

Tas Valley Church Schools Federation


Gender Equality Policy



1 Legislative Context

- 1.1 The Gender Equality Duty was introduced into legislation in the Equality Act 2006 (further updated in 2008) and amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Acts of 1975 and 2003.
- 1.2 It added the duty for public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment (including for transsexual & transgender people);
 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
- 1.3 It also introduces specific duties requiring schools to:
- prepare a written policy on gender equality;
 - set out how we will gather information on gender equality in relation to employment, services and performance of our functions;
 - use this information to review the implementation of the scheme's objectives;
 - assess the impact of our policies on pupils, staff and parents on the promotion of gender equality as well as the impact on attainment levels of these pupils;
 - monitor the operation of our policies through the impact they have on such pupils, staff and parents, with particular reference to their impact on the attainment levels of such pupils.
- 1.4 On 1st October 2010, the Equality Act replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It extends protection from discrimination in some areas and has placed new duties on schools. The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:
- in relation to admissions;
 - in the way it provides education for its pupils;
 - in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or services;
 - By excluding a pupil, or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- 1.5 A person's age is also a protected characteristic in relation to employment but not in the provision of education. Schools therefore remain free to admit and organise children in age groups and to treat pupils in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development without risk of legal challenge.
- 1.6 To meet our statutory duties we publish a written policy identifying all our functions/policies that are relevant to gender equality. The policy is a timetabled and realistic plan, setting out objectives and arrangements for meeting the general and specific duties.
- 1.7 Our obligations under legislation are entirely in keeping with the school's obligations to deliver high quality learning opportunities and provision of care for every member of the school community.

2.1 The General Duty

- 2.1.1 We understand 'sex' to refer to the **biological** differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider **social** roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. 
- 2.1.2 We understand the various parts of the general 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.

- 2.1.3 In taking due regard, we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance. By this, we mean 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.
- 2.1.4 We will ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in the school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality.

2.2 Eliminate Unlawful Sexual Discrimination and Harassment

- 2.2.1 By unlawful sexual discrimination, we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur 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.
- 2.2.2 We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. 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.
- 2.2.3 We recognise sexual harassment as behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender and 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.

2.3 Promoting Gender Equality

- 2.3.1 We recognise that appropriate steps must be taken to ensure that, regardless of gender, everyone will be given the same opportunity to excel and complete their work. The school will also allow equal access to all opportunities for pupils, staff and the wider community, where possible, regardless of gender.
- 2.3.2 By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage, which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.
- 2.3.3 We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

3 Single Sex Provision (where relevant)

- 3.1 Where we provide for one sex only, 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.

- 3.2 We do not provide activities, classes, facilities, benefits 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.
- 3.3 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 facilities, benefits or services for the other sex.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 If requests for additional single sex activities, facilities or provision which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities come from pupils, families or the community, these will be considered and legal advice sought.

4. Single Equality Policy

- 4.1 Our Single Equality Policy and Action Plan form an essential part of this policy and details our current objectives. This will run in conjunction with the School Improvement and Development Plan and Premises Management Plan and is subject to regular revision and amendment.