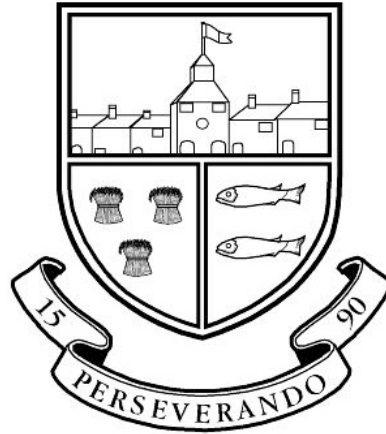




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## ***Conyers School Single Equality Policy***

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***Date:*** September 2023

***Policy Review Cycle:*** Annually

***Review Assigned to:*** Conyers Local Governing Body

*\*Ratification at LGB Oct 23*

**Origin:** Director of Quality Assurance

**Guidance:** Stockton Borough Council

## **Introduction**

Conyers School is committed to ensuring the equal treatment of all students, employees and others involved in the school community.

This Single Equality Scheme for schools in Stockton-on-Tees brings together action plans for race, gender and disability equality, thus meeting the school's statutory duties in relation to the Equality Act (2010). It also goes beyond these three strands and begins to consider how the school develops its approach to equalities and diversity for all our staff, students and their parents and carers. We are also committed to responding to all diversity related legislation and feel that a single equality scheme is the best mechanism for achieving this.

The scheme also highlights how the school has worked with and listened to the staff, students, parents and carers to inform development of action plans and the need and commitment required to ensure the scheme is a success. As well as delivering high quality services to its students, the school is also committed to being a good employer and as such this scheme outlines how we meet our varied duties in terms of recruitment and employment practices.

## **The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees**

Stockton-on-Tees is a diverse borough located in over 20,000 hectares at the heart of the Tees Valley. It comprises an urban and rural environment with a number of towns and villages, each with its own distinctive characteristics, including Billingham, Stockton, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick and Yarm. The area has a population of 187,100 (up from 175,300 in 1991) and records the largest population increase of the Tees Valley Boroughs over the last twenty years; this rise is projected to continue and population trends suggest a total population of 189,200 by 2016. Despite having some of the most populous urban centres in the Tees Valley, the population growth figures are unevenly balanced across the area; with growth being driven in the south of the borough, and particularly within the Ingleby Barwick community.

Projections show that the resident population will age sharply in the next ten years; this will be coupled with a decline in the number of children being born in households in the area. By 2021 the population of working age will account for only 59% of total population down from 63% in 2005. The overall growth disguises these significant shifts in the population structure; for the council these changes will lead to rising demand for some public services such as housing, planning and adults' social care, and infrastructure pressures in the south of the borough where most of the growth is situated.

Across the Stockton-on-Tees' communities there is a wide social and economic mix, with areas of significant disadvantage situated alongside areas of affluence. Whilst 15% of the borough's population live within the top 20% of the most affluent areas nationally, 34% of the resident population live in the 20% of the most deprived areas nationally. Some 2.8% of the population is made up of Black and Minority Ethnic communities (an increase of 1.2% from 1991) and the area is culturally diverse with over 70 languages spoken within the borough.

## **Conyers School**

The school is larger than average and serves the community of Yarm and the surrounding villages and parts of Ingleby Barwick. The majority of students are of white British heritage but in recent years increasing numbers of students of varied ethnic origin have joined the school. The number of students receiving free school meals is low in relation to Stockton and national averages as the majority of students live within the top 20% of the most affluent areas nationally. Again there have been some changes with an increasing

number of students joining the school from outside of our admissions zone; and the number of students from deprived areas and receiving free school meals has increased. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that seen nationally. The school attained Maths and Computing status in 2004 and was named a High Performing Specialist School with a second specialism as a Leadership Partner School (2009-11). Conyers School became an academy on 1 February 2013 and became a Multi Academy Trust on 1 November 2016.

### **Our Equalities Objectives**

In order to ensure that equality and diversity are embedded in the School Development Plan, the scheme remains organised by the five Every Child Matters themes

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well Being

with specific actions for equalities identified under each theme in the relevant action plans.

### **National Context for Diversity (legislative requirements)**

As well as delivering on its commitment to promote equality across all the six strands of diversity- age, disability, faith and belief, gender, race and sexual orientation, the school has a duty to comply with a large and complex suite of equality legislation. As such, the Single Equality Scheme has been devised to ensure that all our policies and practices meet with all the legislative requirements including.

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006** established a new strategic role for Local authorities, including duties to promote choice, diversity, high standards and the fulfilment of potential for every child and places a duty on school governing bodies to promote well-being and community cohesion, and to take the Children and Young Peoples' Plan into consideration.
- **Disability Discrimination Acts (DDA)** - gave disabled people rights in a wide range of key areas such as employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and buying or renting land and property. They require public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, and organisations to take reasonable steps to tackle policies, practices and physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people who want to access their services.
- **Equality Act 2010** - is the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society.
- **Equality Act 2006** – established a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) from October 2007, and a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women (the 'gender duty'). It also makes discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions unlawful, and provides powers to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, including adoption. The Equality Act regulations came into force in April 2007.
- **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief)/(Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003** – outlawed discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion, belief or sexual

orientation. It prevents both direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation on these grounds.

- **Civil Partnership Act 2004** – ensured that same sex partners who register as civil partners will be treated the same as a married couple for a number of legal rights. These include pensions, recognition for immigration, equal treatment for tax purposes (including inheritance tax) and better protection from domestic violence. Civil partners are also exempt from testifying against each other in court as are married couples, as well as having next of kin rights, thus overcoming a number of previously experienced problems. Local authorities are obliged to provide civil partnership ceremonies as part of their register office functions where they are requested. A couple who have not registered their partnership but have lived together as if they were civil partners are to be treated as heterosexual unmarried couples living together as husband and wife.
- **Equalities Review**, which was jointly sponsored by the Equality Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office:
  - Investigated the social, economic, cultural and other factors that limit or deny people the opportunity to make the best of their abilities.
  - Provided an understanding of the long term and underlying causes of disadvantage that need to be addressed by public policy.
  - Made practical recommendations on key policy priorities for: the government and public sector; employers and trade unions; civic society and the voluntary sector to which Stockton Council is now developing its response.
  - Informed both the modernisation of equality legislation, towards a single equality act; and the development of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).
- **Gender Recognition Act 2004** - allows transgender people (who are able to satisfy the necessary evidential requirements) to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate, which provides full legal recognition of their acquired gender. Following a successful application, the law regards the transsexual person as being of their acquired gender, and ensures they have all the rights and responsibilities appropriate to that gender.
- **Human Rights Act 1998** - The act applies directly to public authorities and incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. Human rights are rights and freedoms that belong to all individuals regardless of their nationality and citizenship. They are fundamental in maintaining a fair and civilised society.
- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000** amended the 1976 Race Relations Act which was introduced to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin in the fields of employment, the provision of goods and services, education and public functions. It also set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The 2000 amendment to the act introduced onto public authorities the general duties to promote racial equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

### **The Gender, Race and Disability Equality Duties**

These duties impose broad obligations on public authorities, including schools, to:

- Eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- Have due regard to the promotion of equality and opportunity between persons and other persons;

- Promote positive attitudes.
- Encourage participation by minority and under-served groups in public life.
- Take steps to take account of people's specific needs even when this requires treating some individuals more favourably than others.
- Conduct impact assessments, and draw up relevant schemes (and publicise them).

The three duties are broadly similar in their approach and aims; however in order to ensure the school is compliant with all, they are detailed below:

## **The Race Equality**

### **Duty What is Race?**

A race is a distinct group or population of people distinguished in some way from others most often in terms of physical characteristics but also language, history, ancestry and culture.

### **What is the Race Equality Duty?**

The duty was detailed in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and includes both a general and specific duty.

**The General Duty** as set out in section 71(1) of the Act, requires a school in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between different racial groups.

**The Specific Duties** are set out in articles 2(3) and 2(4) of the Race

Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 which states that school should develop a race equality scheme which highlights:

- Those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which it has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act and its arrangements for:
  - Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality.
  - Monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality.
  - Publishing the results of its assessments, consultation and monitoring, providing public access to information.
- Training staff in connection with the duties.

The Race Equality Scheme must be reviewed every three years.

### **What are the key issues for our school?**

The majority of Conyers' students are of white British heritage but in recent years increasing numbers of students of different ethnic origin have joined the school. Conyers is becoming the school of choice for a group of families of Pakistani heritage living outside of our admission zone. Our challenge is to ensure that all students become fully integrated into the life of the school.

Our challenge also is to ensure all students develop an awareness of the diversity of contemporary society and acquire the knowledge they need to be tolerant, secure and respectful citizens, able to participate in a multi-ethnic society and to recognise cultural differences regarding:-

- Dress
- Religious festivals
- Diet
- Worship
- Belief

### **What impact have we already had on race equality in our school?**

- Race Relations Policy (adopted 2003) gives detailed guidance.
- Staff Handbook – section on race relations deals with promoting positive attitudes and procedures for dealing with racist incidents.
- School regarded as ‘good’ during last Ofsted. Citizenship subject visit reported the inclusive nature of the school and described provision for citizenship as ‘good with outstanding features’.
- ‘Languages for All’ policy. The PD Curriculum is fully compliant with the Ofsted RSE Framework and has a strong element of Citizenship under the guise of ‘being respectful’.
- Focus Day programme includes global dimensions and issues of diversity.
- Different interpretation of uniform for Muslim students.
- Different interpretation of PE uniform for Muslim students.
- Vegetarian and halal diet available to all students.
- The school promotes a strong anti bullying policy.
- Robust system for logging racist incidents. System monitored and reported annually to governors and the Local Authority.
- Displays are reflective of the study of diverse cultures.
- Financial assistance available to all students to enable full participation in visits.
- The school council has representatives from the range of ethnic backgrounds within the school.
- All students encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school. Support given to those students who struggle to adapt to life in a large comprehensive school.
- The school celebrates Black History month through the assembly and PD programme.

### **The Disability Equality**

#### **Duty What is Disability?**

People are affected by disability or health conditions in different ways. This can happen suddenly, as a result of accidents or strokes for example, or gradually as a result of conditions such as arthritis and multiple sclerosis. There is often no defining moment when a health issue becomes a disability, at least for the individual concerned. If a condition affects everyday activities, such as

- the ability to move around

- manual dexterity
- physical co-ordination
- continence
- the ability to lift, carry or move ordinary objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory, or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- ability to recognise physical danger

and has lasted, or is likely to last, at least a year, then it is likely to be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act.

There are two approaches to disability commonly used, the Medical Model and the Social Model.

### Medical Model

The “medical model” is a traditional model of disability focused on the individual and their particular physical difficulties which prevent them from undertaking everyday activities which non-disabled people take for granted. The range of social contact for the disabled person where the 'medical model' is applied is illustrated in the diagram below.



### Social Model

The “social model” focuses on the social environment and how it causes some people to be disabled. As a result if the organisation of society e.g. stairs to access buildings, lead to disability then it is these things which must be changed. The disabling forces at work where the 'social model' is applied can be seen below:



### What is the Disability Equality Duty?

There are two duties which apply to schools. The **General Duty** requires the school to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

This general duty provides a framework for the school to:-

carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a proactive way. It requires us to adopt a proactive approach, mainstreaming disability equality into all decisions and activities.

The **Specific Duties** require the school to:

- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties.
- Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme which outlines:
  - the way in which disabled people have been involved
  - the school's methods for impact assessment
  - steps which the school will take towards achieving the general duty
  - the school's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, education and service delivery.
- Deliver the scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable and impractical to do so.

The school fully supports the Medical and Social Models definitions of disability. As service providers we must ensure that we do not impose barriers on anyone accessing our services and that we consider the needs of the individual person rather than focusing on any impairment.

### What are the key issues for our school?

At Conyers we recognise that a person has SEN / a disability if they have a physical, and / or mental impairment, or learning difficulty which has a substantial and very long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.



This Single Equality Policy incorporates our commitment and actions on SEND equality and demonstrates our commitment to addressing SEND equality in our decision making and delivery of education.

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for SEND, so students, staff and other users of our services can have equal access to our school and its services.

Conyers School meets the needs of many students with SEN, often drawn to our school because of its excellent reputation for a caring and effective approach to special needs education. Key support staff have designated roles and specific training in order to support students with disabilities.

Our key issues are:-

- Timetabling arrangements to ensure that lessons taught in blocks without lift access to upper floors are on the ground floor.
- Work with primary schools to identify children requiring support in future intakes
- Monitoring of disabled students' participation in school life.

### **What impact have we already had on disability equality in our School?**

- Safe and accessible accommodation for students with physical disabilities
- Access to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of students with special educational needs and/or a disability
- Learning support for students on the SEND Support Register
- Installation of lifts to allow access to upper floors in all but one block and access to all activities
- Installation of electronic access door controls to Blocks 3 and 4
- Disabled restroom facilities available
- All new building works comply with current legislation with regard to disabled access and egress
- Physiotherapy room to provide dignity for students requiring privacy to complete daily physiotherapy
- Improvements made to existing access points, disabled parking bays in place
- School trips planned to facilitate participation of SEND students
- Fire evacuation plan in place and it is rehearsed every term. Staff training on use of evacuation chair.
- Portable hearing loop for hearing impaired students. Classroom carpeted to improve acoustics for Hearing Impaired student.
- ICT hardware and software available to ensure access for all students.

### **The Gender Equality**

#### **Duty What is Gender?**

The term 'gender' refers to the social construction of female and male identity, rather than biological differences between men and women. It includes the ways in which those differences, whether real or perceived, have been valued, used and relied upon to classify women and men and to assign roles and expectations to them. The significance of this is that the lives and experiences of women and men,

including their experience of accessing services, can be significantly different. Gender is not always fixed and the Gender Equality Duty urges public service providers to have due regard to the needs of people who have a different gender identity to the one they were assigned at birth.

### **What is the Gender Equality Duty**

The duty to promote Gender Equality was issued under the Equality Act 2006 which amended the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975. In a similar vein to Race and Disability legislation, it contains both a general and specific duty:

**The General Duty** on all authorities is when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination between women and men
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women

**The Specific Duties** are as follows:

- to prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives,
- in formulating its overall objectives, to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap,
- to gather and use information on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of services,
- to consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives,
- to assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality, e.g. choices for KS4
- to implement the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impractical to do so,
- to report against the scheme every year and review the scheme at least every three years.

### **What are the key issues for our school?**

- Some year groups contain significantly more boys than girls.
- Staffing and grouping in PE to enable single sex activities such as football to take place.

### **What impact have we already had on gender equality in our school?**

- Equal opportunity for all roles and appointments within school
- Fair recruitment procedures
- No age/gender specific requirements for posts
- No gender disclosure required
- Curriculum options/choices are available to all students
- Equal opportunity within all subject disciplines is promoted e.g Girls into Computing event and increasing uptake of Boys into Health and Social Care.
- Data analysed and interventions put in place which narrows the gender gap.

- Additional staffing to ensure the full range of PE activities can take place.

### **Age, Faith & Belief and Sexual Orientation**

“Strong and Prosperous Communities”, the recent Local Government White Paper, has recognised the importance of community cohesion and valuing all residents to improving quality of life. This is coupled with the ongoing Discrimination Law Review which is considering the introduction of a single public sector equality duty, thus creating a more streamlined equalities structure. Also, the ongoing equalities review has recently reported and identifies the core priorities for local authorities and their partners in terms of promoting equalities. This will enshrine all aspects of equalities into the work of public authorities. The council is already committed to improving its services and the quality of life for all Stockton residents regardless of their race, gender or disability but also their age, faith and sexual orientation. As a result the council is looking to develop strategies and action plans in these areas over the short to medium term. This will supplement the general commitment in this scheme to introduce actions which wherever possible cut across all six diversity strands. Further information on age, faith and sexual orientation is given below.

#### **Age**

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 came into force on 1st October 2006. They apply to employment and vocational training, and prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, as well as harassment and victimisation on grounds of age. The regulations (which do not affect the age at which people can claim their state pension):

- ban age discrimination in terms of recruitment, promotion and training.
- ban unjustified retirement ages of below 65.
- remove the current age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights. They also introduced:
- A right for employees to request working beyond retirement age and a duty on employers to consider that request.
- A new requirement for employers to give at least six months notice to employees about their intended retirement date so that individuals can plan better for retirement, and be confident that "retirement" is not being used as cover for unfair dismissal. The school is implementing these regulations through its Human Resources function and employment practices to ensure no current or potential employee experiences discrimination as a result of their age. We are also committed to ensuring that no members of the school community face any such discrimination in all aspects of their lives and has equal access to all the services provided by the school.

#### **Faith & Belief**

As a result of the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations (2003), it is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on grounds of their religion or belief. These regulations prevent the indirect and direct discrimination as well as harassment and victimisation of an individual and have been implemented throughout the school.

In the wider community, the school has tended to consider race and faith together. Work will continue within the school to further develop understanding of the issues and consideration given as to how best to address any faith based discrimination identified. Also we will work to further develop our understanding of the issues surrounding belief. Appropriate actions for faith and belief will be developed through the implementation of this scheme.

## **Sexual Orientation**

Members of the LGBTQ+ community are protected at work by the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2003, which in a similar way as faith regulations, prevent discrimination and harassment at work as a result of sexual orientation. The school has implemented these regulations and works to ensure no discrimination takes place amongst its workforce. In the wider community the government estimates that approximately 5% of the population identify as LGBTQ+ although figures are not clear as no national census has requested data on sexual orientation. There is no apparent “gay scene” in Stockton, and that in nearby Middlesbrough is still relatively small compared with other urban areas such as Manchester, Liverpool or Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This may in turn lead to a lack of openness amongst gay male, lesbian and bisexual residents of Stockton. The school is committed to creating a community where everyone has equal access to its services and feels accepted and valued. As such, renewed efforts will be made to consult and involve gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the development of school services.

### **What are the key issues for our school?**

- Further support for those students struggling with sexual orientation or identity issues as part of the RSE programme.
- Ensure that consultation groups do represent the diverse make – up of the school community.
- Ensure that succession planning issues are addressed.

### **What impact have we had upon age, faith and belief and sexual orientation equality in our school?**

- Members of staff who wish to are encouraged to work beyond the retirement age.
- Exit plans for members of staff who wish to change role, relinquish responsibilities or work fewer or more flexible hours in the run up to retirement can be made.
- Regular meetings with colleagues approaching or beyond the retirement age to ensure that plans are supported.
- Highly developed induction programme has been established for all staff to ensure that all new recruits feel supported and accepted.
- Training delivered for staff on LGBTQ+ Inclusion with all departments represented.
- LGBTQ+ Student group established “Conyers Pride Group”

### **How we have developed the Single Equality Policy**

This scheme has been developed collaboratively and is the result of working with students, staff and parents and carers.

- Through the tutorial and focus day programme
- Well-being group discussions
- Inclusion team meetings
- Governors consulted
- Through the development and application of the school code of conduct
- Staff and students are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for treating each other fairly.
- Positive staff role models and good staff/student relationships

- Guidance from SBC's model policy.

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality Impact Assessments are a crucial mechanism for ensuring the embedding of equalities and diversity. Impact assessments will be carried out covering all 6 equality and diversity strands (race, religion, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation) and will identify both good practice as well as areas where our performance in ensuring diversity could be improved. In line with statutory requirements, our equality impact assessment process will be applied to both new policies and existing policies and functions on an agreed programme. Details of the training available to support staff to conduct Equality Impact Assessments are available through Stockton Borough Council's Training Department.

### **Roles and Responsibilities for Implementing the Single Equality**

#### **Scheme The Headteacher 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 students 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 Executive Team are kept up to date with any development affecting the policy/action plan arising from the policy
- provide appropriate support and monitoring for any students to whom the scheme has direct relevance, with assistance from relevant agencies such as C.E.S.C.

#### **The Governing Body will:**

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Single Equality Policy
- establish that the action plans arising from the policy are part of the SDP
- support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- inform and consult with parents about the scheme
- evaluate and review this scheme every three years.

#### **The Executive Team 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 headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this scheme as detailed in the SDP

**Parents /Carers will:**

- have access to the scheme via the school's website
- be encouraged to support the scheme via the school's website
- 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.

**Students 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