



Single Equalities Policy

Our Vision

We want Virginia Primary School to be a community of happy, confident, motivated lifelong learners. We want our children to be successful citizens who value themselves and each other. Therefore, we are continually striving to ensure that we nurture, challenge and enable each and every one to be the very best they can be in all areas of school life.

Rights Respecting School

We are a Rights Respecting School and this policy supports the following articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child:

- **Article 2– without discrimination.** The convention applies to everyone: whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.
- **Article 6 – survival and development.** Every child has a right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.
- **Article 14– freedom of thought, belief and religion.** Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.
- **Article 23– children with disability.** Children with disability have the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community.
- **Article 28 – every child has the right to an education.** Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity.
- **Article 29 – goals of education.** Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.

Policy Updated: March 2023

Policy Renewal Frequency: Every four years

Policy Renewal Date: March 2027

Rationale

This policy reflects the Single Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces previous legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975. This policy therefore supersedes all previous school policies on Disability, Ethnicity (i.e. Race) and Gender.

The Single Equality Act combines the existing three duties into one new Equality Duty that covers all seven of the equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In this school we will ensure that at every level, in all our work and throughout all aspects of the school community and its life, everyone will be treated equally.

This Single Equality Policy sets out the school's approach in ensuring equality for all.

Vision for Equality

At Virginia Primary School we believe in equality for all. We are committed to ensuring all our school community are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skills to challenge discrimination, injustice and associated perceptions. This means that members of the school community consistently reflect and promote positive attitudes and behaviours.

We aim to empower all to make informed and responsible choices about their own actions. We aim to engender a personal and collective sense of responsibility and accountability to ensure that there is true equality of opportunity for all.

Roles and Responsibilities

In an ever changing world, we have the responsibility to prepare our children to become 21st century citizens by ensuring that equality legislation, policy and values are implemented and taught. We aim to achieve this by treating each person as an individual, celebrating that individuality and difference and empowering them with the confidence and knowledge to question and challenge.

Our curriculum will reflect diversity and equality, providing planned, contextualised opportunities for children to learn, to explore and to succeed. This will allow a clarity and depth of understanding needed to challenge inequality, discrimination and injustice. Members of our school community will strive to lead by example and be role models who actively promote equality. Ensuring that all members of our school community feel able and comfortable to access our vision will be essential.

- Our governing body will ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements in respect of this policy and its review.
- The Head teacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, and will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities, that they are given necessary training and support and report progress to the governing body
- The Deputy Head is the school lead for Single Equality but all staff are responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of this policy and adhering to it.
- Our staff will promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in the school, challenge inappropriate language and behaviour, respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment, ensure appropriate support for children with additional needs and maintain a good level of awareness of equalities issues.
- All members of the school community have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, to ensure everyone is valued, and to speak out and report if they witness or are subject to any inappropriate language or behaviour
- We will take steps to ensure all visitors to the school adhere to our commitment to equality.

Ethos and Atmosphere

- At Virginia School, the leadership of the school community will demonstrate mutual respect between all members of the school community
- There is an *openness* of atmosphere which welcomes everyone to the school
- All within the school community will challenge any type of discriminatory and/or bullying behaviour, e.g. through unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions
- All pupils are encouraged to greet visitors to the school with friendliness and respect
- The displays around the school are of a high quality and reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity and are frequently monitored
- Provision is made to cater for the spiritual needs of all the children through planning of assemblies, classroom based and externally based activities

Monitoring and Review

Virginia is an inclusive school, working towards greater equality in the whole school community. We use the curriculum and teaching to enhance the self-esteem of all those we serve and to provide learning environments in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil their potential.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupils' progress, as they move through the school. As part of this process, we regularly monitor the performance of different groups, (Ethnicity, Gender, SEN, FSM, Vulnerable), to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress. We use this information to adjust future teaching and learning plans, as necessary.

Resources are available to support groups of pupils where the information suggests that progress is not as good as it should be. The governing body receives regular updates on pupil performance information.

School performance information is compared to national data and local authority data, to ensure that pupils are making good progress when compared to all schools, and to schools in similar circumstances, benchmarking.

As well as monitoring pupil performance information, we also regularly monitor a range of other information. This relates to:

- Attendance
- Exclusions and truancy
- Racism, disability, sexism, homophobia and all forms of bullying
- Participation in Extended Learning Opportunities

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in pupil performance and provide specific support as required, including pastoral support. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups in order to make necessary improvements.

Virginia School is also committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation. We aim to recruit an appropriately qualified workforce and establish a governing body that is representative of all sections of the community in order to respect and respond to the diverse needs of our population.

The person responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of this policy and its implementation is the Deputy Head.

Their role is to:

- Lead discussions, organise training, update staff in staff meetings, support discussions
- Work with the governing body on matters relating to equality
- Support evaluation activities that moderate the impact and success of this policy
- Develop the pupil voice, for example work with School Council

Developing Best Practice

Learning and Teaching

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, teaching and learning will:

- Provide equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society
- Use materials that reflect a range of cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- Use materials to promote a positive image of and attitude towards disability and disabled people
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and religions and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
- Use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural and religious traditions
- Develop pupil's advocacy skills so that they can detect bias, challenge discrimination, leading to justice and equality
- Ensure that the whole curriculum covers issues of equality and diversity;
- All subject leaders, where appropriate, promote and celebrate the contribution of different cultures to the subject matter
- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education
- Provide educational visits and extended learning opportunities that involve all pupil groups
- Take account of the attainment of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets
- Make best use of all available resources to support the learning of all groups of pupils
- Identify resources and training that support staff development

Learning Environment

There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination. All pupils are encouraged to improve on their own achievements and not to measure themselves against others; to be the best they can be. Parents are also encouraged to view their own children's achievements in this light.

- Teacher enthusiasm is a vital factor in achieving a high level of motivation and good results from all pupils
- Adults in the school will provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equality of opportunity
- As a school we place a very high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability.
- We will meet all pupils' learning needs including the more able by carefully assessed and administered programmes of learning
- The school will provide an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources
- All pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their own learning
- A range of teaching methods are to be used throughout the school to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils
- Consideration is to be given to the physical learning environment – both internal and external, including displays and signage

Curriculum

At Virginia School, we aim to ensure that:

- Planning reflects our commitment to equality in all subject areas and cross curricular themes promoting positive attitudes to equality and diversity
- Use materials and books through which our school community feels represented by, including celebrating historical figures and positive role models from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures
- Develop, design and follow an anti-racist curriculum
- Pupils will have opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality
- Steps are taken to ensure that all pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum by considering their

cultural, backgrounds, linguistic needs and learning styles

- All pupils have access to qualifications which recognise attainment and achievement and promote progression, (SATs, Achievement Awards).

Resources and Materials

The provision of good quality resources and materials within Virginia School is a high priority. These resources will:

- Reflect the reality of an ethnically, culturally and sexually diverse society
- Reflect a variety of viewpoints
- Show positive images of males and females in society
- Include non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context
- Be accessible to all members of the school community

Language

We recognise that it is important at Virginia that all members of the school community use appropriate language which:

- Does not transmit or confirm stereotypes
- Does not offend – racist, homophobic, stereotypes groups etc.
- Creates and enhances positive images of particular groups identified at the beginning of this document
- Does not limit potential or expectation, does not “pigeon hole “people
- Creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem
- Uses accurate language in referring to particular groups or individuals and challenges in instances where this is not the case.

All members of our school community have a responsibility to challenge the inappropriate use of language that impinges on equality.

Extended Learning Opportunities

It is the policy of this school to provide equal access to all activities from the time children enter the school. We undertake responsibility for making contributions to extended learning opportunities and are aware of the school’s commitment to equality of opportunity (e.g. sports helpers) by providing them with clear guidelines drawn from this policy. We try to ensure that all such non-staff members who have contact with children adhere to these guidelines.

Provision for Bi-lingual Pupils

We undertake at Virginia School to make excellent provision for all learners. The majority of our pupils are EAL/bi-lingual learners and we ensure they have access to the whole curriculum. Some children may be new to English perhaps having just arrived in England. These pupils are catered for effectively within class, in small groups or in 1-1 sessions in order for them to access the full curriculum. The class teacher is responsible for coordinating/planning this, with support from a specialist member of staff. These groups may include:

- Pupils for whom English is an additional language
- Pupils who are new to the United Kingdom
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
- Children Refugee or asylum seekers
- Advanced bi-lingual learners

Personal Development and Care, Guidance and Support

- Staff take account of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or any other recognised area of discrimination and the experience and needs of particular groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, refugee and asylum seeker pupils
- All pupils are encouraged to consider the full range of life opportunities available to them, with no discriminatory boundaries placed on them due to their disability, gender, race or sexual orientation (whilst acknowledging that a disability may impose some practical boundaries to some career aspirations)

- All pupils/staff/parents/carers are given support, as appropriate, when they experience discrimination. (Policies: Anti Bullying, Grievance, Complaints etc.)
- We recognise that perpetrators may also be victims and require support.
- Positive role models are used throughout the school to ensure that different groups of pupils can see themselves reflected in the school community
- Emphasis is placed on the value that diversity brings to the school community rather than the challenges and celebrating difference as a positive attribute.

Staffing and Staff Development

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff.

- This must include pupils' access to a balance of male and female staff at all key stages where possible
- We encourage the career development and aspirations of all school staff
- It is our policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils
- Access to opportunities for professional development is monitored on equality grounds

Staff Recruitment

- All those involved in recruitment and selection are trained and aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process.
- Equalities policies and practices are covered in all staff inductions
- All temporary staff are made aware of policies and practices
- Employment policy and procedures are reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact

Note:

Under the Equality Act 2010, in very limited circumstances, an employer can claim that a certain religious denomination or belief is considered to be a genuine occupational requirement of that role. However, this would not apply for all staff in School.

In addition, there are also instances in which a job will qualify for a genuine occupational requirement on the grounds of gender. However, only in very few instances would this be permissible, for example, where the job is likely to involve physical contact with members of the opposite sex, where matters of decency or privacy are involved.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers/Families and the Wider Community

We will work with parents/carers to help all pupils to achieve their potential and to become trusted partners in children's education.

- All parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the full life of the school.
- Members of the local community are encouraged to join in school activities
- Exploring the possibility of the school having a role to play in supporting new and settled communities.

Commissioning and Procurement

Virginia School will ensure that we buy services from organisations that comply with equality legislation. This will be a significant factor in any tendering process.

The Measurement of Impact of the Policy

This policy will be evaluated and monitored for its impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers from the different groups that make up our school. An action plan will be drawn up to enable an impact assessment to be undertaken at the appropriate time within a given timescale.

Policy Development

This policy applies to the whole school community. It has been drawn up as a result of the outcomes of a transparent process and through consultation with:

Pupils, Staff and Governors.

Publicising the Policy

The policy and plan will be published on the school website: www.virginia.towerhamlets.sch.uk Policies are available from the school office. A copy of this policy will be placed in the School Policies folder in the Parents Room.

Supporting Policies and Documentation:

- Inclusion Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Induction Policy
- Vulnerable Pupils
- The school Curriculum Framework
- Equality Act 2010
- Disability Access Plan

Appendix 1: Stonewall School Champions

Virginia Primary School is a Stonewall School Champion and below is an overview of the programme taken from the Stonewall website. For more information, visit the Stonewall website or speak to the Deputy Head.

Primary School Overview:

Primary school children come from a variety of backgrounds and families. Celebrating and acknowledging different families is crucial to make all children feel welcome and enable them to learn how to value those who are different.

Children prosper academically and developmentally in classrooms where they feel welcome and safe. Unfortunately, hurtful language is very commonplace in primary schools. Around three-quarters of primary school teachers report hearing the word "gay" being used as an insult or to mean that something is rubbish.

This sort of homophobic language can affect any students perceived as different – including boys who apply themselves academically, girls who 'behave like boys' and kids with gay parents.

Through Primary School Champions, Stonewall partners with primary schools to help them celebrate different families and address homophobic language in the classroom.

www.stonewall.org.uk

Appendix 3: Glossary

Age: Refers to a person having a particular age (for example, 32 year-olds) or being within an age group (for example, 18-30 year-olds).

Direct discrimination: Refers to less favourable treatment because of a person's protected characteristic.

Disability: A person has a disability if she/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Equality: Equality means treating everyone with fairness and respect and recognising the needs of individuals.

Diversity: Diversity is recognising and valuing that individuals are unique, each having their own values, beliefs, attitude, culture, racial background, sexuality, skills and life experience.

Gender reassignment: Is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. See also trans, transgender, transsexual.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may also involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or be related to gender reassignment or sex.

Indirect discrimination: Is when a provision, criterion or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic, and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Protected characteristics: The equality duty covers the following characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. These are also referred to as protected groups. The duty also covers marriage/civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

Race: Is the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief: Religion means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included.

Sex: Someone being a man or a woman.

Sexual orientation: Is whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Trans: The terms 'trans people' and 'transgender people' are both often used as umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex, including transsexual people (those who propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment to live permanently in their acquired gender), transvestite/cross-dressing people (those who wear clothing traditionally associated with the other gender either occasionally or more regularly), androgyne / polygender people (those who have non-binary gender identities and do not identify as male or female), and others who define as gender variant.

Transgender: Is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. They may or may not seek to undergo gender reassignment hormonal treatment/surgery. Often used interchangeably with trans.

Transsexual: A person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery). Transsexual people feel the deep conviction to present themselves in the appearance of the opposite sex. They may change their name and identity to live in the preferred gender. Some take hormones and have cosmetic treatments to alter their appearance and physical characteristics. Some undergo surgery to change their bodies to approximate more closely to their preferred gender. Transsexual people have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, gender reassignment is a personal process rather than a medical one and it does not require someone to undergo medical treatment in order to be protected.

Victimisation: Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have made a complaint of discrimination, or are thought to have done so; or because they have supported someone else who has made a complaint of discrimination. Victimisation is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.