



The Milford Academy

EQUALITY POLICY

Ratified at Governors 9th February 2023

- M** - Motivated
- I** - Independent
- L** - Learning
- F** - Forward Thinking
- O** - Outstanding
- R** - Respect
- D** - Determined

Introduction.

The school policy was developed as a result of the Equality Act which was introduced fully in 2011. It was the Governors Policy working group that presented this policy to both Governors and Staff and subsequently was approved and ratified by the Governing Body during the Autumn Term 2011.

Aims

At The Milford Academy we have regard to foster good relations between people who share a 'protected character' and those people who do not. This includes the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding and community cohesion.

This means that we will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Through this policy we aim to ensure that:

- All learners are of equal value
- We recognise and respect difference
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging
- We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development
- We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist
- We consult and involve widely
- Society as a whole should benefit
- We base our practices on sound evidence

All learners are of equal value.

At The Milford Academy, we see all learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and gender identity
- whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background
- whatever their sexual identity

We recognise and respect difference.

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised
- religion, belief or faith background

- sexual identity

We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

At The Milford Academy, we intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual and homophobic harassment.
- Community cohesion within both the school and wider community.

We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development.

At The Milford Academy, we ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity, and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity.

We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between:

- disabled and non-disabled people
- people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- girls and boys, women and men.

We consult and involve widely.

At The Milford Academy, we engage with a range of groups and individuals 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. We consult and involve:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people from a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, and girls and boys
- homosexual people as well as heterosexual.

Society as a whole should benefit.

At The Milford Academy, we intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of:

- disabled people as well as non-disabled
- people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- both women and men, girls and boys
- homosexual people as well as heterosexual.

We base our practices on sound evidence.

At The Milford Academy, we maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality in relation to:

- disability
- ethnicity, religion and culture – Race equality
- gender awareness

Unlawful Behaviours

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably because of a protected characteristic – for example if a pupil was refused to be a prefect because she is a girl. It is also unlawful to discriminate because of race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the pupil is associated. So, for example, Milford will not discriminate by refusing to admit a pupil because his parents are homosexual.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage. An example might be holding a celebration event during Ramadan, which could make it difficult for observant Muslim pupils and parents to participate.

Harassment

Harassment covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic. It applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is very important to recognise that this does **not** mean that we are free to bully or harass pupils on these other grounds. Any case would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment. Thus, if a teacher were to belittle a pupil in class because of a disability she has, this could lead to a court case alleging unlawful harassment. The same unacceptable treatment based on a pupil's religion, could lead to a case claiming direct discrimination. The practical consequences and the penalties, would be no different.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure

that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation. If a pupil has himself or herself done a protected act – such as making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher – then the child's own good faith will be relevant. For example, if the parent's complaint is based on information from her son and the son was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish him in the same way as it might do any other dishonest pupil.

The Curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the aims of this policy.

The content of the school curriculum has never been covered by discrimination law, and the Equality Act now states explicitly that it is excluded. The Milford Academy will continue to include a full range of issues, ideas and materials in our curriculum, and to expose pupils to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, without fear of legal challenge based on a protected characteristic.

Religious Observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Disability

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Equality Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction, as it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that Milford may treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. It is never unlawful to treat disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people. The general principle is that you have to treat male and female, Black and White, homosexual and heterosexual pupils equally - but you may be required to treat disabled pupils differently. The definition of what constitutes discrimination is more complex.

The category of 'discrimination arising from disability' protects pupils who are carers e.g. if a pupil is disciplined for a reason (such as absence) arising from their caring responsibilities for a disabled parent /sibling, this may constitute unlawful discrimination.

Protected Characteristics

The term protected characteristics is used to refer to all of the following:

- sex
- race (includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- disability
- religion or belief (and a lack of religion or a lack of belief) but not political beliefs
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage and civil partnership

Role of the Head teacher and Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

The governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

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 headteacher and governing body.

Role of all Staff

All staff are expected to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the aim of this policy
- support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. The Milford Academy is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

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