:

Racism - Conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin.

Institutional racism - The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. We will ensure that all members of the school community will have the opportunity to improve their own understanding of race equality and understand their personal responsibility to promote race equality.

Community Consultation and Partnership

Meadowfield School is committed to working in partnership with local minority ethnic community groups and promoting racial harmony.

We will take positive action to ensure that communication is accessible to all.

Racial Incidents

Meadowfield School will not tolerate any form of racial harassment or abuse.

We accept the definition of a racial incident as contained in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report as any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

The school has a racial incidents procedure in that all such incidents must be recorded on Sleuth and reported to Principal, who will maintain a racist incident log. A copy of this incident log is presented annually to Governors and all data is passed to the LA. The Principal is responsible for implementing the procedure and ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of, and understand, it.

Ethnic Monitoring

- I. Meadowfield School will ensure that ethnic monitoring of the student population and the workforce is undertaken to ensure equality of opportunity and high achievement for all groups.
- II. The Principal will ensure that data on the ethnic profile of the school is used to inform school policies.

3. Responsibilities

In relation to equality areas, it is the responsibility of all members of the school community to:

- I. Promote all aspects of equality and diversity and support this Equality & Diversity Policy including any associated recording and reporting procedures.
- II. Behave in a manner which respects and values diversity.
- III. Challenge and eliminate discrimination, harassment and abuse in relation to the five equality duty areas.

4. Personnel Issues

Meadowfield School is committed to following the guidance and procedures as contained in Kent's:

PERSONNEL MANUAL FOR SCHOOLS UNDER LOCAL MANAGEMENT SECTION 9: EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

Recruitment is based on an assessment of the ability of each applicant to undertake the work expected for the post, whilst considering implications for a balanced staff in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and gender throughout the school.

The School will not discriminate on grounds of race, culture, gender, age, sexual/trans-sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or special need in the selection of staff for promotion, training, or in disciplinary matters.

Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders [see Appendix 1].

Policy Statement on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information [see Appendix 2].

5. Curriculum and Teaching & Learning

Meadowfield School provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all students. The school accepts the three principles in the statutory inclusion statement for the National Curriculum:

- I. Setting suitable learning challenges for all students
- II. Responding to pupil's needs
- III. Overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils

We recognise that citizenship presents opportunities for encouraging respect for individual, cultural and social diversity.

Our Curriculum Leaders, overseen by the Leadership Group, are responsible for ensuring their subject programmes/schemes of work raise awareness of equality issues and challenge stereotypical views of individuals, groups and communities.

Teachers and support staff should be careful to ensure that the content and organisation of the whole curriculum is conducive to promoting equality issues and equality of access in ways that are also supportive of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

In this respect, members of the Meadowfield School community should consider:

- subjects and content matter which reinforces prejudiced or demeaning stereotypes, including the derogative use of labels such as 'gay';
- groupings which by their nature discriminate against students;
- teaching methodologies which inhibit students' attainment potential and capacity for making good progress;
- open access for all to courses and external accreditation opportunities;
- expectations based on ability rather than disability, special need, gender, ethnic background, social circumstances, sexual orientation and religious belief.

Meadowfield School strives to ensure that teaching and learning styles include and raise achievement of all students.

We are committed to ensuring that methods of assessment are culturally neutral and do not disadvantage students from whom English is an Additional Language.

Teachers will seek opportunities to introduce activities that demonstrate the value of individual, cultural and social diversity and encourage learners to discuss equality issues.

The Fundamental British Values of rule of law, individual liberty, democracy and mutual respect and tolerance are embedded throughout all aspects of school life.

7. Associated Documents:

- Meadowfield School: Accessibility Plan.
- Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy.

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Appendix 1

Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Meadowfield School complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

Meadowfield School is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within Meadowfield School and we guarantee that this information is only to be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows Meadowfield School to ask questions about your entire criminal record we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those in Meadowfield School who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidelines and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.

This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

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Appendix 2

Policy Statement on the Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information

General Principles

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Meadowfield School complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Storage & Access

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personnel file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage


Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment [or other relevant] decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six-months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle [e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack]. We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

 Statutory Policy Approved by Governing Body	
Policy Adopted	Date: November 2023
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Next Review	Date: Academic Year 2024/25