

Mapledown School Gender Equality Scheme

This policy has been written in consultation with staff, trade unions and parents.

INTRODUCTION

The Government has introduced the Equality Act 2010 with the purpose of ensuring that people are treated fairly and equally (i.e. are not subject to discrimination). Within this Act a Gender Equality Duty was established for the public sector. The new legal Duty places a requirement on public bodies to be proactive and to promote gender equality within their service delivery and employment. It is recognised that public authorities can make an enormous contribution towards removing the barriers to equal opportunities that exist in society.

The legislation outlines both a General Duty and Specific Duties.

The General Duty

The General Duty requires that every public authority in carrying out its functions should:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, taking active steps to comply with both the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act.
- Take active steps to promote equality of opportunity between genders when carrying out their functions and activities.

It also provides for;

- the basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions, work, education, associations and transport
- changing the definition of gender reassignment, by removing the requirement for medical supervision
- providing protection for people discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic
- clearer protection for breastfeeding mothers
- applying a uniform definition of indirect discrimination to all protected characteristics
- harmonising provisions allowing voluntary positive action

The Specific Duties

In addition, public bodies are required to comply with the Specific Duties which are:

- To produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) identifying Gender Equality goals and actions to meet those goals.
- To consult with employees and stakeholders in the development of the GES.
- To monitor and review progress. The scheme will need to be reviewed every three years.
- To publish an annual report on progress with the Action Plan.
- To develop and publish an Equal Pay Policy including measures to address promotion, personal development and occupational segregation.
- To conduct and publish gender impact assessments of all legislation and major policy developments and publish their criteria for conducting such assessments.

The act also makes provisions on prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment and the provision of goods, services, facilities, education, use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions.

MISSION STATEMENT

At Mapledown School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for staff, pupils and all those receiving services from the school, irrespective of gender. The achievement of all pupils and students will be monitored on the basis of gender and we will use this data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will aim to provide our pupils with a firm foundation which will enable them to fulfil their potential, regardless of gender or stereotypes. We will seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination against pupils and staff by adhering to our duties as an employer under the legislation. At Mapledown, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, work and visit here.

PRINCIPLES

- Information will be collected on gender with regards to both pupils and staff and used to improve the provision of services.
- Pupil achievement will be monitored by gender and any trends or patterns in the data identified will be addressed.
- Pupils of both sexes are encouraged to participate in school life including physical activity, both in and outside of school hours.
- Bullying and harassment of pupils is monitored and information acted on.
- All stereotypes in terms of gender are actively challenged in both the classroom environment and in the playground.
- The school environment is as accessible and welcoming as possible to visitors of both sexes.
- Parents of both sexes are encouraged to participate in their child's education.
- Members of the Governing Body are representative of the pupils, staff and local community that they serve.

EMPLOYER DUTIES

The Headteacher and Governors will ensure that discrimination and harassment is eliminated and that positive gender equality is prompted. In particular consideration will be given to the key employment issues as identified by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), these include:

- Recruitment
- Managing flexible working
- Managing parental and carers leave
- Managing pregnancy and return from maternity leave
- Sexual and sexist harassment
- Transsexual staff
- Gender reassignment
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Equal Pay
- Work based training opportunities

Gender aspects will be considered when appointing staff and when allocating posts of responsibility or re-evaluating staff structures, ensuring decisions are free of discrimination.

Bullying and harassment of staff will be monitored and information acted on.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

All current and future policies and practices will be assessed to ensure they do not discriminate against either sex, or maintain or lead to gender inequality.

Gender impact assessments will be undertaken and published for all policy developments and the criteria for conducting such assessments will be published.

Assessment Criteria

- Identify the aims of the policy or practice.
- Collect evidence on the impact of policies on both sexes.
- When new policies are being developed, assess their likely consequences for both sexes.
- Alter or amend proposed policies so that they promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination.
- Resource those changes appropriately.

MONITORING

Monitoring is necessary in order to identify that no adverse impact has taken place as a result of the implementation of a policy.

To meet the Gender Equality Duty, it is essential that aspects of school life are monitored to identify whether there is an adverse impact on children and young people. The following will be monitored:

- Achievement of pupils by gender
- Staff satisfaction levels by gender
- Distribution of staff pay scales

GOOD PRACTICE

Equal pay for posts of equal responsibility – all new support staff positions, or those to be reviewed, will be subject to the job evaluation process; similarly any TLR payments within the teaching staff structure will be attached to posts according to relevant job descriptions. These processes are intended to ensure that pay decisions made are free from discrimination and are based only on the duties and requirements of posts.

Equality of job opportunity and access for all – positions within the support staff and teaching staff structures to be as accessible as possible to all genders. Flexible working arrangements will be considered in relation to any post to encourage a supportive working environment for those returning from a period of maternity, adoption or other leave, as well as for those with wider family responsibilities.

Access to training, development and communications – All training and development opportunities, particularly those within the control of the school to be as accessible and as flexible as possible to all genders, having regard to the likelihood that staff have varying levels of commitment outside of the workplace. Seek ways to improve communications amongst the workforce, including those on maternity, adoption or other leave. This will help to ensure that there is not discrimination between genders, which may otherwise affect those on periods of extended leave and those with specific family commitments.

Monitoring

In order to ensure that action is taken to meet the Gender Equality Duty, Mapledown, our annual staff and parents surveys provide information which we may use as evidence of ensuring compliance and maintaining our high standards. Our School Council and Trades Unions and other Professional Associations may provide us with additional feedback in this regard.

The Deputy Head will report on progress and compliance at the termly Finance and Staffing Governor sub-committee.

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