

Townsend Church of England School

Equality Policy

Introduction

Townsend Church of England School is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the school community and the wider community are treated equally, fairly, and with respect by the school and by each other. This applies to the school as a place of education, a business, and an employer. Prejudice, discrimination, and victimisation are not tolerated, and we work hard to instil in our pupils a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others. The school's main priority is to provide the best education and care that we can, and establish a cooperative working relationship between home and school, so as to aid the development, progress, and needs of all the children in our care.

The school's 'Respect for All' statement is a critical element in our everyday work to ensure equality and other policies also support this objective and should be read in conjunction with this policy. Policies relating to Special Educational Needs, Accessibility, Exclusions, Pupil Premium Strategy, Safeguarding, Admissions, Well-Being and Anti Bullying, Year 7 Literacy and Catch Up Premium, Charging and Remissions, and our statements on our values and ethos given on our website and in our Prospectus and Annual Booklet, are especially relevant. The Equality of individuals is the foundation and guiding principle of all the school's other policies

This plan sets out how the school will satisfy its duties under the Equality Act to eliminate all discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other behaviour prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, to foster good relations between persons with and without protected characteristics and promote equality of opportunity regardless of whether a person has a protected characteristic (such as race, gender, transgender, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation). The school aims to comply with this duty, in both the delivery of its services and the employment of its staff.

Through the creation of this equalities policy, we have been able to develop a better understanding of what the challenges to equality are within the school and how we can best deal with these. This document will be reviewed regularly by the governing body, or any time there is an update or change to equality legislation, to ensure that it is being effectively implemented and remains focused and up to date on issues surrounding equality both within the school and nationally.

School profile

As the only Church of England secondary school in this area, we offer something special: a long tradition of a high quality education which develops the personality and talents of every child in our care.

Townsend Church of England School is a voluntary aided, all-ability co-educational school for students aged 11 to 18 and recruits students from over 60 primary schools covering a huge geographical area. In addition to many local children, the school receives students who travel to Townsend from long distances ie. Luton, Barnet, Bedfordshire, and from towns such as Hemel Hempstead, Hatfield, Watford, Harpenden and Wheathamstead.

The School is open to everyone and you do not have to go to Church to apply for admission – children of other faiths and those of no faith are very welcome at Townsend. The school Admission Policy supports this assertion.

We are very conscious of our mission to provide every child with more than just academic success. We are a school with clear principles and ideals based on a Christian ethos, and this philosophy is central to our success. Our great strength is that we keep reminding ourselves of what every parent/carer knows: children learn best when they are happy. We provide a stimulating learning environment where all children can achieve, whatever their ability or aptitude.

All students are valued as individuals and all flourish in a community that lives by the Christian values of love, compassion and respect for each other. We uphold the traditional values of good manners and hard work and have high expectations of all our students. Our teaching encourages independent learning and provides students with those skills and qualities which they need to take them through the 21st century.

We instil a love of learning and offer a wealth of cultural, social and sporting activities through which your child can find and develop new interests and skills.

The school has a Respect for All statement that is central to our work in support of equality. Our 'Respect for All' policy, written by students and staff affirms our commitment to each member of our community as an individual and underpins all aspects of our school life. 'Respect for All' is prominently displayed at Townsend and is very much at the heart of our school life. It expresses Townsend's strong commitment to equal opportunities and to life in modern Britain. Each child is valued as an individual and encouraged to take an active part in all aspects of school life.

Respect for All

At Townsend we believe that every person is equally important and that no-one has a right to harass, insult or cause offence to any other person for any reason. We particularly reject the way that some people abuse others:

- because they are richer or poorer, older or younger,
- because they are small or tall, thin or fat,
- because of the colour of their skin,
- because they are a teacher or a pupil,
- because of their religion or beliefs,
- because of disability or personal problems,
- because of gender or sexual orientation,
- because of their looks or what they wear,
- because of their likes and dislikes,
- because they are popular or unpopular,
- because of their ability or lack of ability,
- because of their nationality or accent,

We are all individuals with differences, but we are all members of Townsend and can learn from each other

Our aim is to provide a secure and happy environment where all our students can enjoy working and learning and in which all can develop their potential to the fullest extent, intellectually, spiritually, personally and socially in preparation for a successful and creative adult life in modern Britain and the wider world.

Additional Educational Needs

At Townsend Church of England School we believe in treating all pupils as individuals and so catering for their individual needs. All pupils including the most able are entitled to a challenging and stimulating curriculum that develops their full potential. Within the school's general policy of inclusion, provision for able, gifted and talented pupils and for those with learning difficulties is a matter of equal opportunity and we must ensure that all students have the opportunity to nurture their ability, stimulate their desire for life-long learning and to achieve and excel.

We believe that all teachers are teachers of students with additional needs. Teaching such students is therefore a whole school responsibility, requiring a whole school response. The needs of all students are at the centre of whole school teaching and learning at Townsend. Our Special Educational Needs and Learning Support Policy is based on good practice as established over many years and is integral to the school's 'Respect for All' statement.

Parent/carers and students can be sure that Townsend Church of England School is a fully inclusive school which values every member of the school community. We strive always to raise aspirations and attainment of all students in partnership with a range of outside agencies and stakeholders.

The school Wellbeing department includes a Inclusion Coordinator, a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), 2 Inclusion Managers, 2 Well-being Mentors and 4 Learning Support Assistants, both full and part time who work collaboratively with all teachers, Directors of Learning (subject and year), Senior Leadership and outside agencies, to meet the learning needs of all students. The team is especially aware of those with 'protected characteristics' and is proactive in providing support and encouragement leading to greater academic and other personal achievements.

This school is fully committed to ensuring students are aspirational working to unlock personal potential.

Extra clubs are offered to help with Home Study and we are proud to be the third largest user of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme among Hertfordshire Schools.

We aim to help all our students feel valued, better equipped to make positive choices and play an active role in society, now and in the future.

What is meant by Discrimination?

Discrimination means treating you unfairly because of who you are.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination by:

- employers
- businesses and organisations which provide goods or services like banks, shops and utility companies
- health and care providers like hospitals and care homes
- someone you rent or buy a property from like housing associations and estate agents
- schools, colleges and other education providers
- transport services like buses, trains and taxis
- public bodies like government departments and local authorities.

There are nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act (see these below in the section – Key groups at risk). Discrimination which happens because of one or more of these characteristics is unlawful under

the Act. Everyone has some of these characteristics - for example, sex or age - so the Act protects everyone from discrimination.

If you are treated unfairly because someone thinks you belong to a group of people with protected characteristics, this is also unlawful discrimination

Roles and responsibilities in Townsend Church of England School

Creating a school environment that promotes equality and denounces discrimination is a whole-school responsibility and requires all members of the school community to be actively involved in breaking down barriers to learning and barriers to social and emotional development that prejudice can create.

Individuals in the school are expected to take responsibility for supporting and promoting equality in school above and beyond their other responsibilities.

The governing body

The governing body will:

- revise and approve this document with the help of the headteacher and in consultation with other stakeholders as appropriate and will ensure that it is adopted correctly throughout the school
- follow and support the school Respect for All code
- ensure the school complies with all equality legislation and the school's equality objectives
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the equalities policy and make any amendments to improve on the plan when and where necessary and as required by new legislation
- ensure that parents/carers are informed of any incident related to this scheme which could directly affect their child
- communicate to parents, carers, and the wider community the school's equality policy through the school website.

The headteacher and senior leadership team

The headteacher, with the support of the rest of the senior leadership team, will:

- promote equality both within the school and as appropriate externally to the rest of the community
- follow and support the school Respect for All code
- ensure that all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities regarding the promotion and delivery of equality in school
- report to the governing body as appropriate and propose any amendments that should be made, as well as any feedback from staff, pupils and parents/carers that is available
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- take appropriate action where discrimination or victimisation occurs.

Staff

School staff will:

- ensure that they are up to date and aware of the contents of the school's policy towards all types of discrimination
- follow and support the school Respect for All code
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping

- work to promote anti-bullying strategies as outlined in the school's Behaviour for Learning, and Well-Being and Anti-Bullying Policies
- show a commitment to undertake development and training within this area as necessary
- engage with the school in eliminating any discrimination and act as a good example to students and parents/carers
- promote a positive working environment
- report to their line managers immediately on any incidents relating to discrimination or victimisation, either by staff, pupils, or any other member of the school community, so that these incidents can be reviewed and action taken where necessary.

Students

Students at the school will be encouraged to:

- engage with the school in eliminating any discrimination
- follow and support the school Respect for All code
- promote a positive environment and a positive attitude towards equality
- report as appropriate to school staff any incidents of inappropriate language or behaviour, discrimination or victimisation that they know to have occurred
- support the school's anti-bullying strategies
- set a good example regarding behaviour and social awareness to other students

Parents, carers, and visitors

Parents, carers, and visitors to the school are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with the school's equality policy and to support the scheme as appropriate
- work with the school to resolve any incident relating to discrimination or victimisation that their child is involved in
- respect and follow our equality policy and Respect for All code when visiting the school.

Key groups at risk

Whilst the school recognises that any person or group of people can become victim to discrimination, victimisation or unfair treatment, people may be more at risk of becoming victims of inequality due to:

- Race
- Disability
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)

Promoting equality and social awareness in school and within the local community

Community cohesion

The school expects all its students and staff to act respectfully towards members of the wider community that the school is part of.

Inclusion

Promoting and practising inclusion in school lessons, around the school site, during all school activities and into the wider community is a key part of developing a positive attitude towards equality and people from different backgrounds.

Student voice

Through our support of student voice, we encourage our pupils to have confidence in voicing their opinions and taking responsibility for the world around them. It is important that we teach our children how to engage in mature social interactions and get along with a variety of different types of people. This is developed through student voice by interactions between pupils from different year groups, pupils and staff, and pupils and the wider community.

Recruitment

Townsend Church of England School is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, nationality, gender, religion, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation.

Staff

Equal opportunities for staff

As part of our commitment to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment, the school will ensure that:

- all staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law;
- as an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce;
- we respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, students and parents/carers, and consider reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice;
- we ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Staff discipline and suspension

Townsend Church of England School is committed to ensuring that all school staff are treated fairly and consistently and anyone not adhering to these values is held to account through our adopted staff discipline, conduct, and grievance policies.

The education and wellbeing of our students is a key priority for all staff. Any member of staff who creates a barrier to learning for our students will be held to account. The school's staff appraisal policy provides information on how the school monitors staff performance. We hope that staff will feel confident to voice complaints and grievances in the confidential environment of the school and that they will trust the school to deal with their grievances fully, promptly, and fairly. The school puts great faith in all its employees, and hopes never to have to discipline anyone as a result of misconduct. There is a published and widely circulated Whistleblowing policy that staff receive annually.

Behaviour, exclusions and attendance

The school Behaviour Policy takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustments for students with special educational needs and disabilities. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups, and will take action to address any concerns that arise in this area.

Read our school attendance, behaviour and exclusions policies for more information on the processes surrounding these topics.

Monitoring and review

This Equality Policy will be reviewed periodically by the governing body, unless there is specific reason for it to be reviewed more urgently (for example an incident involving members of the school community or new legislation). Governors will consider how effective it is in tackling discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relationships between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.

Information will be gathered through:

- student attainment and progress data relating to different groups;
- children's and young peoples' views,
- information about how different groups access the whole curriculum and how they make choices; between subject options;
- activities for course choices;
- uptake of the extended school offer;
- exclusions data analysed;
- records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;
- data on the recruitment, development, and retention of employees;
- outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents/carers and others who have been identified as difficult to engage.

At appropriate intervals the senior leadership team will provide updates/reports for the governing body. These will include:

- progress against targets
- school population
- recruitment and retention
- key initiatives.

Outcomes

One of the most important indicators of how successful we are as a school in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination are the outcomes for various individuals and groups. Where robust analysis of outcomes reveals poorer outcomes for any particular groups, an impact assessment will be carried out and a plan put in place to aid these outcomes. If appropriate plans will outline:

- objectives and specific actions to be taken
- expected impact and indicators of achievement (success criteria)
- clear timescales
- who has lead responsibility
- resource implications

Equality impact assessments

Impact assessments are carried out as part of the review of all school policies and assess whether school policies or plans are having a negative or adverse, or positive impact on groups and individuals within the school community.

This document will be reviewed

- at regular intervals
- after incidents that relate to, or impact on, equality in school
- after any significant changes to workplace, working practices or staffing.