

The Marsh Academy

Single Equality Scheme

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1. Introduction and Principles

1.1 Purpose of the SES

The Marsh Academy is committed to an inclusive ethos based on respect for, and celebration of, diversity. The academy aims to prepare all students for living in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. The academy will strive to promote equality in all aspects of the academy's life and community.

We recognise our duty to establish equality for all students, staff, other members of the school community and service users regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or beliefs as defined within existing equalities legislation.

The School recognises that it is the responsibility of **all** members of the school community to:

- Promote equality and support the implementation of all policies and procedures that are included within this Single Equality Scheme;
- Behave in a manner which respects and values diversity;
- Challenge and eliminate discrimination, harassment and abuse.

The purpose of our **Single Equality Scheme (SES)** is to fulfil the duty to members of all these 'equality strand' groups, but also to 'go beyond the call of duty' in establishing justice and equality at the heart of our academy community and in all aspects of our **policies, procedures and practices (PPPs)**. We also seek to ensure that we apply the same principles to other groups in our community for whom we have, as yet, no legislated duty, but who we know face inequality through poverty, social class or others of our identified groups.

Our SES draws together the duties under existing equalities legislation and, applying the principle of '**levelling up**' (see below), enables us to achieve the following for all groups:

- promote equality of opportunity through vision, strategy and practice;
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate harassment and bullying;
- keep accurate records of bullying or harassment related to equalities and report as required to the Local Authority (LA);
- promote positive attitudes and good relations between all groups;
- take positive action to meet needs,
- encourage participation in all aspects of school life within the educational setting;
- promote community cohesion;
- narrow the attainment gap.

1.2 Levelling Up

The principle of 'levelling up' means that, as far as is reasonable, we apply the **highest requirement of the law** across all equality strands. We do this in order to aim for the highest level of equality for all groups while taking into account the need to apply the test of what is **relevant and proportionate**.

1.3 Relevant and proportionate

In paying 'due regard' to the legislation and our commitment to 'levelling up', we apply the principles of relevance and proportionality. We aim to ensure that our actions are **proportionate** to the **relevance** of equalities issues in relation to our PPPs. This means we prioritise those actions that enable us to tackle the most significant issues across the equality strands in order to deliver the best equality outcomes. In doing this we focus on PPPs that have the greatest effect on different stakeholders. We ask whether our PPPs

affect different groups in different ways and try to implement them in ways that promote equality. This is achieved through systematic **Equality Impact Assessment Screening (EIAS)** and increasing the **participation of stakeholders**.

1.4 Participation

We apply the principle that all PPPs will be developed in consultation with those to whom the PPPs refer, as far as is reasonably achievable within the context of an academy community. Participation is based on information gained about representation of different groups. We aim to do this as fully as possible while recognising issues of sensitivity in relation to the different equality strands.

Our consultative groups and working party include representation from the widest range of relevant groups that we can achieve.

The academy involves **stakeholders** including students, staff, parents/carers, governors and other users of the school in relation to all equalities duties. We take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom we are consulting, e.g. written, verbal, or electronic and would offer, upon identification of need, translated materials or interpretation facilities for disabled people or those for whom English is an additional language or are newly arrived in this country.

The views of stakeholders and other equalities-related groups are genuinely taken into account when we set priorities.

1.5 Setting our priorities

The priorities for the SES are set in the light of:

- data collection and needs analysis to inform policy and action planning;
- views expressed by stakeholders that have been involved in the development of the scheme;
- consultation.

Our priorities are:

- narrowing the attainment gap between members of groups covered by the SES and other students who are not members of those groups by:
 - i. ensuring that teaching and learning styles include and raise the achievement of all students;
 - ii. ensuring that methods of assessment do not disadvantage any students e.g. assessments are culturally neutral; accessible to students with disabilities etc.
 - iii. setting and grouping arrangements raise achievement of all students and do not reinforce negative stereotypes or lower the self esteem of students.
- improving the involvement of disabled students, staff and parents and carers;
- challenging race and gender stereotypes in subject choices and career advice;
- tackling bullying of students based on gender, disability, sexuality or poverty;
- promoting positive attitudes to belief minorities;

2. Action by the Governing Body

The personnel & finance committee of the governing body has agreed this policy and a governor has been appointed as a member of the SES working group. That governor will monitor the delivery of the SES for the governing body and report back to them as appropriate.

3. Action by the Senior Leadership Team

The governing body's duty to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination is carried out by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) through:

- raising awareness of all the duties within the whole academy community;
- referring to relevant and up-to-date documentation from the EHRC;
- ensuring understanding of the broad definition of disability within the DDA;
- sensitively encouraging declaration of equality strand membership by students, parents/carers, staff and other users of the school;
- working to implement the gender and age duties in employment functions;
- ensuring that actions identified from the Equality Impact Assessment Screening procedure will be included within the Academy Development Plan and that they meet the specific requirements in relation to ethnicity, gender and disability while 'levelling-up' expectations in the other strands;
- setting up the annual working party review meeting, with membership to include:
 - SLT member
 - Governor
 - Parent/Carer
 - Staff representative
 - SENCO
 - Associate members e.g. disabled students, Mini and whole-school council reps, community/voluntary groups and minority ethnic groups;
- ensuring that the principles of relevance, proportionality and reasonable action are applied appropriately

4. The Working Party

Our working party is involved at all stages of the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the SES. The Key Functions of the Working Party are:

- to ensure the involvement of the widest possible range of people representing the different equality strands;
- to arrange for the gathering of information relating to all equality strands;
- to consider arrangements for impact assessments;
- to meet and review the EIAS annually

5. Information Gathering

The collection of information is crucial to supporting us in deciding what actions to take to improve equality and tackle discrimination within the school community. The information also subsequently helps us to review our performance so it needs to be detailed enough to enable us to measure how we are delivering on equality duties. The information also helps us to do accurate impact assessment and identify which of the school's priorities have been achieved and what we need to do better.

Types of information to be gathered

The wide range of information gathered to support our planning and action to promote equality and tackle discrimination includes the following:

- identification of students, parents, carers, staff and other users of the academy representing the different equality strands in order for the school to monitor the scheme (comprehensive and sensitive efforts made to collect information and meet security of information requirements);
- student attainment and progress data relating to different groups;

- information about how different groups access the whole curriculum and how they make choices between subject options;
- sports and activities choices of all groups;
- uptake of the extended school offer by group;
- exclusions data analysed by group;
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;
- data on the recruitment, development and retention of employees;

6. Impact Assessment

Impact assessment refers to the review of all current and proposed PPPs in order to help us act to promote equality and to ensure no person is disadvantaged by academy activities through discrimination. Impact assessments are an on-going process to ensure that the academy's PPPs are developed in an increasingly inclusive and equitable way.

We undertake our impact assessment in a relevant, proportionate and systematic way. They are incorporated into the academy's planned review and revision of every policy and are also undertaken through other established criteria in a screening process.

Screening PPPs helps us know how much weight to give to promoting equality in relation to each policy and whether or not a full equality impact assessment is necessary. Screening is not a substitute for full equality impact assessment but an aid to managing impact assessment. We are aware that many PPPs have the potential to affect different groups in different ways and this is factored into the screening process.

Every new PPP will be drawn up with regard to the academy's duties as described in this SES and the appendices, and will be subject to the process of impact assessment in relation to potential positive or adverse impacts.

7. Implementation

We will reflect all six equality strands in our Academy Development Plan, where appropriate actions have been identified. This ensures that we are taking action to fulfil both the general and specific duties of the relevant legislation and extend our practice through 'levelling-up' as described above.

The Academy Development Plan ensures that equality is checked, monitored and evaluated systematically.

The Academy Development Plan shows:

- targets and specific actions;
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria);
- clear timescales;
- who has lead responsibility;
- evidence of impact and review.

Our SES relates to a range of other policies and plans, and will be implemented through them, and the procedures and practices that relate to them. These policies are listed in the appendices and significantly include our Accessibility Plan and our Community Cohesion Policy.

The academy will evaluate the effectiveness of the SES with its School Improvement Partner, through the governing body and with Ofsted when the academy is inspected.

8. Publication and reporting

The working party decides how best to publish the SES. The academy can provide a copy in a range of formats for those requesting it.

The academy reports on the progress made on the Academy Development Plan and, within this, the impact of the SES itself on academy practice in addition to the impact assessments done on the full range of PPPs.

9. Review

As part of the review of the SES, the academy commits to:

- revisiting and analysing the information and data used to identify priorities for the SES and action plans;
- using the impact assessments to ensure that actions taken have had a positive impact across all equality strands, that the promotion of equality is at the heart of school planning and that discrimination is being tackled effectively.

The review of the SES informs the setting of new priorities and identifies actions. This process continues to:

- involve the participation of a full range of stakeholders;
- be evidenced-based - using information and data that the academy has gathered and analysed;
- use the evidence to do accurate impact assessments which then inform priorities.