

# Vernon Primary School



## Equality Policy and Objectives

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## Equality Act 2010

*'The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, replacing all the previous UK anti-discrimination laws. This Act 2010 defines types of unlawful behaviour in relation to persons with protected characteristics. This Act 2010 applies to all schools including maintained and non-maintained special schools. The guidance provides information about the types of behaviour that are unlawful and information about the characteristics that are protected under the Act. The Equality Act 2010, specific duties (Regulations, 2011), introduced new specific equality duties to help public authorities meet their new obligations under the general duty. These specific duties apply to all schools.'*

**In order to comply with their specific duties, schools are required to do the following:**

- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the public sector equality duty or "general duty";
- Prepare and publish equality objectives (*Appendix A*).

In this document, Vernon Primary School will set out to inform parents/carers and staff of our aims and objectives in promoting equality through our daily practice across the school community.

### **Introduction:**

At Vernon, we are committed to promoting an understanding of equality and diversity throughout our school life. The overall objective is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality objectives (*Appendix A*) to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. The school will endeavour to create a community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse society. We aim to ensure that all members of the school community through their contact with the school are treated with fairness and respect at all times. At Vernon we will:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups;
- Foster good relations between different groups.

This policy is based on the following core values as expressed in the Schools' Aims and Values.

### **Vision and Aims:**

Our aim at Vernon Primary School is to help prepare our children to value and embrace their future. We believe that the children are our richest resource and we seek to foster a love of learning and of life. Our School is a vibrant, dynamic learning community, building positive relationships with all children, staff, parents/carers and the wider community. We have an open door policy which means that parents/carers are always welcome to come and talk to us if they have any concerns or issues that they would like to raise. We adopt a child-centred holistic approach to the planning and delivery of the curriculum, ensuring that all our children receive their entitlement of a broad and balanced education. We endeavour to create an open and friendly environment where individual children's needs are met. This will enable them to flourish in our School and achieve their full potential.

### **Our School Aims:**

- To create a rich, safe, stimulating and purposeful learning environment to enable children to grow in confidence and work with independence;
- To encourage, praise and reinforce success, celebrating efforts, enabling all children to gain a sense of achievement;
- To encourage and welcome the wider community into the daily life of our School, drawing on the skills of others and working in partnership to further support and extend children's learning;
- To help each child to achieve their full potential, by aiming for excellence, in providing a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum that meets the needs of individual children;
- To enrich the curriculum through educational visits, visitors and extensive use of the environment;

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- To nurture a life-long love of learning and support children in making the right choices socially, morally, spiritually, culturally and emotionally;
- To promote full inclusion and equal opportunities for everyone in the community;
- To work in true partnership with parents, carers and the community, involving them in the evaluation of the school's successes;
- To give responsibility to learners and develop their self-confidence by contributing to the community;
- To build on our very high expectations for success.

### **Teaching and Learning**

School Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils and considers them in relation to the various equality strands. This is in-line with our key values which are stated below.

### **Values**

The key values for our school are **Creativity and Curiosity, Independence, Respect and Cooperation**; these thread through our planning, teaching and learning across the whole school, ensuring that our ethos is consistent and progressive from Reception to Year 6. These values prepare our pupils for modern Britain and as such, we feel that they play an integral role in shaping our curriculum and celebrating diversity through equality practices. Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, included and their contributions are valued. Through collaborative learning opportunities children become equipped with lifelong skills, a love of learning and we aim for all children at Vernon to become confident in driving their own learning forwards, striving to achieve their potential. The importance of learning through our core values and beliefs are embedded in daily practice. The PSHE curriculum provides further opportunities to explore equality at a greater depth of understanding.

### **Discrimination**

#### **Direct Discrimination**

The Equality Act 2010 defines direct discrimination as occurring when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have, are perceived to have or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics as set out in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age;
- Disability or long term health condition;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race (which includes ethnic origin, colour and nationality);
- Religion or belief;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

At Vernon we will foster good relations for those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Our focus will be on promoting understanding and tackling prejudice.

#### **Indirect Discrimination**

The Equality Act 2010 defines indirect discrimination as occurring when a condition, rule or policy in the school is applied to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your school, i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.'

#### **Harrasment**

Harassment has a specific legal definition in the Equality Act: it is "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person". This covers

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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. Where schools are concerned, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Any case against the school would be on grounds of direct discrimination rather than harassment. The consequences, procedures and policies related to harassment are the same as those that apply to direct and indirect discrimination.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Equality 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, but it includes anything that is carried out under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, 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. As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, a child must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or sibling in relation to the Act. If a pupil has himself or herself carried out a protected act – such as making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher – then the child's own good faith will be relevant. The consequences, procedures and policies related to victimisation are the same as those that apply to direct and indirect discrimination.

### **The Equality Duty for Schools**

#### **The Headteacher and leadership team have the responsibility for the following:**

Visitors (including parents /carers, contractors and volunteers) are expected to:

- Support the school's approach and commitment to equality and to comply with the provisions of the policy.
- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour which is unlawful under the Act whilst on the school premises.

#### **The Governing Body of the school has responsibility for:**

- The Governing Body is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation.
- The Governing Body will endeavour to ensure that all relevant policies reflect the school's commitment to the principles of equality and that this commitment is reflected clearly in all its work.
- The school ensures the involvement of staff and governors and, where appropriate, takes steps to enable the contribution of pupils and their parents/carers and other relevant parties. Members of the school community will be kept informed of Equality and Diversity initiatives being undertaken.

#### **All members of staff are responsible for:**

- Being aware of their responsibilities under the Act and this policy, and recognise that they have a role in their day-to-day work to promote equality, inclusion and strong community relations.
- Highlighting any training they require developing their responsibilities under the Act.
- Dealing fairly and professionally with any incidents of bullying and discrimination.
- Promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their lessons and being role models for equal opportunities through their words and actions.
- It is the responsibility of all staff, including those helping on a voluntary basis, and partner organisations to promote equality.

### **Recruitment and training**

The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal and in-line with statutory duties, safeguarding procedures and local authority guidance.

- Selection criteria and procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- All employees who are involved with recruitment and selection have a responsibility to ensure that they have received the appropriate training to enable them to act in a fair and lawful manner and to ensure that no unlawful act of unfair discrimination occurs.
- This policy will be made available to all employees, new employees and job applicants.
- All new employees are given a full induction, including information about relevant policies.

Appropriate provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance for pupils and staff.

### **Anti-Bullying**

Bullying is hurting a person deliberately, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It is described as a deliberate act carried out to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the person bullying. It can be a single incident that has a lasting effect upon the victim, or it may be a pattern of repeated behaviour that takes place over time.

### **Bullying (including forms of child-on-child abuse) is:**

- meant to hurt or intended to cause distress;
- deliberate;
- may be repeated over a period of time;
- an imbalance of power.

### **Bullying (including forms of child-on-child abuse) manifests itself in several ways:**

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft);
- Verbal (e.g. name calling);
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone);
- Emotional (being unfriendly, tormenting);
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or abusive comments, sending of inappropriate images);
- 'Cyber-Bullying' or 'Virtual' bullying (the use of technology and/or social media to bully an individual);
- Bullying of children with Protected Characteristic: Pupils who may be targeted based on age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, race, sexual orientation. For example, homophobic bullying or a child being treated unfairly based on gender, such as girls being targeted with misogynistic language or behaviour. This type of bullying could take some or all of the above forms.

For more information of forms of child-on-child abuse, see school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Safeguarding).

At Vernon Primary School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a secure atmosphere. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated at our school. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s)/carer(s) or other interested people.

In the event of the need to exclude a pupil for a fixed term, the Headteacher would support parents/carers and the child through the exclusion process. Further information about the exclusion process is detailed in the behaviour policy.

### **Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND):**

**'A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.'** (SEND Code of Practice 2014)

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or;

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- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Vernon Primary School supports pupils with a wide range of SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disability). Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life. We celebrate learning for all pupils and where significant adjustments are needed, we endeavour to work collaboratively with external agencies and parents/carers to meet the need/s of the child.

We regularly review and evaluate the breadth and impact of the support we offer or can access. We co-operate with the local authority in reviewing the provision that is available locally and in developing the Local Offer. We also collaborate with other local education providers to explore how different needs can be met most effectively. We have due regard to general duties to promote disability equality.

### **Discrimination arising from a Disability**

According to the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if:

- (a) He or she has a physical or mental impairment, and
- (b) The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

With regard to a disability there are two further types of unlawful behaviour. These are:

- discrimination arising from a disability;
- a failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Discrimination arising from a disability is when a disabled person is discriminated against because of something that is a consequence of their disability. This is unlawful unless the discrimination can be justified.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments means that where a school places a disabled pupil or member of staff at a disadvantage compared to other pupils or members of staff, the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

For individual children with disabilities we make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children, to prevent them being put at a substantial disadvantage. Whether a school should provide an auxiliary aid or service is a question of reasonableness in all the circumstances of the case. These reasonable adjustments are anticipatory – they require thought to be given in advance to what children with disabilities might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage.

### **Accessibility**

The main priorities of the Accessibility Policy are to ensure that disabled people have:

- An accessible school environment;
- Equal access to the curriculum;
- Equal access to training and personal development;
- Appropriate means of information sharing and communication.

For further information refer to the Accessibility Policy.

### **Diversity**

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

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At Vernon we are mindful that diversity means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity is a set of conscious practices that involve:

- Understanding and appreciating the interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment;
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own;
- Understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
- Recognising that personal, cultural and institutionalised discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

### **Uniform**

At Vernon Primary School the Headteacher and Governing Body determines the guidelines about school uniform and aspects of appearance such as hair, jewellery and make up.

Although the Equality Act does not specifically deal with school uniforms, the Headteacher and Governing Body exercise due regard to equality law and to obligations under the Human Right's act 1998 when making decisions in this regard. Sensitivity is shown to the needs of different groups when determining reasonable adjustments. Please refer to the school's Uniform Policy for more details.

To avoid discrimination, our school will:

- Avoid listing uniform items based on sex, to give all pupils the opportunity to wear the uniform they feel most comfortable in or that most reflects their self-identified sex;
- Ensure our uniform costs the same for all pupils;
- Allow all pupils to have long hair (though we reserve the right to ask for this to be tied back for health and safety reasons);
- Allow all pupils to style their hair in the way that is appropriate for school yet makes them feel most comfortable;
- Allow pupils to request changes to swimwear for religious reasons;
- Allow pupils to wear headscarves and other religious or cultural symbols;
- Allow for adaptations to our policy on the grounds of equality by asking pupils or their parents to get in touch with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who can answer questions about the policy and respond to any requests.

### **Safeguarding**

All staff at Vernon Primary believes that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and in doing so ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school.
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children.
- To raise awareness of all staff of the need to safeguard all children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To emphasise the need for good communication between all members of staff in matters relating to child protection.
- To promote safe practice and encourage challenge for poor and unsafe practice.
- To promote effective working relationships with other agencies involved with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, especially with Children's Social Care and the Police.

- To ensure that all members of the school community are aware of our procedures for ensuring staff suitability to work with children.
- To ensure that staff understand their responsibility to support pupils who have suffered abuse in accordance with their agreed plan e.g. extra/targeted help, child in need/child protection plan.

For further information on safeguarding please refer to our Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Safeguarding).

### **Monitoring and Review**

At Vernon, we celebrate and value all forms of achievement. We promote a reward system throughout the school and appropriate to each developmental stage that is based on positive reinforcement. At the forefront of all practices is the schools mission statement: 'Nobody else is quite like me!'

Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress giving all pupils full opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do and, therefore, to benefit from the process.

Often through face to face discussions, questionnaires and surveys, Vernon Primary School uses a range of mechanisms to consult with and obtain feedback from its pupils, parents/carers and staff as well as other interested parties.

### **Dealing with breaches**

The commitment and approach to equality is of high importance and is embedded in our practices; therefore, we take breaches of the Equality Act seriously. At Vernon, we ensure that any complaints and evidence of a failure to comply with this policy are thoroughly investigated and are dealt with as determined by the Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher and/or the Governing Body, as appropriate.

Under the schools disciplinary procedures, discriminatory acts will be dealt with as misconduct where appropriate to do so. Sexual harassment may also amount to a criminal offence and may lead to police involvement. Harassment may also be an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where the harassment relates to a protected characteristic). Serious acts of discriminatory behaviour, including acts of harassment, could amount to gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Many concerns and minor complaints can be resolved quickly and informally through the class teacher or another member of staff, depending upon the nature of the complaint. All complaints will be dealt with in a transparent way and as quickly as is reasonably practical. All parties will be kept informed during the investigation of a complaint and of the outcome except where this is confidential e.g. in the case of a staff disciplinary process.

It is important that complaints are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. All correspondence to the school or governors should be by email or letter care of the school office, and not to the home address of any governor. The school endeavours to have a full discussion of any complaints raised, with a view of resolving issues informally before moving into the formal stages of procedure.

### **Resolving complaints**

At each stage in the procedure, Vernon Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur;



- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made;
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint;
- an apology.

At each stage a person will be asked to state what action they feel might resolve the issue. For further details please refer to the school's Complaints Procedure.

**Related documents:**

Accessibility Policy; SEND Policy; Behaviour Policy; Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Safeguarding); Anti-Bullying Policy; Uniform Policy; Complaints Procedure.

**Availability of equality information:**

This policy is available in the following ways:

- On the school website;
- As a paper copy from the school office;
- As part of the school's induction process for new staff and Governors;
- As part of equality training for existing staff.

**Members of the working party:** Karen Wood (Pastoral Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead), Jo Carvell (Headteacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead); Sarah Kiely (Deputy Headteacher); Kerry Walmsley (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENDCo), Ashley Hickson (Chair of Governors).

**Policy Date: March 2025**

**Review Date: March 2029**

**Ratified by Governors: March 2025**

## Appendix A

### The School's Equality Objectives

<b>Vernon Primary School Equality Objectives 2024-2025</b>				
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Actions to achieve outcomes</b>	<b>Key people responsible</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
To ensure that high standards of provision for disadvantaged pupils are maintained and that achievement gaps are minimised.	Pupil Premium Strategy Statement which clearly states the rationale behind decisions made regarding the use of PP money and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three-tiered approach for all Pupil Premium children to benefit from additional funding.</li> <li>Data action plan - Accountability of standards: teachers to ensure at Pupil Progress Meetings that PP children are identified and to set targets for them to make accelerated progress.</li> </ul>	Pupil Premium Lead, SLT, All teachers.	Monitor termly & measure the impact by July 2025
To improve the attendance of disadvantaged children including those in receipt of Pupil Premium funds.	Gap in attendance between disadvantaged pupils and their peers diminishes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed attendance data showing termly trends for PP pupils including reasons for absence and actions taken by school to improve attendance.</li> <li>Individualised Attendance Plans (when needed) to remove barriers to good attendance. Headteacher, DSL &amp; Senior Attendance Champion to focus on identified families in need, agree actions of support to put in place.</li> <li>Termly Attendance Newsletters to parents/caers regarding the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.</li> <li>Liaise with Cheshire East Locality Support Officer if required to further support families.</li> <li>Attendance and Children Out of School Team to support with lowest attending pupils.</li> </ul>	Headteacher, DSL, Senior Attendance Champion	July 2025
To positively promote the high quality provision of all pupils with a range of needs, including pupils with a high level of both physical and learning needs (SEND).	Pupils with barriers to learning will fully participate in the full life of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SENDCo to work closely with the Assessment Coordinator to analyse data for SEND pupils and further develop bespoke packages of support.</li> <li>Use a range of reasonable adjustments and adaptive teaching strategies that ensures the needs of all pupils are met.</li> <li>Ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation.</li> </ul>	SENDCo Assessment Coordinator SLT All teachers & staff	Monitor Termly & measure the impact by July 2025
To continue to promote a shared understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity, further preparing children for life in Modern Britain.	To achieve the SMSC Quality Mark, showcasing the school's commitment to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (including British Values) within an inclusive, positive school culture.	PSHE Coordinator and SMSC Quality Mark Team to focus on provision within the area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management</li> <li>Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum</li> <li>Extra-curricular Provision</li> <li>Whole School</li> </ul>	PSHE Coordinator, British Values Lead, Pastoral Lead. all teachers & staff.	July 2025