

 Cotton End Forest School

**Equal Opportunities Policy**

Updated: September 2019

Reviewed: September 2021

Reviewed: September 2023

Review: September 2025

**Purpose**

This policy is in place to ensure that Cotton End Forest School’s ethos, policies and practices respect and protect the rights of all individuals, and promote practices to ensure that all our pupils and staff are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities. It is central to the promotion of community cohesion.

We will make every effort to ensure that all groups prosper and are not subjected to harassment, victimisation or discrimination, using this policy to support good decision-making. In addition, the school will take all reasonable steps to protect those who are perceived to have a protected characteristic or those who are associated with people who have a protected characteristic, from discrimination. We will ensure that we consider how different people will be affected by our plans and policies so that provision is appropriate and accessible to all and meets different people’s needs. We will consider the impact of our plans and policies in relation to the nine protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation and
9. Religion or belief

In addition, Cotton End Forest School will, consider the impact of our plans and policies in relation to:

1. Employment
2. Pay
3. Special Educational Needs, including children who exhibit challenging behaviour and those with emotional, mental and physical well-being needs
4. Children who have frequent moves and lack stability in life leading to time out of school or low attendance
5. Children who are caring for others
6. Children from homes with low income, and/or inadequate home study space
7. Children with low levels of parental support or different parental expectations.

We acknowledge that this not an exhaustive list and we will therefore consider any other issues relating to equal opportunities as and when they arise.

**British Values**

At Cotton End Forest School, we actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

* **Democracy:**

Children show knowledge of the Britain’s democratic parliamentary system through the School Council, History curriculum and our Values programme.

* **The Rule of Law:**

Children are taught the difference between right and wrong through the school’s ethos, Behaviour policy and Values Education.

* **Individual Liberty:**

Within school pupils are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms and advised how to exercise these safely, for examples through our e-safety and PSHE/SMSC discrete lessons.

* **Mutual Respect:**

Mutual respect is at the heart of our school ethos. Children learn that their behaviour has an effect on their own rights and those of others. Our pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to understand how they can contribute positively to their own lives and to all those in the school community. All members of the school community treat each other with respect. At Cotton End Forest School, we reinforce the understanding that we are all equal with different qualities, backgrounds, interests and personalities. We celebrate personal achievements and interests. Through our values programme, we learn different life skills such as tolerance, respect and co-operation.

* **Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.**

At Cotton End Forest School, we place a great emphasis on celebrating diversity with the children. Our RE, PSHE and SMSC curriculum reinforce this. Children visit places of worship that are important to different faiths and we learn about and celebrate different cultures on our culture days.

**This policy accords with legislation:**

* The Equality Act 2010
* The Education Act 2002 (Section 78)
* Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools (Nov 2014)

**Relationship to other policies**

This policy relates to all our school policies.

**Roles and responsibilities of headteacher, other staff, governors**

The **headteacher** will:

* Ensure that the school produces information about how it is meeting the aims of the general duty and publishes SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited) equality objectives, and then update the published information to review and publish objectives at least once every four years.
* Incorporate these objectives into the school development plan to describe what the school will do to ensure that its policies and practice do not discriminate unfairly, **directly or indirectly**, against any groups of adults or pupils in the school, so that it is accessible to all.
* Monitor the progress of pupils of minority groups and compare it to the progress made by other pupils in the school.
* Consider equality before and at the time of making decisions or taking actions which may have implications for any of those groups covered in the list of 16 points above, and keep a record showing that questions relevant to equality duties have been addressed.
* Ensure that governors, staff, parents and carers are aware of their roles in ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
* Work with governors and staff to establish a culture which celebrates diversity/equality and achievement; promotes high expectations and inclusive approaches.
* Welcome applications for school places and jobs from all sections of the community.
* Ensure that incidents are reported, analysed, addressed swiftly and effectively, and reported on.
* Monitor how well the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

The **staff**:

* Will actively implement the equalities objectives through the School’s Development Plan, and support the monitoring of impact.
* When selecting class material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of any of those groups covered in the list of the points above.
* Monitor the progress of pupils of minority groups or those who have a protected characteristic and compare it to the progress made by other pupils in the school
* We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues.
* All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of discrimination. We record any incidents in the school incident book and draw them to the attention of the Head teacher.
* Will challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of pupils’ experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience and promote fundamental British values.

**Students, parents and carers** will be consulted on the plan regularly and be kept informed through the school prospectus and home-school agreement and other methods of communication used by the school such as the school website, newsletters and school policy.

**Visitors and contractors** will be made aware of the policy through relevant documentation.

The **governing body** will:

* Contribute to decision-making when objectives are being agreed.
* Ensure that equality objectives are integrated in the school development plan together with detail about how and when implementation will be monitored and the impact evaluated.
* Designate responsibility to each link governor for equality issues.
* Use its power to nominate governors to ensure its composition reflects the community it serves.
* Apply the principles of best value without discrimination when purchasing goods and services.
* Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of this policy, seeking evidence of measurable improvements in relation to equality issues, and using the outcomes to inform future plans.
* Monitor how well the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values.
* Disseminate the outcomes of evaluation to the whole school community, together with a summary of the action to be taken.
* Complies with its duty under The Equality Act 2010, to publish information to show how their school complies with the Equality Duty. This must be done initially by 6th April 2012 and annually thereafter.

The governing body expects all members of the school community to be committed to this policy, and that visitors will comply with it. It accepts responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented in every aspect of school life. If there is a breach of the policy, the school will take appropriate action. This may include the following.

*In the case of pupils breaching the policy:*

* staff dealing with the incident will record it in the incident report book
* the perpetrator will be dealt with in accordance with the behaviour policy
* the consequences of any further breach of conduct will be clearly stated with the ultimate sanction of exclusion.

*In the case of staff breaching the policy* the relevant procedures outlined in the staff discipline and grievance procedure will be instigated.

*In the case of parents, visitors or contractors breaching the policy* they will be reminded of the school’s commitment to equality and asked to desist, and further incidents may lead to individuals being requested to leave school premises.

Serious breaches constitute criminal offences and will be reported to the relevant authorities.

**Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

The governing body will receive reports, via the relevant Link Governor, from the head teacher and staff that enable evaluation of the implementation and impact of actions taken to achieve the equality objectives. It will monitor the pattern and frequency of equality related incidents – defined as any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to contravene this policy- and evaluate the effectiveness of response.

**Monitor and Review of Equal Opportunities Policy**

The policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed as part of the ongoing audit of practice and development within the school.

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Head teacher)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Governor)