



Odyssey House School

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It also provides some changes about which schools need to be aware.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. However, schools that are already complying with the law should not find major differences in what they need to do.

The exceptions to the discrimination provisions for schools that existed under previous legislation – such as the content of the curriculum, collective worship and admissions to single-sex schools and schools of a religious character, are all replicated in the new act. However, there are some changes that will have an impact on schools as follows:

- Introduction of a new single equality duty to replace the previous three separate duties. This includes new specific duties which are less bureaucratic and more light-touch than previous duties, requiring schools to publish equality information and objectives. Initially this must be done by 5 April 2012, and then periodically updated (chapter 5 of the guidance below gives full details).
- It is now unlawful for employers to ask health-related questions of applicants before job offer, unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work. This means that schools should no longer, as a matter of course, require job applicants to complete a generic health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Schools are advised to review their existing practices to ensure they are complying with both the Health Standards Regulations and Section 60 of the Equality Act.
- It is now unlawful to discriminate against a transgender pupil.
- It is now unlawful to discriminate against a pupil who is pregnant or has recently had a baby.
- New Positive Action provisions will allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim – for example providing special catch-up classes for Roma children or a project to engage specifically with alienated Asian boys.

Extending the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils. Following the recent consultation on implementation and approach, this duty was introduced in September 2012.

Aims & Values

Odyssey House School is a welcoming school where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all students to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion or disability. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with parents, staff and members of the wider community.

At Odyssey House School we aim to promote equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

We aim to:

- provide a secure environment in which all our students can flourish and achieve all five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and enjoy economic well-being);
- provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- prepare students for life in a diverse society in which children are able to see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive non-stereotyping information about different groups of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age;
- plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity; actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage;
- make inclusion a thread which runs through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- involve stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- publish and share our policies and impact assessments with the whole community;
- collect and analyse data to ensure all groups are progressing well and no group is subject to disadvantage;
- use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for all, respond to students' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning;
- ensure that the wider school curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity;
- have high expectations of behaviour which demonstrates respect to others.

Leadership, Management & Governance

Odyssey House School is committed to:

- being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community;
- encouraging, supporting and enabling all students and staff to reach their potential and make a positive contribution;
- working in partnership with families, the local authority (LA) and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination ensuring that our Equality and Diversity Policy is followed.

Responsibilities

The Senior Leadership team (SLT)

It is the SLT's responsibility to:

- ensure that the college complies with equality legislation;
- meet requirements to publish equality schemes;
- ensure that the school's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- scrutinize the recording and reporting procedures at least annually;
- follow the LA's admissions policy, which is fair and equitable in its treatment of all groups;
- monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary;
- have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development;
- provide information in appropriate, accessible formats;
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy;
- be pro-active in recruiting high-quality applicants from under-represented groups.

The Headteacher

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to:

- implement the policy and its strategies and procedures;
- ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant continuous professional development;
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice;
- deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying;
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality and diversity policy;
- produce a report on progress annually.

All Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be vigilant in all areas of the college for any type of harassment and bullying;
- deal effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences;
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture;
- promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation;
- promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society;
- keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

Community Cohesion

We are committed to supporting community cohesion by:

- developing a common vision and sense of belonging
- developing an appreciation of the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances

- creating opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential
- building strong and positive relationships

Engagement and extended services

- We have good links with other local school
- Teachers have links with other schools and promote good role models when interacting with staff from other schools, through a range of activities
- Learners have a strong voice and opportunities to take responsibility through our Student Council
- We engage parents through a range of activities, consultation evenings and focus groups to name but a few. Our pastoral system works with the parents to improve children's attendance
- We have strong links with external agencies including social services, the EWO service, the health service and police.
- Multi- agency working with voluntary agencies and private sector. Building networks and partnerships between services to encourage joint thinking and sharing of skills.
- Outreach work via family support team including preventative work and crisis intervention, home visits and needs-led support.
- Integrated support to ensure a personalised service.
- Relevant signposting to other agencies in the community.
- Raising awareness in the community about the range of services on offer at the School and locally.

Monitoring & Quality Assurance

Each student's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, looked-after status.

In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the college meets its duty to positively promote diversity. (e.g. lesson observations record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity.)

The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making.