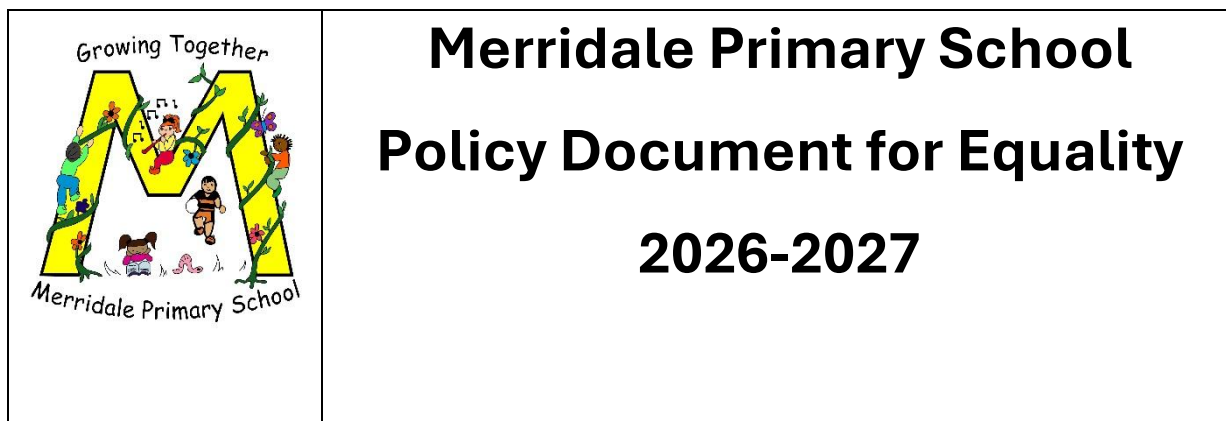




Policy Adopted by Governors: January 2026

Date for next review: January 2027

This Equality Policy replaces the;
Race Policy
Disability Equality Scheme
Gender Equality Scheme
Equal Opportunity Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with;
Schools Guidance and Framework on the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
Education and Inspections Act 2006
Ofsted Inspection Schedule 2012
Wolverhampton City Council Religious and Cultural Dress and Symbols Guidelines
Monitoring Racist and Bullying Incidents Guidance 2010
School community cohesion audit
Accessibility Policy and Plan

Purpose

The overall objective of Merridale Primary School's Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community – children, staff, governors, parents and community members.

1. Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Statement

We will not tolerate less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, and religion or belief. We will adhere to the legal definitions of these protected characteristics as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) code of practice which can be found in annex A.

Through our school ethos and values, curriculum and community links, we will work towards:

- a common vision

- a sense of belonging for all
- similar life opportunities for all
- strong and positive relationships between different communities.

Through this Equality, Diversity and Cohesion Policy, Merridale Primary School seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any person through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependents, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, where the person lives, or, spent convictions.

Equality and Diversity is more than just meeting legal obligations, or targets. It's about making a difference to the lives of the people we serve, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. This means an ongoing commitment to ensuring that our services meet the varied and individual needs of children and young people in our school. We will make sure that our employment practices are fair and promote equality. We will actively value the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures, locally and nationally. We will prepare children and young people for living in a diverse society with increasing global connections and controversial issues.

We will ensure that the principles of this policy are reflected in all our policies, practices, procedures and services and are part of everything we do.

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

Whilst the school operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice which is highlighted throughout this policy, specific actions are set out in:

- Accessibility Plan
- School Improvement Plan
- School Prospectus
- School Newsletter
- School Website

Teaching and learning

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement.

To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps, including providing targeted support where appropriate;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;

- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community without stereotyping and expose pupils to a range of thoughts and ideas;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.
- Seek to involve the community around the school in the celebration and raising awareness of cultural issues.

Admissions and exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on the protected characteristics or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any disproportionality is identified and dealt with.

3. Equal opportunities for staff

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Merridale Primary School.

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. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment in our employment practice, advance equality across all groups within our workforce and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Equality aspects such as age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity and religion and belief are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff, which are monitored as part of the performance management process;

- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Equalities Legislation

Our commitment is reinforced through our legal duty both as an employer and service provider. The legal duties come from a range of relevant equality legislation and associated codes of practice.

Through this policy we are committed to complying with the general and specific duties, as well as codes of practice.

Race

The Race Relations Act (1976) and the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) requires schools to take appropriate steps to promote race equality, eliminate unlawful race discrimination and promote good race relations.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995 and 2005) places a positive duty on us to ensure that services provided by the school and its premises are accessible to disabled people, that we promote disability equality, eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote positive attitudes to encourage participation. In some situations this may mean treating disabled people more favourably.

Gender

The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Equality Act (2006) places a positive duty on us not to treat anyone unfairly because of their gender, this means to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between girls and boys, men and women. We need to ensure that the needs of both sexes and transgender people are taken into account in our services and employment.

Sexual Orientation

All public bodies have responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation through the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. The Equality Act 2006 extends the provision to service delivery, making it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services and facilities. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

Religion and Belief

The school has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion and belief through the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. The Equality Act 2006 extends the provision to service delivery, making it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services, facilities and public functions. This also includes lack of faith and people of no faith. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

Age

The school has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities in employment and vocational training on the grounds of age, through the Age Discrimination Act 2006 and

Age Discrimination Regulations. The provisions apply to all age groups. We will ensure that we follow these regulations.

Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a responsibility on schools to promote community cohesion, locally, nationally and globally. We will do this through promoting a common vision, a commitment to equality and social justice, respecting people's different backgrounds and promoting positive relationships in the school and local neighbourhood. We promote these through the ethos of the school, the curriculum, assemblies and Diversity Days.

Future legislation

We will also welcome the contribution of future equalities legislation to provide equal opportunities for everyone.

Accessibility

Merridale Primary School will comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and should be physically accessible to disabled pupils. We will plan to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can access the school curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can access education and associated services; and
- Improve access to written information which is provided to disabled pupils. This will be done within a reasonable period of time and in formats which take account of the views expressed by the pupils and parents / carers about their preferred means of communication.

We will review our accessibility targets at least every three years. The targets can be found in the school accessibility plan.

We will work actively to anticipate the needs of disabled staff and pupils and will ensure the inclusion of disabled people by making reasonable adjustments. We will consider the following in deciding when a reasonable adjustment request can be met;

- How effective the change will be in assisting the disabled person
- Its practicality • The cost
- The resources and size of school
- The availability of any financial support and
- Any safety issue

5. The general equality duty and public sector equality duty

From April 2011, The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single equality duty on all public bodies including schools, which is extended to all protected strands – age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief. This combined equality duty, which replaces the three previous public sector equality duties, has three main elements. In the discharge of our functions, we will have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by 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.

Merridale Primary School will tackle discrimination by:

- (a) recording and reporting all racist incidents and prejudice related bullying incidents
- (b) promoting the Jigsaw PSHE programme, our school values and British Values
- (c) UNICEF, 'Rights and Responsibilities'

Merridale Primary School is committed to advancing equality of opportunity by:

- i) removing or minimising disadvantages
- ii) taking steps to meet the needs of pupils, parents / carers and staff
- iii) encouraging participation in any activity in which participation of protected groups is disproportionately low.

Merridale Primary School will foster good relations by:

- A) tackling prejudice and harassment including bullying, and
- B) promoting understanding between pupils from different backgrounds

In order to comply with the requirements of the public sector equality duty (PSED) we will;

1. Collect and publish school equality information annually.
Merridale Primary School will undertake routine equality monitoring of our pupils by race, gender, age and disability across a number of areas including admissions, exclusions, progress and attainment.

Merridale Primary School also undertakes routine equality monitoring of our staff. We will collect the following workforce information;

- The number of part-time / full-time staff and the race, gender, disability, and age distribution
- An indication of likely representation on sexual orientation, religion and belief, providing that individuals cannot be identified
- An indication of any issues for transsexual staff, based on our engagement with transsexual staff, providing that individuals cannot be identified, and voluntary groups
- Gender pay gap information
- Grievances and dismissals

We will collect and publish the following school information:

- questionnaire returns
- attendance

We will publish school equality information annually as part of the school prospectus and Head teacher's Report to Governors and School Newsletters.

2. Undertake engagement activity with protected groups annually Merridale Primary School will undertake engagement activity annually with protected groups to 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.

Engagement activity will include:

Surveys/questionnaires

Focus groups

Peer supporters and school council

Parents evenings

Celebrations

Governors forums

3. Identify and publish school equality and accessibility objectives Merridale Primary School will develop specific and measurable equality and accessibility objectives based on the evidence gathered and published and the engagement in which we have been involved. Objectives will meet the three aims of the general duty. The equality and accessibility objectives will be reviewed annually. Every three years, accordingly, we will draw up an action plan within the framework of the overall school improvement plan and process of self-evaluation, setting out the specific equality and accessibility objectives we shall pursue. We will report annually on progress towards achieving them.

3. Undertake equality analysis on the effects of school practices and policies
Merridale Primary School will undertake equality analysis on all relevant school policies and decisions, as part of the school policy review process.
All curriculum policies
SEN
Safeguarding
Teaching and learning policy
Collective Worship
Inclusion
School handbooks

5. Roles and Responsibilities Governors The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and prospective pupils, and responsive to their needs.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.

The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, or pregnancy.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of any of the protected characteristics, and ensures that all reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils.

The governing body is liable for any breaches of the legislation. It is also liable for the actions of its employees and agents of the school, unless it can show that it took all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation taking place.

Head Teacher

It is the head teacher's role to implement the school's Equality Policy and she is supported by the governing body in doing so.

It is the head teacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Policy and their responsibilities within it, and that teaching and non-teaching staff are given appropriate training and support to apply this Policy fairly in all situations.

The head teacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this Policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

The head teacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

The head teacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

Teaching & Non-teaching Staff

All staff will ensure that all pupils and members of staff are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.

All staff will strive to provide curriculum material that gives positive images and challenges stereotypical images.

All staff will challenge any incidents of bullying, prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the head teacher.

Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

Staff are personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment, whether or not the employer is liable. However, an employee is not liable in relation to disability discrimination in schools.

Parents

Parents will support our school in the implementation of this policy and follow it through their own behaviour. All parents will ensure their children attend school and

engage in their learning. Parents will inform staff about any prejudice related incidents that occur

Pupils

All our children are responsible for treating others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment. They are to attend and engage in their own learning as well as helping other children to learn. Pupils will tell staff about any prejudiced related incidents that occur

6. Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head Teacher and Governing Body. Anyone wishing to make a complaint will be advised to follow the School Complaints Procedure.

Racial incidents will be recorded and reported to the Local Authority following the procedures and guidelines established by CYPS.

Other prejudice driven behaviour will be recorded and reported following the procedures and guidelines established by the Equalities Unit of DCC.

7. Monitoring, Reviewing and Assessing Impact

This policy has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Policy annually and monitor our equality and accessibility objectives annually as part of school improvement planning.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

Annex A: Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics for the schools provisions are:

- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

Age and marriage and civil partnership are NOT protected characteristics for the schools provisions, but do apply to staff.

Disability

A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law

calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause. In relation to physical impairment:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered.
- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met (see below).
- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.

Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia. The other tests to apply to decide if someone has the protected characteristic of disability are:

- The length the effect of the condition has lasted or will continue: it must be long term. 'Long term' means that an impairment is likely to last for the rest of the person's life, or has lasted at least 12 months or where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months. If the person no longer has the condition but it is likely to recur or if the person no longer has the condition, they will be considered to be a disabled person.
- Whether the effect of the impairment is to make it more difficult and/or time-consuming for a person to carry out an activity compared to someone who does not have the impairment, and this causes more than minor or trivial inconvenience
- If the activities that are made more difficult are 'normal day-to-day activities' at work or at home.
- Whether the condition has this impact without taking into account the effect of any medication the person is taking or any aids or assistance or adaptations they have, like a wheelchair, walking stick, assistance dog or special software on their computer. The exception to this is the wearing of glasses or contact lenses where it is the effect while the person is wearing the glasses or contact lenses, which is taken into account.

For example:

Someone who has ADHD might be considered to have a disability even if their medication controls their condition so well that they rarely experience any symptoms, if without the medication the ADHD would have long-term adverse effects.

Progressive conditions and those with fluctuating or recurring effects are included, such as depression, provided they meet the test of having a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, as is more likely for school pupils, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention known to someone – it does not matter who this is, whether it is someone at school or at home or someone like a doctor:
- once they have proposed to undergo gender reassignment they are protected, even if they take no further steps or they decide to stop later on
- they do not have to have reached an irrevocable decision that they will undergo gender reassignment, but as soon as there is a manifestation of this intention they are protected
- start or continue to dress, behave or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person
- undergo treatment related to gender reassignment, such as surgery or hormone therapy, or
- have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

It does not matter which of these applies to a person for them to be protected because of the characteristic of gender reassignment.

This guidance uses the term 'transsexual person' to refer to someone who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

Pregnancy and maternity

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is covered in Section 2.

Race

Race means a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin and a racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

A person has the protected characteristic of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'. Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

Religion or belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

A religion need not be mainstream or well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within religions may be considered a religion. Cults and new religious movements may also be considered religions or beliefs.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. 'Religious belief' goes beyond beliefs about and adherence to a religion or its central articles of faith and may vary from person to person within the same religion. A belief which is not a religious belief may be a philosophical belief, such as humanism or atheism.

A belief need not include faith or worship of a god or gods, but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world.

For a belief to be protected by the Equality Act:

- It must be genuinely held.
- It must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on information available at the moment
- It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour
- It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance.
- It must be worthy of respect in a democratic society.
- It must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Sex

A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to either boys or girls.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to.

- Some people are only attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men).
- Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people).
- Some people are only attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people).

Everyone is protected from being treated worse because of sexual orientation, whether they are bisexual, gay, lesbian or heterosexual.

Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.

Appendix 1:

Definitions of Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 outlines eleven different forms of discrimination and harassment which can occur:

Direct Discrimination

Treating a person worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic

Indirect Discrimination:

Acting towards someone in a way that has a worse impact on them – and others with that particular characteristic – than on people who do not have that characteristic.

Discrimination by Association

Treating a person worse than someone else because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic

Discrimination by Perception

Treating a person worse because you incorrectly think they have a protected characteristic.

Discrimination Arising from Disability

Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected to their disability unless it is objectively justified.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct. Harassing a person because of a protected characteristic.

Third Party Harassment

Allowing a person to be harassed by anyone because of a protected characteristic when you have been made aware of it on at least two separate occasions

Victimisation

Treating a person badly or victimising them because they have complained about discrimination, helped someone else complain or have done anything to uphold their own or someone else's equality law rights.

Institutional Discrimination

The collective failure of an organization to provide appropriate and professional service to people because of a protected characteristic

Multiple Discrimination

Occurs when for more than one reason a person is treated less favourably than others with those characteristics in the same or similar circumstances

Pressure to Discriminate

It is unlawful for a person with authority or influence over another to induce them to discriminate, or to put pressure, directly or indirectly, on another person to discriminate. It is also unlawful for a person to give in to instructions or pressure to discriminate