



BLACON HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Equality Scheme

VISION STATEMENT

Blacon High School will inspire everyone to work together to create a successful, inclusive and forward looking learning community, supporting excellence for all to make a positive difference to society.

Reviewed by Committee: 7th February 2019
Ratified by Full Governing Body: 21st March 2019
Next due for review: Autumn 2021

Introduction

This Equality Scheme for Blacon High School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. The Equality Act 2010 that introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty covers a number of protected characteristics on the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. Our Scheme includes the following protected characteristics outlined in the Act: age; sex; race; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy or maternity; marriage and civil partnership; ensuring any individual within our community is not discriminated against or devalued.

This relates to:

- prospective students
- students at the school
- in some limited circumstances, former students

The Act also contains positive action provisions which enable schools to take proportionate action to address disadvantage faced by particular students. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged student group.

The school will have due regard and will actively consider equality duties and implications when undertaking its business and the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

As part of the Equality Act the school has specific duties to publish information to demonstrate how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to prepare and publish equality objectives.

We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes.

The Scheme addresses bullying and discriminatory incidents including race, disability, gender, transgender and homophobic incidents.

The school will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student:

- in relation to admissions
- in the way it provides education for students
- in the way it provides students access to any benefit, facility or service or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment
- because of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment of another person with whom the student is associated

Our Equality Scheme is inclusive of our whole school community – students, staff, parents, carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

The purpose of this Scheme is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- promote and advance equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community
- promote and foster positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins
- ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve students, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

In the implementation of this Scheme we have moved from a focus on an individual response to an approach that builds on race, disability and gender considerations from the start and at every level of the school, at strategic, policy, management and classroom level. We need to be able to demonstrate what we have done and what we plan to do to improve opportunities and outcomes for students, staff, parents and other users of the school. This Scheme will be monitored and delivered through the governors' role, School Improvement and Self Evaluation process.

We will ensure that every student and member of staff irrespective of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnership, i.e. 'protected characteristics' is able to achieve high standards and that strategies are in place to tackle under-achievement. We will ensure that every student and member of staff has access to the necessary support required to enable them to achieve their highest potential. We will ensure that the school's procedures for disciplining students and managing behaviour are fair, effective and equitable.

The school will not discriminate against anyone who is associated with a person with protected characteristics and the person with whom they are associated will not be discriminated against.

Our intention is to ensure that the adults working or volunteering in the school include as much as possible a balanced gender mix, appropriate representation of diverse ethnic groups and disabled people. We believe that this will provide good role models for students from all backgrounds.

We will involve students, staff, parents, carers, governors and all other stakeholders in the development of our Scheme. They need to be involved from the very start and their involvement will inform the preparation, development, publication, review and reporting of the Scheme. The aim is to ensure that we meet the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, and children and adults with disabilities.

Other policies and procedures that are linked to the aims of this Scheme are:

School profile, context and vision

Blacon High School is located in Blacon, Chester. It is a mixed genders 11-16 comprehensive, with a roll of 394. Students come from local primary schools within Blacon and the surrounding areas. The school is popular and roll numbers are increasing year on year. The percentage of students identified by the school to have special educational needs is above average for the county, and the proportion with statements of special need is above average.

Almost all students speak English as their first language and are of European origin. The proportion of students who claim eligibility for free school meals is above average for the county. Some areas from which the school draws its students are relatively disadvantaged and suffer some economic deprivation.

On entry to the school at age 11, students' attainment spans the full range of ability and is broadly average overall. Data reveals an annual trend that standards are continually improving supported through focussed work with our partner primary schools the standards in writing have begun to rise.

The proportion of staff and students from ethnic minority backgrounds is very small. Students are taught to value diversity through PSHE, SMSC, the RE curriculum and various cultural visits and through assemblies.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key vision: *“Blacon High School will inspire everyone to work together to create a successful, inclusive and forward looking learning community, supporting excellence for all to make a positive difference to society.”*

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met.

We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and endeavour to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services. Specifically our duties in relation to:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – helping children to learn to understand others, to value diversity while also promoting shared values
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level
- Engagement and extended services – to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations with different schools and communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Scheme
- oversee the effective implementation of the Scheme
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the Scheme
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the Scheme 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 Scheme and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership Team is kept up to date with any development affecting the Scheme or actions arising from it

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Scheme
- ensure that the objectives arising from the Scheme are part of the School Development Plan (SDP)
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the Scheme

- evaluate and review the Scheme annually and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Scheme
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Scheme
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this Scheme as detailed in the SDP

Our students will:

- be involved in the development of the Scheme and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Scheme
- be encouraged to actively support the Scheme

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Scheme
- have access to the Scheme through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Scheme
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Scheme
- be informed of any incident related to this Scheme which could directly affect their child

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Scheme
- be fully aware of the Equality Scheme and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Scheme
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Scheme
- Be encouraged to support the Scheme

Community cohesion

We understand that community cohesion is the process that should happen in all communities to ensure that different groups and individual people get on well together. Our school considers this to be a fundamental part of our role allowing for new residents and existing residents to adapt to one another.

At Blacon High School our provision aims to develop learner understanding and promote diversity and equity. The school develops student awareness of community cohesion via our links with other schools and schools in other countries. Students are also engaged in charity fund raising.

Induction at all key stages is very effective and the transition programme from primary to secondary includes a number of half and full day sessions for students and parents to engage in school ethos and community.

Participation and Involvement

The development of this Scheme and/or policies prior to this has involved the school community.

We've listened to what they have to say, including people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities, taking account of all the protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010.

- Our student's views are accessed through the School Council and Student Voice agenda for the school
- Our staff contribute via the communication strategy based of the hierarchical line management structure that links the senior management team to all staff
- Our school governors contribute through the various committees
- Parents/carers are written to for their views on various aspects of school life and they are invited to participate in surveys
- Minority, marginalised and potentially vulnerable groups are engaged via the pastoral system, the SEN support system and by engaging staff with particular skills, for example, in support of those students who speak English as an additional language

Using information

We have used information about our school to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. The information helps us to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our students and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

In addition, we know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this for example RAISE online data, incident reporting data. We analyse this data, for example, attainment data and respond to areas of inequality with strategies that help improve performance.

Ofsted inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through student voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action, for example, attendance monitoring.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Our staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and associate teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics including age. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

All job applications are evaluated against a person specification and notes are taken of all interviews and other selection procedures. Feedback is offered to all candidates and all materials related to the appointment are available for inspection for a period 6 months.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

The school encourages employees to disclose information that may present 'barriers' for them at work. There is a clear whistle blowing policy and staff are encouraged to bring to the attention of senior managers any improper conduct including harassment and discrimination. The Headteacher or Business Manager monitors recruitment and promotion ensuring that posts are offered on the grounds of relevant qualification, knowledge, skills and experience. There is a confidential exit interview process and any issues that are brought forward are used to inform policy revision.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Responding to Bullying and Race Related Incidents

We recognise that prejudice based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

All forms of bullying and discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We have set out the measures that our school will take to address bullying and discriminatory incidents in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Blacon High School ensures the Framework is put into action in the following ways:

- The School's Anti-bullying Policy forms part of the Code of Conduct and as such is reviewed regularly by the school's Governing Body.
- The School's management structure, pastoral and curriculum is clear and well defined with all members of staff being made aware of the correct reporting of incidents of bullying, whether motivated by race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religious conviction, etc. All staff are aware of the named SLT member responsible for Safeguarding / Child Protection.
- A central data base of all bullying and discriminatory incidents is maintained by the school and where required these incidents are reported to the Children's Services department of Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Implementation, monitoring, reviewing and objectives

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors. This Scheme also sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the Scheme and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

We have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty through an annual action plan. These will be reviewed annually.

Disability

We welcome the requirements of the Equality Act in relation to Disability. This section sets out our commitment to ensuring elimination of:

- direct and indirect discrimination
- discrimination arising from disability
- harassment
- victimisation

Our Scheme shows how we promote disability equality, promote and advance equality of access and opportunity across all areas of the school, to disabled students, staff, parents, carers and other school users.

We will ensure we provide protection for disabled students and prospective students by preventing discrimination against them at school for a reason relating to their disability and ensure they are treated equally.

Reasonable adjustments

We will take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage and ensure that we will to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people:

- where something we do places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students we will take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage
- we will provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces in comparison to a non-disabled student

When carrying out our functions, we will have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation of disabled people in public life

Students with a physical or mental impairment are often presented with difficulties affecting their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes physical disabilities, sensory impairments and learning disabilities. We will endeavour, where necessary with the support of our own staff, the LA and other partners to remove these barriers to access to the curriculum at Blacon High School.

Accessibility planning

The school will aim to ensure our accessibility planning will:

- increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided and act as unforeseen needs arise improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students
- make reasonable adjustments and provide auxiliary aids

Access to the school curriculum

Guidance from the DfE indicates that the term “curriculum” covers not only teaching and learning but also the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, sporting and cultural activities or school visits. The guidance goes on to suggest that curriculum access should be seen at a “whole school” level, the rationales

being that many barriers to access the curriculum will be similar for many groups of students and therefore a strategic approach should be adopted to removing those barriers.

Improving the delivery of information to disabled students

This requires written information normally provided by Blacon High School to be made available to disabled students. The information will take account of students' disabilities, students' and parents' preferred formats and be made available within a reasonable time frame. Blacon High School's approach to this will be influenced by guidance published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

Blacon High School will utilise the services of the EHRC to determine definitions of disability physical difficulties, hearing and/or visual impairments and also mental health conditions and certain medical conditions (for example epilepsy and diabetes).

Information made available for student (and to parents) with disabilities will include hand outs, timetables and information about school events. Blacon High School will also consider the wider context of information which the school communicates with students and parents including the following:

- signage outside and inside the school
- maps and diagrams of the school
- dining hall menus
- positioning of display stands and display work
- the school prospectus

Blacon High School considers issues relating to spoken information to students (and parents) who have hearing impairments.

Improving the physical environment of schools

Improvements to the physical environment in terms of access will be considered as a part of the School Development Plan (SDP) process. Blacon High School will address issues such as lifts, floor coverings, signs and furniture; aids to physical access include ramps, handrails, lifts, widened doorways, electromagnetic doors, adapted toilets and washing facilities, adjustable lighting, blinds, induction loops and way-finding systems.

Gender Equality

We welcome the requirements of the Equality Act with regard to Gender equality and this section sets out our commitment to meeting the duty. We will give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex, including domestic violence, sexual violence, bullying and exploitation.
- Promote equality of opportunity between women and men in all of our functions.
- The School gathers gender monitoring information from various sources. Analysis of student progress provides gender performance information which allows the school to identify under-performance and target intervention strategies at specific groups and individuals.
- The school seeks to overcome gender stereotyping when advising students on subject choices or career paths. Positive role models of both genders are used when discussing with students choices that they may wish to make in both these areas.
- The school's recruitment selection and internal promotional systems are set up ensure that no discrimination takes place. Person specifications and job descriptions are in place for all posts and selection is made purely on the meeting of the criteria outlined in those documents.
- The school uses the Curriculum to deliver positive images of women and overcome poor stereotypes of women in the work place and other arenas.

Religion and belief

Our school recognises the need to consider the actions outlined by the Equality Act 2010 in relation to Religion and Belief which requires us to assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures have on promoting equality for people based on their religion, belief and non-belief.

Sexual orientation

Our school recognises the need to protect students from unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation as required by the Equality Act in relation to Sexual Orientation. We are committed to taking a pro-active approach to preventing all forms of homophobia within the school and will assess the impacts of our policies, functions and procedures on promoting sexual orientation equality.

The school teaches an understanding of human sexuality which values all equally. The school takes seriously homophobic bullying or the use of inappropriate language and stereotypes, which will always be challenged within the school.

Review of the scheme

This Scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis to take account of outcomes and changes in demand. The review process will allow Blacon High School to ensure the appropriateness of the strategy and the effectiveness of its implementation.

Version Control

Number	Update	Date	By whom
0.1	Policy created – bringing together all previous policies around equality and diversity	Jan 2015	Rachel Keating
1.0	Policy approved at Governor committee meeting	21/05/2015	Safeguarding and Equality, Community Cohesion
	Policy approved by full Governing Body	09/07/2015	Governing Body
1.1	Minor amendments – Add the protected characteristics of the Act throughout the document (outlined in the introduction), page 4 (update number on roll)	Jan 2016	Rachel Keating
2.0	Policy approved at Governor committee meeting	04/02/2016	Safeguarding and Equality, Community Cohesion
	Policy approved by full Governing Body	16/06/2016	Governing Body
2.1	Policy reviewed - no amendments	05/11/2018	Laura Rose
3.0	Policy approved at Governor committee meeting	07/02/2019	Curriculum, Safeguarding and Equality
	Policy approved by full Governing Body	21/03/2019	Governing Body