Staplehurst School

Equality Policy (including Public Sector Equality Duty and Accessibility Plan)

	Date
Policy reviewed by Headteacher	February 2024
Policy approved by the Full Governing Body at its meeting on	19 March 2024
Policy to be next reviewed	March 2027
*Accessibility Plan to be reviewed annually	March 2025

Contents

Equality Policy

Introduction

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine major Acts of Parliament and almost a hundred sets of regulations which had been introduced over several decades. It provides a single consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by getting rid of anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time and it extends protection against discrimination in certain areas.

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 pupils,
- in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Guidance

Department for Education's Advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities - The Equality Act 2010 and the Equality and Human Rights Commission Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED**) that applies to public bodies, including schools, and extends to certain **protected characteristics**. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements.

In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to 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.

Definitions

There are 9 Protected Characteristics, these include
- Age (for employees, not for service provision)
- Sex (including issues of transgender)
- race,
- disability,
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage or civil partnership (for employees)

Disability - the Equality Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'

Guiding Principles and Purpose

Staplehurst School is an inclusive community school. Staplehurst School is committed to equality both as an employer and a service-provider and we carry out our day to day work through our ethos of: learning, achieving and having fun together. The guiding principles of the policy are to:

- Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- Ensure that our school is a safe, secure and stimulating place for everyone.

- Recognise that people have different needs; we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.
- Recognise that for some pupils, extra support is needed to help them to achieve and be successful.
- Ensure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking to pupils and parents/carers, and through our School Council, PTA and Parent Forum.
- Ensure that no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their gender identity or reassignment; their marital or civil partnership status; being pregnant or having recently had a baby; their religion or beliefs; their sexual identity and orientation.

Information Gathering

The collection of information is crucial to supporting the school in making decisions about what actions would best improve opportunities and outcomes for pupils. The information will help us to review our performance. Information will be detailed enough to enable us to measure the delivery on equality duties, to assess the impact of the changes made and to help the school identify which of our priorities have been achieved. From the information we collect, the most important indicators of how successful we are in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination are the outcomes for the different group of children. .

Types of Information

- Identification of children representing the different protected characteristics. Comprehensive and sensitive efforts are made to collect accurate information and meet security of information requirements, in addition to our duty to secure accurate information relating to ethnicity and first language;

- Pupil attainment and progress data relating to different groups;

- Children's views are actively sought through the school council & pupil voice questionnaires;

- Information about how different groups access the whole curriculum; sports and activities choices of all groups;

- Uptake of the extended school offer by group;

- Records of bullying and harassment on the grounds of any equality issue;

- Outcomes of actions taken to secure the involvement of parents, in particular those who have been identified as difficult to engage.

Objective Setting

The priorities for the school will be set in the light of:

- An examination of the information that the school has gathered.

- The messages that the school has heard from pupils, parents and staff.

PSED Publication

There are two specific PSED publication duties schools are required to carry out. These are:

- To publish annual **information** to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty - **see Part 1**.

- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable **equality objectives** and to review these objectives every 4 years- **see Part 2.**

- We set our **Accessibility Plan** objectives for a 3-year period and review the progress annually - **see Part 3.**

Responsibilities

The Governing Body (GB)

The GB has a duty to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. Functionally, the GB discharges this responsibility through the SLT and monitors outcomes via its Learning & Development (L&D) Committee.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT promotes equality and eliminates discrimination by:

- Familiarising themselves with the **Guidance**

- Raising awareness of elements of the duties with all staff, parents and pupils

- Providing appropriate training for all relevant people on the implementation of the policy

- Ensuring understanding of the broad definition of disability within the Act

- Sensitively encouraging declaration of protected characteristics by pupils

- Monitoring the outcomes, undertaking **Impact Assessments** and responding with appropriate actions.

All Members of the School Community

Staplehurst School regards equality for all as a responsibility for all. All members of the community (staff, contractors, volunteers, parents and pupils) contribute to ensuring that the school is a fair, just and cohesive community by:

- Raising issues with the Inclusion Manager or SLT which have an impact or potential impact on the schools provisions, criteria and practices

- Maintaining an awareness of, and professional interest in, the school's Equality Policy

- Behaving with respect and fairness to all members of the school community

Parents' responsibility

The School follows the DfE's guidance on dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility.

The School staff must treat all parents equally, unless there is a Court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility. Everyone who is a parent has a right to participate in decisions about a child's education and receive information about the child (even though, for day-to-day purposes, the School's main contact is likely to be a parent with whom the child lives on school days).

The School will:

- ask parents or guardians for contact details, including names and addresses, of all parents when they register a pupil;

- ensure that names and addresses of all parents, where known, are included in the admission register and also in pupil records and are available to the pupil's teachers;

- ensure that the school has details of who to contact in the case of an accident or medical emergency;

- ensure that details of Court orders are noted in a pupil's record

- ensure that contact details, including names and addresses, of all parents are forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves

- run Parent Governor elections in accordance with the School Governance Constitution Regulations

Data Protection & GDPR

The School recognises its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and associated legislation and the rights of data subjects with regards to the personal data held on them. Please refer to the School's Data Protection Policy, GDPR Statement and Privacy Notice for further details.

Reviewing and revising the policy

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years or earlier in the light of any new information and/or guidance which becomes available. As part of the review of the policy, the school will revisit the information that was used to identify the priorities for the policy and ensure all legislative requirements are considered.

The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Part 1: Information

Number of pupils on roll at the school: 396 (February 2024)

There are pupils at our school with different types of disabilities and these include:

- Physical Disability

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- Autism

- Global Learning delay

- Speech and Language disorders

- Sensory Disorders

- Medical conditions e.g. Epilepsy, Diabetes, Asthma & Eczema

- Downs Syndrome

- Visual Impairment

Demographics date of Staplehurst School 2023-2024

Demographics of Staplehurst School
2023-2024: 392 Pupils
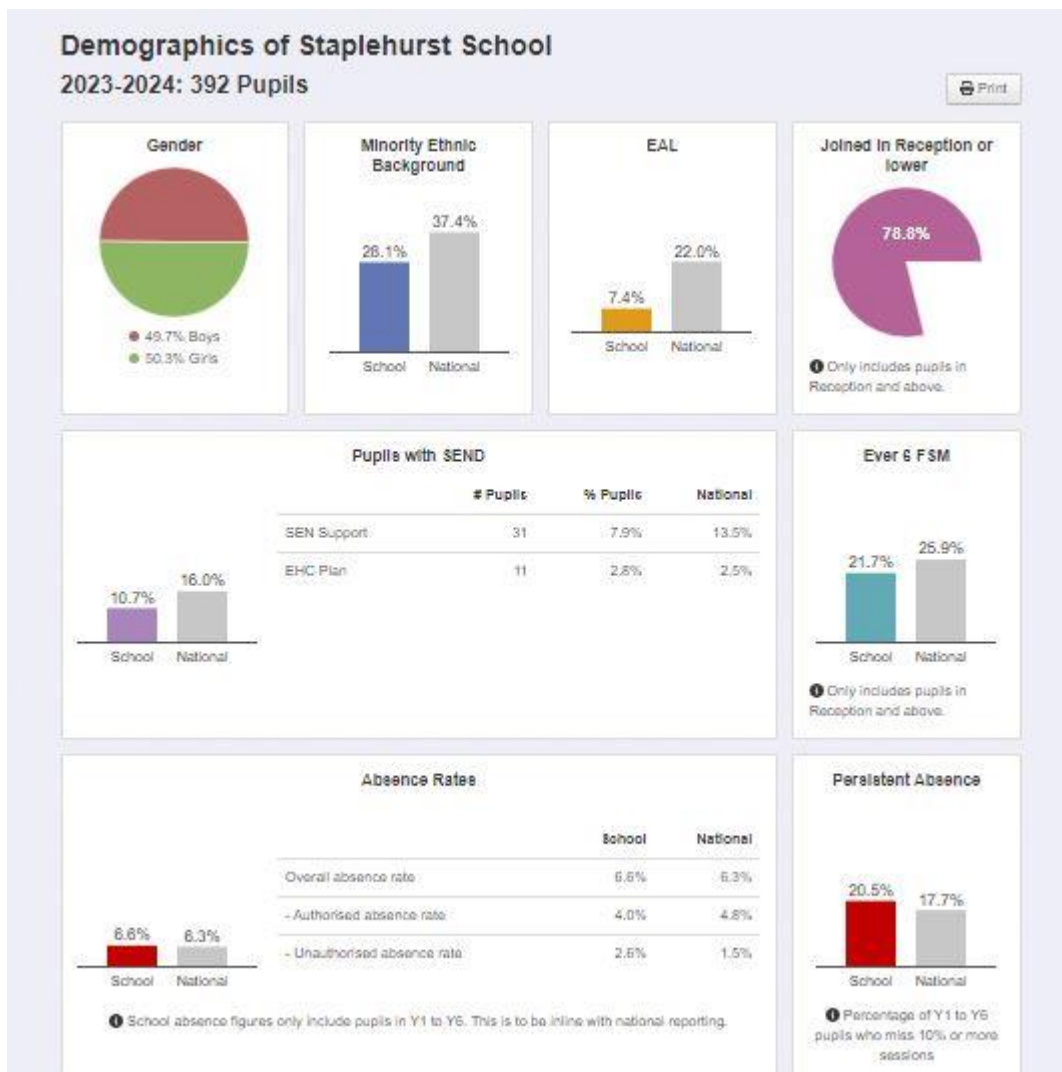
Year Groups

	Pupils	Boys	Girls	EAL	Summer Born	Ever 6 FSM	SEN Support	EHC Plan	Absence Rate
Reception	46	27	19	4	23	5	0	2	6.7%
Year 1	68	36	32	5	35	9	4	1	5.1%
Year 2	58	24	34	5	26	12	4	0	6.2%
Year 3	58	31	27	2	21	17	6	4	8.6%
Year 4	49	23	26	4	24	10	3	1	7.4%
Year 5	52	27	25	7	21	18	9	1	8.0%
Year 6	61	27	34	2	24	14	5	2	5.1%

Ethnicities

	# Pupils	% Pupils
White - English	279	71.2%
Gypsy / Roma	32	8.2%
Gypsy	15	3.8%
White Eastern European	8	2.0%
Indian	7	1.8%
Bangladeshi	6	1.5%
White Other	6	1.5%
White and Any Other Ethnic Group	5	1.3%
White and Black Caribbean	5	1.3%
Asian and Any Other Ethnic Group	4	1.0%
Black - African	3	0.8%
Filipino	3	0.8%
Other Gypsy/Roma	3	0.8%
Other Mixed Background	3	0.8%
White and Any Other Asian Background	3	0.8%
Other Asian	2	0.5%
Other White British	2	0.5%
Traveller of Irish Heritage	2	0.5%
Kurdish	1	0.3%
NOBT	1	0.3%
Not Set	1	0.3%
Sri Lankan Sinhalese	1	0.3%

SEND Specific Needs

	# Pupils	% Pupils
Social Emotional and Mental Health	19	4.8%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	13	3.3%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	5	1.3%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	3	0.8%
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	2	0.5%
Other Difficulty/Disability	2	0.5%
Physical Disability	2	0.5%
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need	2	0.5%
Vision Impairment	1	0.3%

Information shown on the table taken from Insight.

Part 2: Equality objectives

Objectives

The School's Equality Objectives are to:

- **ensure that all pupils, and those who are disadvantaged, attain at the nationally expected standard and make consistently good progress in reading, writing and maths**;

- **ensure that SEN pupils make good progress in reading, writing and maths**.

The strategies and interventions to tackle these concerns are detailed in the **School Learning Plan**. The Leadership team monitors their impact as part of our regular monitoring cycle in school.

How we have due regard for equality

The information provided here aims to show that we give careful consideration to equality issues in everything we do.

1. We are aware of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 that it is unlawful to discriminate, treat some people less fairly or put them at a disadvantage.

2. Where applicable our policies make explicit that we aim to give careful consideration to equality issues and as policies are reviewed in line with the monitoring cycle, they will be edited to reflect this requirement

3. We keep an accurate record, when possible and appropriate, of the protected characteristics of our pupils and employees at whole school and year group levels

4. We analyse our data to ensure we act upon any concerns in relation to the protected groups and this is reported termly to Governors.

5. We give due regard for equality issues in decisions and changes we make.

6. We record any inappropriate behavioural (including those regarding protected characteristics) or safeguarding incidents and act upon any concerns and report as appropriate to the LA and the Governing body on a termly basis.

7. We deal promptly and effectively with all incidents and complaints of bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to disability or special educational need, ethnicity and race, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion and belief and sexual orientation. We keep a record of all such incidents and notify those affected of what action we have taken and importantly monitor the impact our provision has had.

8. We provide training to all staff in relation to dealing with bullying and harassment incidents.

9. We have a special educational needs policy that outlines the provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs.

The School recognises its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and associated legislation and the rights of data subjects with regards to the personal data held on them. Please refer to the School's Data Protection Policy, GDPR Statement and Privacy Notice for further details.

Part 3: Accessibility Plan

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 replaced nine major Acts of Parliament and almost a hundred sets of regulations which had been introduced over several decades. It provides a single consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by getting rid of anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time and it extends protection against discrimination in certain areas.

Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010 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 pupils,
- in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

Duties in Schedule 10 part 3 (2) of the Equality Act 2010 require the governing body to plan (the Schools Accessibility Plan) to increase access to education for disabled pupils in 3 ways:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum,

- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school, and

- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Definition of disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has:

*A physical or mental impairment which has a **substantial and long-term adverse effect** on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

Definition of the terms:

- 'physical impairment' includes sensory impairments;

- 'mental impairment' includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness;

- 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'; and

- 'long-term' is defined as 12 months or more.

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above.

The effect on normal day-to-day activities is on one or more of the following:

- mobility;

- manual dexterity;

- physical co-ordination;

- continence;

- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;

- speech, hearing or eyesight;

- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;

- perception of risk of physical danger.

Some people are automatically covered by the definition: those with cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV infection or a severe disfigurement. There are special provisions for people with progressive or recurring conditions.

Aims

- ☐ Make every child feel welcome
- ☐ Value all pupils equally
- ☐ Have high expectations of all pupils
- ☐ Remove all barriers to learning and participation

Action Points

The physical environment of the school will be monitored by the Finance & Resources Committee of the Governing Body to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are being made to this end.

An accessible curriculum will be monitored by the Learning & Development Committee of the Governing Body, who will liaise with the Inclusions Manager and the Headteacher.

Staff training and awareness will be monitored by the Headteacher.

The governing body will be responsible for ensuring that Finance & Resources and Learning & Development Committee's terms of reference are reviewed to reflect these responsibilities and that they are included on committee agendas.

Broad Guidelines

A disabled person can be discriminated against on two ways:

- ☐ By less favourable treatment (there are situations where there may be a reason for less favourable treatment.
- ☐ Schools may be guilty of discrimination if they fail to take reasonable steps which lead to disabled pupils and prospective pupils being placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' compared to non-disabled pupils.

The school will review practice and draw up short, medium and long-term targets. The action plans will be reviewed by the relevant committees and staff with a view to improving access for children, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to.

Appendix A Identifying Barriers to Access – Curriculum

Question	Yes	No	Action/Comment
Are teachers and support staff receiving training to teach and support disabled pupils?	✓		Pupil Provision meetings provide support for children with SEND needs.
Are classrooms optimally organised for disabled pupils and staff?	✓		Appropriate spacing in place to accommodate wheelchair access.
Do lessons provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve?	✓		Differentiation is moderated by subject leaders and SLT.
Are lessons responsive to pupil diversity?	✓		
Do lessons involve work to be done by pairs, groups and the whole class?	✓		Lessons vary and incorporate learning styles where appropriate.
Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and physical activites?	✓		
Do staff recognise and allow for the mental effort expended by able & disabled pupils, for example using lip reading?	✓		Staff are continuously developing their understanding of these needs.
Do staff provide alternative ways of giving access to experience or understanding for disables pupils who cannot engage in particular activities, e.g. pe?	✓		
Does our school cover equality issues in the curriculum as part of your focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development?	✓		This is also reflected in our SMSC policy.
Is there access to appropriate IT for pupils with disabilities?	✓		Programmes are accessible to all we use Clicker 6, Purple Mash, Text to Speech, Duo ABC, Dolphine Easy Reader, One Note etc. consideration is given by the SENCO into suitable apps accessible for all children.
Do staff allow for additional time required by some children to use equipment in practical work?			Additional adult support is given.
Are school visits accessible to all pupils irrespective of attainment or impairment?	✓		Appropriate transport is booked to accommodate ALL children and adults.
Are there high expectations of ALL pupils?	✓		Targets reflect high expectations. Teachers are continuing to develop skills and provide challenge.

Appendix B Identifying Barriers to Access – Premises

Question	Yes	No	Action/Comment	Person responsible	Timescale for completion
Does the size and layout of areas – including all academic, sporting, play, social facilities, classrooms, the assembly hall, dining area, library, indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, playgrounds and common rooms allow access for all pupils or members of staff?	✓		Works completed on ramps and access September 2021. Further works took place Summer 2022 for access to additional classrooms. Additional works for KS2 area in terms of ramps and widening of doors approved by KCC February 2024. Works due to be completed Spring/ Summer 2024.		Complete Complete O/S complete by end of August 2024.
Can pupils who use wheelchairs move around the school without experiencing barriers to access such as those caused by doorways, steps and stairs, toilet facilities?	✓		Where there are internal steps in the school, there is an alternative ramp access route.		
Are pathways of travel around the site and parking arrangements safe, routes logical and well signed?	✓		External signage around the school completed. Internal signage is updated and completed. Parking bay identified for disabled badge holders. Differentiation of staff car park and pathway marked. Corners, steps and handrails marked with yellow paint and reflective tape for partially sighted children. Reflective tape marks lighting on outdoor pathway. Lighting improved for darker evenings improving access in and out of school.	F&P Committee	Complete
Are emergency and evacuation systems set up to inform all pupils, including pupils with SEN and disability; including alarms with both visual and auditory components?	✓		Auditory alarms are in place, teachers and teaching assistants are trained on evacuation drills and are familiar with SEN pupils.		

Are non-visual guides used to assist people to use buildings, ie lifts with tactile buttons?		☐ Not applicable.		
Could any of the décor or signage be considered to be confusing or disorientating for disabled pupils with visual impairment, autism or epilepsy?		☐ Not applicable		
Are areas to which pupils should have access well lit?	✓	Lighting improved during the spring term.		Complete.
Are steps made to reduce background noise for hearing impaired pupils such considering a room's acoustics, noisy equipment?	✓	Previously open-plan classroom areas – rooms 5-7 – have had partition walls and doors fitted to reduce noise pollution.		
Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?	✓	Furniture and equipment are sourced following consultation with the Inclusions Manager and Local Education Authority for individual SEN pupils.		
Is the equipment in the disabled toilet properly installed and accessible?	✓			

Appendix C Identifying Barriers to Access – Whole Community

Areas requiring action	Suggested Action	Person Responsible	Timescale	Review
Are teachers, admin and support staff aware of the implications for them of the Equality Act?	Share updated policy with all staff	Headteacher and Inclusions Manager	Complete	Annual
Does the school provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, an audio tape or in Braille for the families of pupils and prospective pupils who may have difficulty with printed information?	No, but can be provided as needed	Headteacher and Inclusions Manager	As needed	As needed
Does the school ensure that information is presented to groups in a way which is user friendly for people with disabilities e.g. by reading aloud and explaining diagrams?	Steps will be taken as needed – all current info is printed according to RNIB recommended font size			
Does the school have facilities such as ICT to produce written information in different formats?	Yes, in place			
Are staff familiar with technology and practices developed to assist people with disabilities?	Yes, in place	Headteacher		Annual
Are pre-school home visits used effectively to plan ahead for pupils with disability?	Yes, in place	Headteacher	According to school start dates	As needed
Do staff have access to training?	Yes, in place	Headteacher	Ongoing	Annual
Do policies reflect the school's aims?	Yes, in place	Headteacher	Ongoing	Annual