



PS35 EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Number	PS35
Policy Name	Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy
Issue Date	September 2023
Review Date	September 2024
Owner	Headteacher
Reviewing Body	Approved by Executive Team, ratification by SGB October 2023

Policy:

This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equality and fairness to all in our employment and not provide less favourable facilities or treatment on grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marital and civil partnership
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, additional protection exists for those employees who have transitioned and obtained a gender recognition certificate. Autism Unlimited also considers gender-fluid and non-binary employees to be protected under s. 7 Equality Act 2010.

At Autism Unlimited we know that our success depends on our staff. Autism Unlimited strives to be an organisation where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

Autism Unlimited is committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes throughout Portfield School and the wider charity. Autism Unlimited expects employees to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

We recognise our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, the diversity of the school community and inclusion of all those we work with. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying, victimisation and harassment and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Act and its subsequent provisions. Therefore, and in line with the Race Disparity Audit's recommendation, no longer refer to colleagues as BAME or BME as these terms in themselves, omit other cultures. We will refer to colleagues from any other culture within our school as ethnic minorities or transracial.

The Equality Act 2010 includes not only an individual classified as physically disabled but also an individual whose mental health has a substantial, adverse effect on daily life.

We also recognise too that people on very low incomes, or who live in relative poverty may experience inequality and reduced life chances, heightened by the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Values, Principles and Standards

Equality of opportunity is fundamental to good practice in education, in which fairness of opportunity for all is a basic right. This policy is therefore underpinned by the following values, principles and standards:-

- equality and social justice;
- acknowledging and valuing inclusion and diversity as good practice but also as the norm;
- respect for others whatever their background or way of being;
- compliance with equal opportunities legislation;
- elimination of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination by addressing and not condoning;
- active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behaviour;
- commitment to inclusive education which enables and supports all pupils to develop their full potential;
- accountability for compliance with this policy by all members of the school;
- communities and others engaged in school business or activities.

Objectives

The objectives of this Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy are to:-

- develop an ethos and culture which demonstrates how we value all people and enable respectful communication between all members of the school community;
- actively promote equality of opportunity by ensuring all staff have access to all job opportunities, supporting flexible working requests where the school is able to do so with no loss of service to our children and young people;
- prepare pupils for life in a diverse society using resources from the PSHE / RSHE curriculum to help them understand what this means for them as they move towards independence;
- promote good relationships amongst people within the school community and the wider communities within which we work where open communication is key;
- eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or other oppressive behaviour through use of the School Disciplinary Procedures when required;
- deliver equality, diversity and inclusion through our school policies, procedures and practice;
- do our utmost, within available resources, to remove barriers which limit or discourage access to school provision and activities;
- take positive action to provide encouragement and support to individuals and groups whose progress has been limited by stereotyping and cultural expectations;
- monitor the implementation of equality, inclusion and diversity policies within the school;

If a colleague feels they have been discriminated against under any area of the Equality Act 2010, they should raise it firstly with their direct line manager. If they do not feel able to approach their immediate line manager, they should contact a member of staff within the HR Department. Members of staff can also raise any queries regarding the delivery and monitoring of this policy by approaching a member of staff within the HR Department.

The roles and responsibilities of each member of the school community in delivering this policy is set out below.

Communication of Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy

We will take active steps to communicate this Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy to all pupils, parents, staff, and governors of the school. This will be by way of inclusion in new staff induction processes, training and refresher training for all staff and governors.

Responsibilities and Accountabilities

The Governors are responsible for:-

- making sure the school follows all of its equality, inclusion and diversity policies and codes and meets its legal responsibilities with respect to equality;
- monitoring the makeup of the workforce regarding protected characteristics where recorded, encouraging equality, inclusion and diversity and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy, making changes to employment practices when necessary to ensure fairness and to ensure legal relevancy.

The Head Teacher is responsible for: -

- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with all equality legislation;
- ensuring the school implements its equality, inclusion and diversity policies and codes of practice;
- following the relevant procedures and acting in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying ensuring such acts are dealt with as misconduct under the Staff Code of Conduct, Grievance or Disciplinary procedures;
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

School SLT are responsible for:-

- putting the school's equality, inclusion and diversity policies and codes into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and acting in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.
- line managers play a crucial role in making people feel welcomed and fairly treated within Portfield School and within their own teams. They should lead by example in demonstrating the expectations set out in this policy.

All staff are responsible for:-

- promoting equality, inclusion and diversity by avoiding and not colluding with unfair discrimination;
- challenging any incidents of unfair discrimination or racial, sexual or other stereotyping, perpetrated by pupils or other staff and;
- keeping up-to-date with equality law and participating in equal opportunities and diversity training;
- reporting and not condoning any incidents of unfair discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying to senior managers.

Pupils/students are responsible for:-

- respecting others in their language and actions;
- following all of the school's equality, inclusion and diversity policies and codes of conduct.

Recruitment & Selection

In seeking to achieve a diverse workforce at all levels, we will ensure that no employee, job applicant or candidate for promotion will be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements that are not related to the job.

Autism Unlimited recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- We recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates as possible. We will advertise jobs via various methods ensuring this attracts a diverse range of candidates.
- All applications are shortlisted based on qualifications and experience.
- For all roles more than one person will be involved in the recruitment and selection process.
- The reasons for the selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded on the interview paperwork.
- All recruitment agencies acting for Autism Unlimited are aware of its requirement not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

DBS

Autism Unlimited used the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to contribute to the assessment of the suitability of applicants and staff to work for the company. We will comply fully with the DBS code of Practice and will treat all applicants and staff fairly. We will not discriminate unfairly against anyone based on a conviction disclosure, or other information received from the DBS.

Promotion, Training and Career Development

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities irrespective of any protected characteristic. Access to training shall be open and accessible for all staff. All employees will have equal access to training and other career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities. However, the Company will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide special training and support for groups which are underrepresented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career development opportunities.

Promotion within Autism Unlimited will be made without reference to any of the forbidden grounds and will be based solely on merit. The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no unjustifiably discriminatory impact on any group.

Reporting Concerns about equality and diversity

This policy sets out that we are all responsible for ensuring equality, inclusion and diversity. Autism Unlimited operates an open-door policy to discuss workplace problems and employees can discuss any matter with their line manager on an informal basis. Autism Unlimited recognises that this may not always be appropriate; if this is the case employees can raise a concern with their line manager who will refer it onwards to the HR Department where your concern will be recorded. If the concern is about your line manager, you should raise it with the HR Department in the first instance where it will be recorded.

Autism Unlimited will treat seriously, and act where appropriate in response to all complaints of discrimination or harassment on any of the protected grounds made by employees, agency staff, customers, suppliers, contractors or third parties.

If an employee decides not to take any action to deal with the problem and the circumstances described are very serious then we reserve the right to investigate the situation. Autism unlimited has an overall duty of care to ensure the safety of all employees who may be adversely affected by experiences at work.

Monitoring and Reviewing

This Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains compliant with diversity, equality and inclusion legislation. Any new legislation will be included in the policy as and when it is brought into the public domain.

Legislation and case law that we as a school, were aware of when reviewing this policy:-

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU)
- ET outcome Taylor v Jaguar Land Rover Limited (September 2020)
- The Sewell Report April 2021