

PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY INCLUDING ACCESSIBILITY & DISABILITY PLAN

This policy complies with 'The Equality Act 2010' and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This policy also includes the school's Accessibility Plan and published equality objective.

This policy combines previous School Equality policies including:
Race Equality Policy/Disability Equality Scheme/Gender Equality Policy/
Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy is in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 which controls how your personal information is used by organisations, businesses, or the government.

The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Parkside Middle School will ensure any information held is used fairly,
lawfully and transparently

Dated: January 2024

Review date: January 2026

Headteacher.....

Chair of Governors.....

Introduction

Parkside Middle School is an average-sized middle deemed secondary school with 607 pupils on roll in Years 5, 6, 7 and 8. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, and a few are from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and / or disabilities is 21.25%. In addition, there are a small number of children who are Looked After.

Legal Background

Equality Act (2010)

This Act unifies, supersedes, or updates much of the previous law relating to equality.

Schools are now required to ensure that pupils are protected from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics' which are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership
5. Pregnancy and Maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or Belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual Orientation

Schools are prohibited from discriminating against, harassing or victimising:

- Prospective pupils
- Pupils at the school
- Former pupils

The Act contains provisions which enables schools to take proportionate action to tackle disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of a particular group. This is not the same as positive discrimination, which means providing preferential treatment that exceeds positive action conditions. However, in the case of disabled pupils, it is never unlawful to positively discriminate in their favour.

The 2010 Equality Act also enshrines existing duties already established in law as follows:

- Disability General Duty
- Gender General Duty
- Race General Duty
- Community Cohesion Duty
- Sexual Orientation

Aims

At Parkside Middle School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and age (for staff only). We will adhere to the legal definitions of these protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

We aim to develop and maintain a culture of inclusion and diversity, in which those connected with the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life and feel valued, cared for, and listened to. The development of a positive self-image, self-advocacy, respect for others and an awareness of the value of everyone's contribution to the school community is an integral part of our Parkside ethos.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, sex, age and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination through our positive approach to equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. We believe that our diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by those who learn, teach, and visit here.

Mainstreaming Equality into Policy and Practice

Whilst the school operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice (detailed in this policy) more specific actions are set out in the School Improvement Plan, Self-Evaluation Documents and the School's Accessibility Plan.

Teaching and Learning

Parkside Middle School aims to provide our pupils with opportunities to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this we will:

- Provide a curriculum that is accessible and relevant to the needs of each individual pupil and use specialist techniques and approaches which may motivate, support the needs, or improve access of any individual pupil.
- Ensure that pupils have the time needed for them to acquire, develop, practice, and apply skills
- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils.
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps, including providing targeted support where appropriate.
- Take account of the achievements of pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets.
- Ensure equality of access for pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society.
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community which do not stereotype but which do expose pupils to a range of thoughts and ideas.
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice.

- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and to celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- Seek to involve parents/carers in supporting their child's education.
- Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations, and their impact on learning.
- Include teaching and classroom-based approaches which are inclusive of our diverse range of pupils.
- Seek to involve the community around the school in celebrating and raising awareness of cultural diversity.
- Challenge any behaviour (verbal or written, e.g., graffiti, literature/propaganda) that differentiates degrades or isolates an individual or group due to race, religion, language or culture, sexual orientation, disability, socio economic status.

This includes:

- Racist, homophobic, or transphobic comments or name calling
- Comments about appearance
- Rejection by colour
- Mocking language or accent
- Belittling religious observances or cultural traditions

Admissions and Exclusions

Our admission arrangements (set by Worcestershire County Council) are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate with reference to the Protected Characteristics or socio-economic factors. Strategies are always put in place to meet the needs of any child who may be at risk of frequent sanctions or possible exclusion. We monitor Behaviour Management Plans to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

Exclusions will always be based on the School's Exclusions Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any disproportionality is identified and dealt with.

Equal Opportunities for Staff

Parkside Middle School is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made based on merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer Duties

As an employer we will ensure that we eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment in our employment practice and advance equality across all groups within our workforce.

Aspects of Equality (age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and religion and belief) are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions do not unlawfully discriminate against any person.

Actions we will take to ensure that this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff.
- Providing continued professional development opportunities for staff, which are monitored as part of the Appraisal/Performance Management process.
- Provision of Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity.

Consultation and involvement

Our policy is informed by the input of staff, pupils and parents and carers. We achieve this by using the following:

- Feedback from the annual parent/carer questionnaire, parent/carer and teacher meetings
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings and Professional Development Training
- Issues raised in Annual Reviews, Early Help, Child-In-Need and Child Protection Meetings
- Plans/Personalised Provision Maps
- Feedback at local, regional, and national meetings.

Equality and the Law

Parkside Middle School will ensure it does not unlawfully discriminate against its pupils, prospective pupils, staff, job applicants, or parents / carers in the performance of its duties or in applying its policies and practices.

Unlawful Discrimination involves treating someone less (or more) favourably than a "comparator". Harassment (which is a form of discrimination) means violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Victimisation involves treating a person less favourably because of a previous complaint. We recognise that discrimination can occur in the following ways and will actively work to alleviate it;

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Discrimination arising from disability including failure to make reasonable adjustments and provide auxiliary aids and services.
- Harassment
- Victimisation

Accessibility

Parkside Middle School will comply with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and will ensure that our school is as physically accessible as is reasonably (within the limitation and restriction of our school site) possible to pupils who have a disability. To ensure wider accessibility we will:

- Increase the extent to which pupils who have a disability can access the school curriculum.
- Improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which pupils who have a disability can access education and associated services.

We will review our accessibility targets every three years. The targets can be found in the school's Accessibility Plan at the end of this policy.

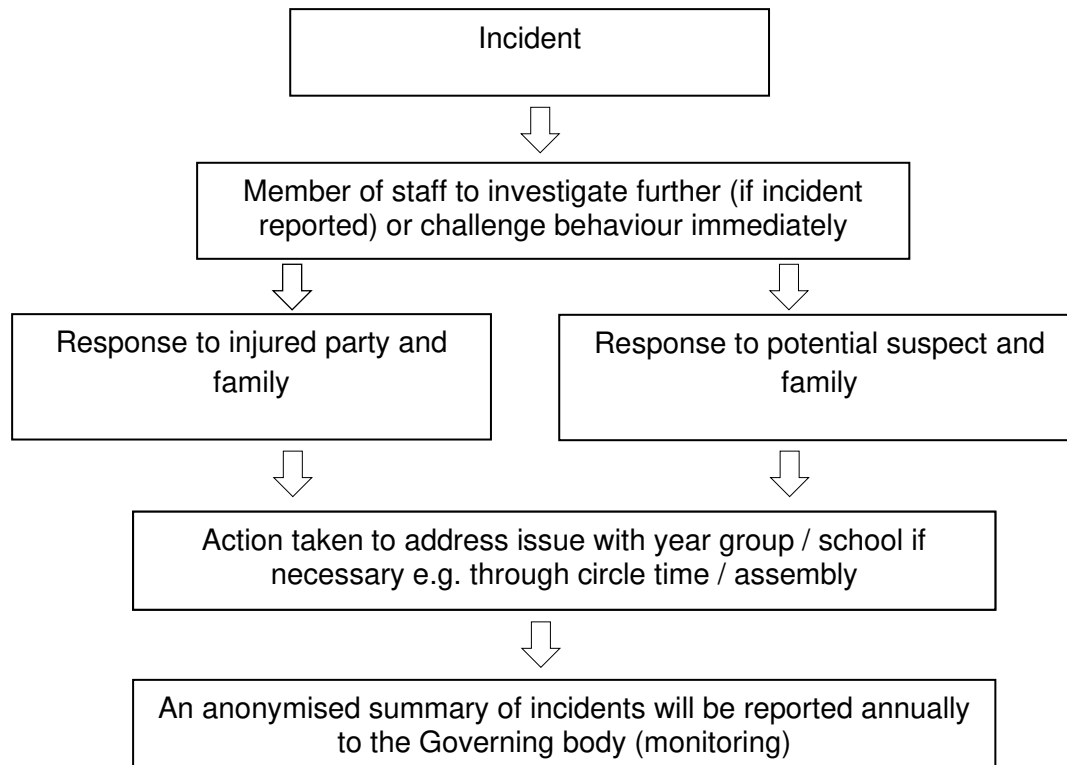
We will work actively to anticipate the needs of staff and pupils who have a disability and will ensure their inclusion by making reasonable adjustments where possible.

When considering whether a request for a reasonable adjustment can be met, we will consider the following factors:

- How effective the change will be in assisting the person with a disability.
- Its practicality.
- The cost.
- The resources and size of school.
- The availability of any financial support.
- Any safety issues, considering the nature and limitations of our school site.

Responding to and Reporting Incidents

It should be clear to pupils and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school, following the procedure below.



The General and Public Sector Equality Duties

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single equality duty for all public bodies, including schools. This duty replaced previous Equality Duties and applies in respect of all Protected Characteristics— age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion, or belief. The Equality Duty has three aims. It states that the school will attempt to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Tackling Discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a pupil's individual circumstances.

All discriminatory incidents and incidents of harassment or bullying will be dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to the Senior Leadership Team where necessary. All incidents must be logged on BROMCOM under the specific category.

Parkside Middle School will tackle discrimination by:

- recording and reporting racist incidents and prejudice related bullying incidents and taking follow up action as and when appropriate.

Parkside Middle School is committed to advancing equality of opportunity by:

- removing or minimising disadvantage
- taking steps to meet the needs of pupils, parents / carers and staff
- encouraging participation in activities in which participation of protected groups is disproportionately low.

Parkside Middle School will foster good relations by:

- tackling prejudice and harassment including bullying, and
- promoting understanding between pupils from different backgrounds.

Parkside Middle School will ensure that a clear procedure is in place to enable pupils and staff to report any incidents which are of concern. Staff will be encouraged to consider dealing with such incidents as a vital aspect of well-being for the whole school.

In addition to the general Equality Duty schools are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which was introduced by subsequent Equality Regulations. The PSED sets out requirements for public bodies (including schools) to set and publish an equality objective and publish information which will demonstrate how the school is complying with the aims of the Equality Duty and meeting the objective it has set.

To comply with the requirements of the PSED we will:

- Undertake routine equality monitoring of our pupils by race, gender, age and disability across several areas including admissions, exclusions, progress and attainment.
- We will also undertake routine equality monitoring of our staff. We will collect the following workforce information.
 - a) The number of part-time / full-time staff and analysis of race, gender, disability, and age distribution
 - b) Gender pay gap information
- We will develop an equality and accessibility objective based on the evidence gathered and the engagement in which we have been involved. The objective will meet the three aims of the general Equality duty.

The equality and accessibility objective will be reviewed every 3 years.

Every three years we will draw up an action plan allied to the overall school improvement plan and self-evaluation process; this will set out the specific equality and accessibility objectives we will pursue (see Appendix B).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of Governors

The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy and will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive and meets the needs of both pupils and prospective pupils.

The governing body seeks to ensure that no-one seeking employment at the school will be subject to any kind of unlawful discrimination. It will take reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment is accessible to adults and children who have disabilities.

The governing body will ensure that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of any of the protected characteristics and ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils.

The governing body is liable for any breaches of Equality legislation. It is also liable for the actions of its employees and agents of the school, unless it can show that it took reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation taking place.

The Role of Staff: Teaching and Non-Teaching

Staff will ensure that pupils and members of staff are treated fairly, equally and with respect and will promote and maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.

Staff will strive to provide curriculum material which includes positive images and challenges stereotypical images and assumptions.

Staff will challenge any incidents of bullying, prejudice, racism, or homophobia, and will record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Headteacher, Senior Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

Teachers will support the work of ancillary or support staff and support and encourage positive intervention in respect of any discriminatory incidents.

Staff are personally responsible for acts of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation which they carry out during their employment.

Review of Progress and Impact

This policy has been agreed by the Governing Body in line with legislative requirements. We will review progress against our Equality Policy annually and monitor our equality and accessibility objectives annually as part of school improvement planning.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender, and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

Complaints

Should there be a complaint regarding the Equality Policy the school will follow the Complaints Policy. Such complaints should be made within 90 days of the incident in question, otherwise the Governing Body will not be obliged to investigate them unless there are mitigating circumstances.

Date of policy: January 2024

Review date: January 2026

Appendix A: Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010

The 9 Protected Characteristics

1. Age

The Act protects employees of all ages but remains the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

2. Disability

The Act states that it is unfair to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with a disability. Indirect discrimination now also covers disabled people, which means that a job applicant could claim that a particular rule or requirement disadvantages people with that disability.

3. Gender reassignment

It is discriminatory to treat people who propose to start to or have completed a process to change their gender less favourably, for example, because they are absent from work for this reason.

4. Marriage and civil partnership

The Act continues to protect employees who are married or in a civil partnership. Single people are however not protected by the legislation against discrimination.

5. Pregnancy and maternity

The Act continues to protect women against discrimination because they are pregnant or have given birth.

6. Race

The Act continues to protect people against discrimination on the grounds of their race, which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.

7. Religion or belief

The Act continues to protect people against discrimination on the grounds of their religion or their belief, including a lack of any belief.

8. Sex

The Act continues to protect both men and women against discrimination on the grounds of their sex, for example paying women less than men for doing the same job.

9. Sexual orientation

The Act continues to protect bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people from discrimination on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

Appendix B: Accessibility Plan and Published Equality Objective

PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN AND PUBLISHED EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 2022 – 2023 (to be updated every 4 years)

Target	Responsibility	Reviewed	Date	Cost
To ensure accessibility to school site for people with a disability	Health and Safety Governor	FGB	On-going	N/A
To promote equality of opportunity for people with a disability who use the school (equality objective)	Inclusion Team	Curriculum Committee	On-going	N/A
To ensure pupils with a disability can participate in the school curriculum	Deputy Headteachers SENCO	Curriculum Committee	On-going	Curriculum budget SEN budget

This complies with 'The Equality Act 2010' and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) including publishing an equality objective. Senior Deputy Headteacher monitors this as part of her duties relating to the School Improvement Plan.