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REGISTERED CHARITY 210031

Equality Scheme Policy Responsible person – Assistant Headteacher Next scheduled review – Summer 2017		
Date	Reviewed by	Amended (Y/N)
Summer 2009	Ian Wilson	Yes
Summer 2011	Ian Wilson	Yes
Summer 2013	Sarah Billingham	Yes
Summer 2015	Sarah Billingham	Yes
Summer 2017		



MEATH SCHOOL

‘Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence [physical and mental]. They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.’ *

I CAN is committed to respecting the equal human rights of all pupils in our schools and to educating them about equality. We also respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the school community. In particular, we will comply with relevant legislation and implement school plans in relation to race equality, disability equality and gender equality.

* United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19 [1989]

This Single Equality Scheme provides a format for addressing the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2010. This supersedes and brings together all previous statutory duties in relation to race, gender and disability and also addresses the duty to promote community cohesion, thus meeting the school’s statutory duties in these areas.

The scheme also highlights how our school has worked with and listened to the staff, pupils, parents and carers to inform development of action plans and the need and commitment required to ensure the scheme is a success. This is underpinned by a commitment to promoting positive relationships and understanding between all groups within our school community.

This document sets out how pupils with the following protected characteristics (previously known as equality strands) will be protected in our school from harassment and discrimination:-

- disability.
- gender.
- race.
- religion and belief.
- sexual orientation

This scheme extends however to cover all aspects of vulnerability, including those associated with socio-economic factors (e.g. pupils from low income families).

We are also committed to be fully inclusive of all community users, including parents and carers. As such, this scheme therefore also sets out how we will work to overcome any discrimination related to the other protected characteristics:-

- Age
- Being married or in a civil partnership

This Scheme sets out:

- information about our school and the local area;
- our plans to meet our general and specific duties;
- how we will promote community cohesion within the school;
- how we have involved people in the development of this scheme;
- what consultation has taken place;
- what our plans are to gather and use information;
- how we intend to ensure our policies are fair;
- how we will report on our progress;
- who is responsible for making our scheme a reality; and,
- an action plan addressing our equality priorities

This scheme is reviewed every three years and is reported on annually.

Aims of the Single Equality Scheme

- To articulate the school's commitment to equality which permeates all school policies and practices
- To ensure that everyone who belongs to, or comes into contact with, our school community is valued and respected
- To promote equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- To comply with statutory duties under equalities legislation in one document

Purpose of the Equality Scheme

This equality scheme is the school's response to the specific and general duties in the current equality legislation, which has been brought together under the Equality Act 2010. It is an attempt to capture how the school is systematically establishing and implementing good practice in equality and diversity across all areas of school life. This includes a response to all aspects of social identity and diversity.

This Equality Scheme sets out how the school will:

- eliminate discrimination
- eliminate harassment or victimisation related to any aspect of social identity or diversity;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote positive attitudes to all aspects of social identity and diversity;
- encourage participation by disabled people and people representing different aspects of social identity in public life;
- take steps to take account of difference even where that involves treating some people more favourably than others;
- take proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils.

Planning to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity

This scheme is underpinned by the core belief that all children and young people belong to their local community and share the same rights to membership of that community and a quality education. An action plan accompanies this Equality Scheme which identifies what we will be doing over the coming 3 years to make our school more accessible to the whole community, irrespective of background or need (see appendix).

We will collect data related to the protected characteristics and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. This data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school. This will include the following functions:

- admissions
- attendance
- attainment
- prejudice related incidents

Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fare well in the education system. We provide both our pupils and staff with awareness of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents. If incidents still occur we address them immediately and report them to the Local Authority using their guidance material. The Local Authority may provide some support.

The scheme encompasses our **anticipatory duties to plan ahead for the reasonable adjustments** (reasonable and proportionate steps to overcome barriers that may impede some pupils) we need to make to be best placed to help disabled pupils who come to our school.

All pupils at Meath School are disabled. This is because:

- **They have a difficulty with speech, language-comprehension and interaction as a normal day-to-day activity**
- **The effect of their impairment or condition is ‘more than minor or trivial’**
- **It has ‘ a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’**

At Meath School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for staff, learners and all those receiving services from the school, irrespective of disability. The achievement of all pupils will be regularly monitored, and we will use all available data to raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will aim to provide our pupils with a firm foundation, which will enable them to fulfil their potential, regardless of their disability. We will actively seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination against pupils and staff by adhering to our duties as an employer under the legislation.

We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be celebrated by all who learn, teach and visit here. We aim to identify, remove or minimise barriers to achievement for all our pupils and in every area of school life. We have high expectations of participation within the school day, and within the local or home community beyond it.

This action plan replaces the school's Disability Accessibility Plan for the school (previously required under the planning duties in the Disability Discrimination Act)

Monitor, review and reporting

The action plan is renewed annually and progress towards the equality objectives within it is reported on regularly to governors. Equality objectives have been identified through consultation with key stakeholders. It is available in different formats and in different languages on request to the school office.

Every three years, we will review our objectives in relation to any changes in our school profile. Our objectives will sit in our overall school improvement plan and therefore will be reviewed as part of this process.

This Scheme will be reported on annually. Progress against the action plan will be evaluated and the impact of the action and activities assessed. This report will be made available on the school website and as a separate document.

Publication

This action plan is understood and implemented by all staff and is available. We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Single Equality scheme and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the school's website.

Breaches

Breaches to this statement will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Principal and governing body

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal will:

- ensure that staff and parents are informed about the Single Equality Scheme;
- ensure that the scheme is implemented effectively;
- manage any day to day issues arising from the policy whether for pupils or for the school as an employer;
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the scheme;
- liaise with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available;
- monitor the scheme and report to the Governing Body at least annually, on the effectiveness of the policy;
- ensure that the SLG are kept up to date with any development affecting the policy/action plan arising from the scheme;
- provide appropriate support and monitoring for all pupils and specific targeted pupils to whom the scheme has direct relevance, with assistance from relevant agencies.

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation;
- recommend all governors receive up to date training in all the equalities duties;
- designate a link governor with specific responsibility for the Single Equality Scheme;
- establish that the action plans arising from the scheme are part of the School Development Plan;
- support the Principal in implementing any actions necessary;
- inform and consult with parents about the scheme;
- evaluate and review the actions every three years;
- evaluate the action plan yearly.

The Trustees, with the governors of the school, are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation
- Monitoring incidents
- Ensuring that the Equality Scheme and its procedures are followed

The Senior Leadership Group will:

- have general responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this scheme;
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the scheme;
- identify good quality resources and CPD opportunities to support the scheme;
- with the Principal, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues;
- assist in implementing reviews of this scheme as detailed in the School Development Plan.

People with specific responsibilities:

- The Principal, along with theSLG, liaises with staff and is responsible for monitoring how vulnerable pupil's needs are met.
- The ICAN HR assistant, in conjunction with the Principal, is responsible for ensuring the specific needs of staff members are addressed.
- Class teachers, in conjunction with the Deputy Headteacher are responsible for gathering and analysing the information on outcomes for vulnerable pupils.
- The Principal/ Deputy Headteacher are responsible for investigating reported incidents of a discriminatory nature.

Parents/Carers will:

- have access to the scheme;
- be encouraged to support the scheme;
- have the opportunity to attend any relevant meetings/awareness raising sessions related to the scheme;
- have the right to be informed of any incident related to this scheme which could directly affect their child.

School Staff will:

- accept that this is a whole school issue and support the Single Equality Scheme.
- be aware of the Single Equality Scheme and how it relates to them.
- make known any queries or training requirements.
- know how to deal with incidents of concern, and how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping.
- know procedures for reporting incidents of racism, harassment or other forms of discrimination.
- know procedures for dealing with and reporting prejudice related incidents.
- ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.
- keep themselves up to date with relevant legislation and attend training and information events organised by the school or LA.
- ensure that pupils from all groups are included in all activities and have full access to the curriculum.
- promote equality and diversity through teaching and relations with pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community.

Pupils will:

- be made aware of any relevant part of the scheme, appropriate to age and ability.
- be expected to act in accordance with any relevant part of the scheme.
- experience a curriculum and environment which is respectful of diversity and difference and prepares them well for life in a diverse society.
- understand the importance of reporting prejudiced based bullying / incidents
- ensure the peer support programme within the school promotes understanding and supports pupils who are experiencing discrimination.

Action Planning

This scheme is supported by an action plan, the progress of which is monitored and evaluated by the Governing Body.

The action plan that identifies the equality objectives for the school arising from this scheme has:

- clear allocation of responsibility;
- clear allocation of resources, human and financial;
- clear timescales;
- expected outcomes and performance criteria;
- specified dates for review;

The effectiveness of this Scheme will be evaluated and reflected in:

- the School Self
- School Improvement Advisor