

Goodleigh C of E
Primary School

Equality and Cohesion
Policy

Goodleigh C of E Primary School

1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate how the school promotes and advances equal opportunities and community cohesion, and tackles inequalities and discrimination.

Goodleigh is made up of a mixture of families in terms of employment and economic background. Our annual census data shows us that the children are predominately from a White British background. We have a large cohort of children with Special Educational Needs.

As migration and economic change alter the shape of our local and national communities, it is more important than ever that all schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion and inclusion. But community cohesion is not just about good race relations, it applies to many aspects of community life including positive relations between older and younger generations, and as Devon has an increasing older population this is another important factor.

2. Definitions

- Equality = Treating people fairly and according to their needs. Equality of opportunity and outcome, rather than equality of treatment. People have similar life opportunities in so far they are able to fulfil their own potential.
- Inclusive = Making sure everyone can participate, whatever their background or circumstances.
- Diversity = Recognises that we are all different. Diversity is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
- Cohesion = People from different backgrounds getting on well together (good community relations). There is a shared vision and sense of purpose or belonging. Diversity is valued. Relationships are strong, supportive and sustainable. Cohesion is an outcome of equality and inclusion.
- Community = From the school's perspective, the term "community" has a number of meanings:
- The school community – the students we serve, their families and the school's staff.
 - The community within which the school is located – in its geographical community, and the people who live and / or work in that area.
 - The community of Britain – all schools by definition are part of it.
 - The global community – formed by European and international links.

3. Scope

This policy applies to and aims to benefit all staff, Governors, pupils, parents/guardians.

4. Our Values and Commitment

It is our belief that every school, irrespective of its intake and location, is responsible for educating young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of age, culture, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, nationalities, sex/gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic backgrounds.

Goodleigh Primary School aims to be a thriving, inclusive and cohesive community. We wish to show that, through our inclusive policies, ethos, curriculum, actions and relationships, we promote a common sense of identity and support diversity. This is linked very closely to our efforts to ensure that "Every Child Matters" as well as encouraging well-being in general.

We are committed to:

- ✓ Celebrating diversity.
- ✓ Promoting and advancing equality and inclusion.
- ✓ Meeting people's needs.
- ✓ Encouraging participation.
- ✓ Promoting cohesion, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- ✓ Tackling discrimination and disadvantage.
- ✓ Tackling bullying.
- ✓ Encouraging, supporting and striving to enable all pupils and staff to reach their potential.
- ✓ Working in partnership with parents and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate good practice.
- ✓ Ensuring that this policy is followed.

5. Our Legal Duties

Legislation relating to equality and discrimination is laid out in the Equality Act 2010. Legislation covers employment (work), the provision of services and public functions, and education.

Employers (schools) are liable for acts of employees if they did not take reasonable steps to prevent such acts. Employees can be liable for acts (where an employer took reasonable steps to prevent such acts).

The 'Protected Characteristics' within equality law are:

- **Age** - A person of a particular age (e.g. 32 year old) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds). However, age discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Disability** - A person has a disability if s/he has, or has had, 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. It includes discrimination arising from something connected with their disability such as use of aids or medical conditions.

- **Gender reassignment** - A person (usually with 'gender dysphoria') who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (the process of changing physiological or other attributes of sex, therefore changing from male to female, or female to male). 'Trans' is an umbrella term to describe people with this 'Gender Identity'. 'Intersex' or 'Third Sex' are not covered by the Act but the school will treat Intersex children with the same degree of equality as potentially Trans children. Children as young as five may begin to show signs of gender dysphoria and therefore it is relevant in a primary school environment.
- **Marriage and civil partnership** – Marriage and civil partnership discrimination does not apply to the provision of education, but it does apply to work.
- **Pregnancy and maternity** - Maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth (including still births), which reflects the period of a woman's Ordinary Maternity Leave entitlement in the employment context. In employment, it also covers (where eligible) the period up to the end of her Additional Maternity Leave.
- **Race** - A person's colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. It includes Travellers and Gypsies as well as White British people. It may include Caste.
- **Religion and belief** - Religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. Religion and belief discrimination does not prevent a school from carrying out collective worship or other curriculum based activities, but pupils may withdraw from acts of collective worship.
- **Sex** - A man or a woman.
- **Sexual orientation** - A person's sexual orientation towards the same sex (lesbian or gay), the opposite sex (heterosexual) or to both sexes (bisexual). Although children may not identify as gay or lesbian until later, promotion of sexual orientation equality is still relevant in a primary school environment. For example, a child may have an older sibling or parent who is gay. Children may experience friends 'coming out' when they are older.

'Prohibited Conduct' (acts that are unlawful):

- **Direct discrimination** - Less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** - A provision, criteria or practice that puts a person at a particular disadvantage and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Harassment** - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It includes harassment by a third party (e.g. customer or contractor) in the employment context. Harassment because of gender reassignment, sexual orientation or religion and belief in relation to the provision of education does not apply but such acts may constitute direct discrimination.
- **Victimisation** - Subjecting a person to a detriment because of their involvement with proceedings (a complaint) brought in connection with this Act.
- **Combined (dual) discrimination** - Discrimination because of two protected characteristics such as age and sex/gender. Not yet effective.
- **Discrimination arising from disability** – Treating someone unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (such as periods of absence from work or medical conditions) **and failure to make reasonable adjustments.**

- **Gender re-assignment discrimination** (allows reasonable absence from work for the purpose of gender-reassignment in line with normal provision such as sick leave).
- **Pregnancy/maternity related discrimination** – unfavourable treatment because of a girl's/woman's pregnancy or maternity. It includes unfavourable treatment of a woman because she is breastfeeding.
- **Discrimination by association or perception** - For example, discriminating against someone because they "look gay", or because they have a gay brother; discriminating against someone because they care for a disabled relative.

Public Sector Duties (applies to Schools):

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to (in relation to protected characteristics above):

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
2. Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; encourage participation in public life).
3. Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

Reasonable Adjustments and Access Plans (Schedule 10)

Schools are required to:

- Take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage caused by a provision, criteria or practice or a physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. This involves removing or avoiding a physical feature.
- Take reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids/services.
- Provide information in an accessible format.
- Develop and implement (by allocating appropriate resources) Access Plans which will
 - Increase disabled pupils' access to the school curriculum
 - Improve the physical environment
 - Improve provision of information.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one that you owe to disabled pupils generally, regardless of whether you know that a particular pupil is disabled or whether you currently have disabled pupils. You should plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments you may need to make.

For more information: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com> which includes the guidance for education providers (schools) or <http://www.devon.gov.uk/equalitylegislation.htm>

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion and on Ofsted, to report on the contributions made in this area. The duty on schools came into effect on 1 September 2007 and the duty on Ofsted in September 2008.

For more information: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion>

Aspects of educational legislation has also promoted equal opportunities, e.g. the Education Act includes a duty for local authorities to educate children with special educational needs in mainstream schools wherever possible.

6. Responsibilities

Governing Body

- Ensure that the school complies with equality and cohesion legislation.
- Ensure that the policy and its procedures are implemented by the Headteacher.
- Ensure all other School policies promote equality and cohesion.

Headteacher

- Implement the policy and its related procedures.
- Make all staff aware of their responsibilities and provide training as appropriate to enable them to effectively deliver this policy.
- Take appropriate action in any case of actual or potential discrimination.

All staff

- Enact this policy, its commitments and procedures, and their responsibilities associated with this policy.
- Deal with bullying and discriminatory incidents, and know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on any grounds.
- Attend such training and information opportunities as necessary to enact this policy and keep up to date with equality and cohesion legislation.
- To be models of equal opportunities through their words and actions.

Pupils

- Refrain from engaging in discriminatory behaviour or any other behaviour that contravenes this policy.

Visitors (e.g. parent helpers, contractors)

- To be aware of and comply with the school's equality and cohesion policy.

7. Communicating and Promoting this Policy

All staff and governors, including supply teachers and visitors are to be made aware of this policy and any subsequent updates or amendments.

Parents will be invited through the school's weekly newsletter to be involved in any review of the policy.

A copy will be:

- Displayed on the school's website.
- Included in the folder of public documents available to any parent on request.

8. School Improvement Plan

Legislation requires us to set objectives to meet our public sector duties and improve our practice. Objectives will be contained within the School Improvement Plan.

Objectives will be agreed by Governors and based upon the following:

- Pupil performance/monitoring data.
- Consultations with staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Impact assessments and other audits.
- Inspection feedback.
- Legal duties.
- National or local issues relevant to the school.

9. Practice

▪ Admissions and attendance

The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and abilities and has a separate Admissions Policy.

Devon admissions and transfer criteria are determined by the Local Authority which is responsible for assessing the impact of its policies on different groups.

Information about pupil's gender, ethnic origin, home language, religion or belief, physical and emotional needs and diet is collected to enable the school to meet the needs of all pupils.

Attendance of all pupils is monitored regularly by the Education Welfare Officer. Where individual or groups are identified as causing concern appropriate strategies are implemented with support from the Education Welfare Services.

Provision and support is available for pupils to take time off for religious observance with minimal disruption to their education.

▪ Policies

When the governing body approves policies, all policies shall be checked to ensure they do not have potential to disadvantage people because of a protected characteristic, and advance equality and foster good relations where possible.

▪ Teaching, Learning and Curriculum

In school, there will be a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all pupils, removing barriers to learning and wider activities and reducing unjustifiable difference in outcomes for different groups of pupils.

Our teaching and the curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values, and help students understand and value the diversity that surrounds them, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.

The taught and wider curricula will help to promote awareness of the rights of individuals and develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

The curriculum of our school will promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our learners and society, and prepare our students for the wider opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life after their school career with us has ended.

Equal opportunities will be specifically taught and promoted through certain areas of the curriculum. For example, through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) issues relating to gender, physical disabilities (e.g. mobility, hearing, sight), age, race and religion or belief can be addressed.

Science and sex and relationship education lessons (SRE) will provide opportunities for issues relating to gender and sexual matters to be addressed as appropriate for the age of the children.

Assembly and Collective Worship also enable specific matters around religion, belief and culture to be directly addressed.

In class discussions, all pupils should be given the opportunity to contribute and staff should not allow the more lively and/or knowledgeable children, irrespective of gender, to monopolise the discussion. Indeed, it may be necessary for staff to deliberately ask reluctant individuals to contribute not only for equal opportunity reasons but to enable the staff member to evaluate the child's understanding or to facilitate the child's learning and personal development.

▪ **Purchasing**

When purchasing equipment it shall be checked to make sure it can be used by children with disabilities (e.g. hand-held devices cater for people with visual impairments and manual dexterity problems so that buttons can be easily navigated).

▪ **Pastoral care**

Support is available for specific pupils if necessary e.g. pupils for whom English is a second language, to enable them to participate equally and achieve their own potential.

▪ **Activities, including extra-curricular activities**

A variety of extra-curricular activities will be offered. For reasons of health & safety and management it is often necessary to restrict membership of the activity to specific age groups and/or a specific number of members.

All extra curricular activities are open to all children including those, such as football and netball, which historically orientated to one gender. In these activities both single gender and mixed gender teams are created. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that children with disabilities can participate in sporting activities.

We provide different opportunities for young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools and communities locally, nationally and on a wider basis where possible.

The school works in partnership with a wide variety of agencies and organisations to support the learners' education. Engagement with parents through an open door ethos, parents' evening, curriculum meetings, festivals and other celebrations are considered a priority at the school.

Focus groups involves the children in the decision making and organisation of the school, teaches the children the importance of participation and making a difference to the school, local community and beyond.

We have a number of activities that take place within our school that contribute to community cohesion including: **See Community | Cohesion Audit**

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▪ **Anti-Bullying and dealing with incidents of a discriminatory nature**

Bullying will not be tolerated at this school. It can make pupils' lives unhappy and can hinder their academic progress. In this school we accept the definition of bullying as stated by the Government Anti Bullying Campaign: "Bullying is a deliberate act, often repeated, done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status, or other gratification to the bully".

Bullying can range from:

- Physical (hitting ,kicking, theft)
- Verbal (name calling, racist and homophobic remarks)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)

Discriminatory Incident:

Is any incident which is perceived to be discriminatory/prejudiced by the victim or any other person on the basis of someone's race, colour, nationality, culture, language or religion/belief, disability, age, gender/sex, sexual orientation, gender identity,"

If any child or adult is found to be deliberately engaging in discriminatory language or behaviour the following procedures will apply.

Staff and Governors will be reminded of their obligations to refrain from engaging in discriminatory language or behaviour and warned that further non-compliance will result in further action being taken. The form of this action will depend on the degree and context of the discriminatory language or behaviour and will be in line with the school and local authority's disciplinary procedures.

Visitors will be reminded of their obligations to refrain from engaging in discriminatory language or behaviour. Non compliance on more than two occasions will result in visitors not longer being welcome and their offer of help terminated. Contractors will have their services terminated and be reported to the local authority if applicable for relevant sanctions to be imposed.

Pupils will have the relevant sanction imposed on them as set down in our school Behaviour Management policy's sanctions.

- High standards of behaviour are expected of all pupils.
- The school's Rewards and Sanctions procedures are applied to all pupils fairly and equitably in accordance with our Behaviour Policy.
- Sanctions, including exclusions, are monitored for patterns or trends.
- Any incidents will be recorded on the appropriate local authority forms and sent to the authority each term (even if there have been no incidents) for monitoring purposes.
- Appropriate action will be taken to prevent an incident re-occurring and appropriate support provided to those affected by the incident which may include Safeguarding provisions.
- Parents/guardians of the pupils involved will be informed of the incident.
- The situation will be monitored.

The headteacher will be responsible for ensuring the above procedure for reporting and responding to an incident is carried out and followed up. Any parent wishing to report an incident should contact the headteacher.

Further information, incident report forms and guidance: <http://www.devon.gov.uk/cyps-prejudicerelatedbullying2010-web.pdf>

▪ **Behaviour, discipline and exclusions**

Anyone involved with our school found to deliberately breach this policy will have appropriate action taken against them.

Staff and Governors will be reminded of their obligations to adhere to the policy and warned that further non-compliance will result in further action being taken. The form of this action will depend on the degree and context of the non-compliance and will be in line with the school disciplinary procedures.

Visitors will be reminded of their obligations to adhere to our school policy. Continued non-compliance will result in parent helpers being no longer welcome and their offer of help terminated, contractors will have their services terminated and be reported to the local authority if applicable for relevant sanctions to be imposed.

Pupils will have the relevant sanction imposed on them as set down in our school Behaviour Management policy's sanctions.

▪ **Staff recruitment, support and professional development**

Staff appointments will be based on the applicant most able to demonstrate they best match the Person Specification and their ability to undertake the Job Description. Irrelevant characteristics such as gender, race, religion, etc. will not form part of the selection process. The part of the application form where candidates disclose these details for monitoring purposes will be detached before members of the staff appointment panel receive copies of the application forms so they neither know nor can be influenced by this information.

Occasionally it may be necessary to fill a post immediately. On these occasions an existing member of staff or member of the community (e.g. a parent helper) who is known to be police checked may be asked to undertake the duties of the post temporarily pending a more permanent or fixed term appointment being made.

All staff have been made aware that there is no legal obligation to disclose a disability, however by informing the school of a disability, the school will be able to make reasonable adjustments which may include applying for support through the "Access to work" scheme.

Any staff who indicated that they have a disability, will be informed of any reasonable adjustments that are either in place or planned to be put in place in the future.

Any specific training needs of other staff to help make reasonable adjustments are dealt with through the school's Continuous Professional Development Programme. Systems are in place to support staff if they are returning to work, and staff's attention has been drawn to these procedures.

▪ **Governors**

The constitution of the Governing Body is determined by Government legislation to be representative of the local community, with local authority appointed members, and others elected by, and representative of, the parents, the staff and the LA. The school conducts the election of parent and staff governors and on these occasions it is made clear that all staff and parents have an equal opportunity to stand for election.

All governors are eligible to hold posts of responsibility (e.g. Chair of Governors) and annual elections are held for these posts. The governing body meetings are arranged and timed to enable full participation by representatives of all members of the community.

▪ **Partnerships with the local communities**

All parents/guardians shall have equal opportunities to, and are encouraged to, become involved in the life of the school either during the school day or as part of our school Parents' Association, PTFA, regular meetings held for new parents as well as the AGM at which all parents have equal opportunity to stand for election to one of the offices.

As appropriate we draw upon and involve the experience and expertise of the parents and community in the life of the school, and welcome parents and guardians from all backgrounds and abilities.

As far as practicable and appropriate we may provide information for specific parents in a format alternative to that normally used to take into account their specific needs and thereby enable them to access the information.

We promote equal opportunities for all parents to meet staff formally and informally. At the beginning and end of the school day, staff are available for informal meetings with parents. Formal opportunities are provided each term after school and timed for shortly after school on one occasion and later in the evening on another to facilitate every opportunity for both parents, including those with work commitments, to attend.

As circumstances do not always make it possible for parents to attend on these occasions, teachers are always willing to arrange to meet parents at other times if necessary. In addition, duplicate copies of newsletters are willingly provided for parents living separately if this is requested.

Parents and members of the community are welcomed to help voluntarily in the school, working directly with pupils on reading, craftwork, cooking, and helping with school trips etc. Offers of help are welcomed provided that the parents have, or can be taught, the skills that the task requires and satisfy the necessary police clearance checks. We may also directly approach parents and members of the community to come into school and share an aspect of their life with the children. Indeed, on occasion they may be deliberately chosen because of their religion, race or disability or other reason. For example, members sharing their experience of their culture or faith to enhance children's awareness of diversity; or disabled athletes demonstrating how individuals can overcome disability and achieve success.

10. Annual Reporting

Improvement objectives are contained within the School Improvement Plan and will be reviewed as the SIP is reviewed (on an annual basis).

A full review of the whole policy will be carried out every three years.

Progress reports will be communicated via Schools Governors Meetings.

As with all school policies, the impact of them must be monitored closely to ensure that they are effective in reaching their aims, and to ensure that resources are used effectively.

A rolling programme of policy review is in place.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, followed by the date 10/5/12.