

The James Young High School Equality Strategy **June 2023 – Revised 2024**

At The James Young High School we celebrate our diverse school community, with individuals who value one another and the different contributions that everyone can make. To ensure each individual is given the opportunity to fulfil their maximum potential, pupils should be equipped with the knowledge, skills, competence, attitudes and experiences which will effectively prepare them to take their place in a diverse and multicultural society. It is vital that all pupils' educational experiences are organised so that no pupil is denied opportunity on the grounds of any and all of the protected characteristics outlined in this strategy document. It follows that every pupil, at every stage in their education, must be valued and treated equally. This is an essential principle of social justice which permeates this strategy document.

Our aims and vision can be outlined through the following principles:

- Committing to the aim of promoting equal opportunities and social justice, and to the belief that all stakeholders within our school community have the right to expect that they will be able to achieve their full potential, regardless of any and all protected characteristics they possess.
- Recognising ethos as an important factor in promoting these principles, particularly with regard to the cultivation of self-esteem and respect for others.
- Highlighting the need to further develop action to ensure that pupils, staff and parents develop positive attitudes and behaviour towards those possessing protected characteristics, including those of different sexes, gender identities, races/ethnicities and religions/beliefs, as well as those with disabilities.
- Implementing and developing understanding of equalities issues, particularly through increasing awareness of the principles outlined in this strategy within our curriculum.
- Working to ensure that the ethos of the school is inclusive and offers rigorous protections against any and all forms of discrimination.

Strategy Aims

In the provision of equal opportunities and equality for all pupils and stakeholders, this strategy is underpinned by relevant local authority policies, as well as relevant national legislation. The Equality Act (2010) outlines 9 relevant 'protected characteristics'. It is unlawful to discriminate against any person based on any and all protected characteristics they possess. These characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Whether a person is married or in a civil partnership
- Whether a person is pregnant or on maternity leave
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We aim to ensure that all strategies and practices conform to the principle of equal opportunities and comply with the Equality Act (2010), as well as other relevant child-centred legislation, including the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) and Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). The James Young High School also implements local authority guidance through adherence to West Lothian policies on Diversity and Equality.

This strategy upholds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC is a universal treaty which covers all aspects of a child's life and sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. The James Young High School is committed to embedding a rights based approach, and this strategy is particularly relevant to Articles 2, 14, 23 and 23 (see Appendix 1).

Forms of Discrimination

We are committed to ensuring that our practices in relation to this strategy document rigorously challenge all forms of discrimination, including: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, and harassment.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because they possess a protected characteristic set out above. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is a strategy or practice that applies in the same way for everybody, but disadvantages a group of people who share a protected characteristic. A strategy or practice applied in the same way for everyone must be shown to have a clear rationale and protections in place to ensure those with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged.

Harassment

Harassment is defined in the Equality Act (2010) as: *“unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”*. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which cause offence to a person, whether intentional or unintentional, because of a protected characteristic.

Implementation

- The Depute Head teacher (Support) is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this strategy.
- Pupils will be made aware of this Equality Strategy, as well as other school strategies including the Anti-Bullying Strategy and LGBTQ+ Strategy. This will be supported through the Equality Statement which will be displayed in all classrooms.
- The practices and principles outlined in this strategy will permeate the curriculum, with particular focus on discussion and reflection in PSE classes, as well as our Developing The Young Workforce (DYW) programme.
- Pupils will be encouraged through their awareness of equalities issues to develop positive attitudes themselves and to respect the diversity of others.
- Incidents relating to any and all forms of discrimination, as outlined in this strategy, will be recorded via the referral system (SEEMiS).
- Staff will be supported in the implementation of the principles outlined in this document through Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) opportunities.

Curricular Implications

In order to ensure the principles outlined in this strategy document permeate our approach to teaching and learning, our curriculum must be equitable and diverse, ensuring that all pupils are not impeded from achieving success based on any and all protected characteristics they possess. Also, our curriculum must equip pupils with a diversity of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences. This will be achieved through the following principles:

- Our curriculum must organically incorporate a diverse range of groups, including racial backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, disabilities and religions/beliefs. This will allow all pupils to develop their understanding of the diversity that exists in the world. Within this, it is vital to avoid tokenism; all departments should permeate their learning and teaching resources with a diversity of knowledge, attitudes and experiences.
- Our curriculum must rigorously challenge stereotypes based on the protected characteristics outlined in this strategy document, encouraging pupils to reflect on and critically evaluate stereotypes they may already be aware of.
- Reasonable adjustments must be made to ensure that all pupils are able to access the curriculum without impediment based on any and all protected characteristics they possess. These adjustments include, but are not limited to: appropriate in-class support and differentiation to ensure all pupils can access all aspects of the curriculum; identification of additional support needs through appropriate monitoring, testing and reporting; additional provisions through pupil support, including alternative arrangements in examinations.
- Pupil progress and attainment will be judged holistically, free from discrimination, both through implicit and explicit bias, as outlined in this strategy document.

Procedures For Staff

All incidents of direct discrimination, indirect discrimination or harassment will be logged on SEEMiS.

It is essential that no incident is ignored as this contributes to discrimination through passive acquiescence of the unacceptable. Types of actions which could be considered to constitute discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics outlined in this strategy document include, but are not limited to:

- Name calling
- Making threats
- Ridiculing
- Expressing discriminatory remarks
- Discriminatory jokes
- Graffiti
- Discriminatory literature
- Wearing of provocative badges
- Assault
- Spitting

Staff should log any incident in contravention of this strategy on SEEMiS. This will note the date, incident and the action taken, as well as following relevant child protection procedures where appropriate.

All reported incidents will be investigated, and action which is appropriate to the severity of the concern will be taken by relevant members of staff. All incidents of discrimination should be considered as "serious" and the culprit should be made aware of this. It should be explained to the culprit why their behaviour is unacceptable and the implications should be discussed with them.

Actions that will be taken against those in contravention of this strategy include, but are not limited to:

- Restorative conversations with those who have contravened this strategy, in line with our Positive Behaviour Strategy.
- Increased monitoring of those in contravention of this strategy, including target cards where appropriate.
- Dialogue with parents/carers and other relevant stakeholders.

In more severe cases, actions such as Formal Disciplinary Warnings may be appropriate.

In the case of staff or other stakeholders contravening this strategy, appropriate local and national polices will be followed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We aim to ensure that the principles outlined in this strategy are rigorously monitored and evaluated through the following:

- Ensuring a clear, consistent timeline for review and evaluation of our progress in implementing the principles outlined in this strategy.
- Collating, reviewing and evaluating department and whole school strategy statements, including the JYHS Equality Statement.
- Sharing effective practice through a commitment to professional reflection and dialogue between all stakeholders.
- Monitoring subject uptake to ensure equal access to all subjects, with a focus on ensuring there are no barriers to subject uptake on the basis of the protected characteristics outlined in this strategy.
- Monitoring referrals of incidents recorded through SEEMiS which are in contravention of the principles outlined in this strategy.

Appendix 1 – Relevant Articles of the UNCRC

Article 2 (non-discrimination): The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion): Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

Article 23 (children with a disability): A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups): Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.