

Brimsham Green School

Gender Equality Policy

This Gender Equality Policy is to be reviewed tri-annually by the Pastoral Committee of the Governing Body.

This Gender Equality Policy was agreed on 29 June 2010

Signature (Chair of Pastoral Committee)

Date for Review June 2013

To be read in conjunction with South Gloucestershire Council's Gender Equality Scheme. (Appendix A)

Purpose of the Policy:

Legislative Context

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality. It places a duty on schools to produce a Gender Equality Scheme.

Social Context

We understand that despite thirty years of individual legal rights to sex equality there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs and such stereotyping has to be understood, challenged and overcome.

The General Duty

In accordance with our school's mission statement, vision and values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, Brimsham Green School has due regard for the need to, and endeavours to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could occur either directly or indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other, or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator. (Relevant policies – Anti bullying and Behaviour policies).

We differentiate between 'sex' and 'gender' as follows:

- Sex – the biological differences between male and females
- Gender – refers to the wider social roles and responsibilities which structure our lives

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By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognise and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumption.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, women and men differently, especially if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will ensure that we promote gender equality at all stages of the recruitment process for staff. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We understand the three parts of the duty to be different, but that they should normally support each other. However, we are aware that achieving one may not lead to achieving all three. In taking due regard we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance; that is that the weight we give to gender equality will be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. The greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater regard we will pay to it.

Relationship to other Policies:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Community Cohesion
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Discipline and Grievance Policy
- Race Equality Policy

Roles and Responsibilities:

The school embraces the responsibility to think and act more strategically about gender equality in order to meet specific duties, and guided by the Code of Practice prepared by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC).

We strive to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues within the operation of our school. In order to do this we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area.
- Consult all staff, students, parents/carers and relevant local communities
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, students, parents/carers and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Assess and address the causes of any gender pay gap

We will:

- Set out the results of reviews, consultations and assessments where appropriate
- Report on progress to the Governing Body annually and set further objectives where necessary

Responsibilities:

All governors, staff, volunteers, students and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Gender Equality Policy. In addition:

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The **Governing Body** is responsible for ensuring that the school prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews this Gender Equality Policy and in particular the employment implications of meeting the Duty.

The **Headteacher** works to ensure that:

- The policy is implemented
- Staff recruitment, training opportunities and conditions promote gender equality
- Existing and planned policies are assessed for the ways in which they impact on gender equality
- Curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school trips and extended school activities take account of the need to promote gender equality
- Incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to the school's behaviour/anti-bullying policies
- Visitors to the school, or those who use the premises, are aware of the Gender Equality Policy

All staff have a responsibility to:

- deal with incidents of sexual harassment or bullying
- help eliminate unlawful discrimination
- prepare and/or help deliver a curriculum, teaching and learning methods, classroom organisation, assessment procedures, behaviour management, school visits etc that take into account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality

Students, parents/carers and visitors: have a proportionate responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the policy.

Despite the Equal Pay Act of 1970, and Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, there is still widespread discrimination and gender inequality in society. The purpose of this Gender Equality policy will therefore:

- support us in our decision-making and policy development
- give us a clearer understanding of the needs of staff, students and their families
- enable us to provide better quality services for a variety of needs
- help us target our resources more effectively
- help to promote increased confidence in our school
- make more effective use of our workforce

We recognise that both sexes can suffer from sexual stereotyping and that sometimes the same policies can impact differently upon men and women and girls and boys. We will make appropriate adjustments if this is found to be the case with any of our policies and practices.

We also recognise that girls and boys, and women and men, can experience different forms of discrimination depending on, for example, their ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age or disability, and we will take this complexity into consideration.

In these ways we will strive to improve the situation for, and the relationships between, men and women and boy and girls within our school and the wider community.

Single Sex Provision

Within school there are areas where we provide for one sex only (e.g. PE lessons). This is to help meet the different needs of boys and girls (men and women); needs often arising out of historical and current stereotyping and unjust gender discrimination, or where there is an issue of physical intimacy or embarrassment to be considered. We do not provide activities or services for one sex only if this would amount to less favourable treatment of the other sex, or where it would promote gender stereotyping and gender inequality.

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We do not deny one sex the same opportunities as the other and where we provide for one sex only we ensure there are equivalent and proportionate activities and services for the other sex. We do not offer different curriculum choices to boys and girls, and where there are curriculum options we ensure that these are not offered in such a way that boys and girls are steered into making choices based on gender stereotypes.

Should requests for additional single sex activities or services, which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities, come from students, families or the community, these will be considered and legal advice sought.

Breaches of the Gender Quality Policy

Striving to eliminate gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change. Where possible, breaches of this policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes. More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

Where safeguarding issues based on sex and gender come to the attention of the school, these will be dealt with according to our child protection procedures.

Produced May 2010.