



West Blatchington Primary School and Nursery Equality Policy

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| | | Page |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | Introduction and Context 1.1 Why we have developed this Equality Policy 1.2 Our school within the wider context 1.3 Our vision statement about equality 1.4 Overall aims of our Equality Policy | 3-5 |
| 2 | Our approach 2.1 Introduction 2.2 Teaching and learning 2.3 Support for students 2.3a Auxiliary Aids 2.3b Pastoral Support 2.3c Schools to parents and the community 2.4 Admissions 2.5 Exclusions 2.6 Religious observance 2.7 Hiring out our premises | 6-9 |
| 3 | Our staff | 10 |
| 4 | Roles and responsibilities within our school community | 11-12 |
| 5 | Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying 5.1 Definitions 5.2 Reporting, recording and responding to incidents and bullying | 12- 14 |
| 6 | Involving the school community in the development of our equality practice | 14-15 |
| 7 | How we identify our equality objectives | 15-16 |
| 8 | Implementation, monitoring and reviewing | 16 |
| | Appendix 1- advice and guidance on equality matters | 17 |
| | Appendix 2- A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child | 18-21 |

1 Introduction and context

1.1 Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for West Blatchington Primary School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes **all the protected characteristics** covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are 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 health and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.(see Appendix for summary)

Please also refer to our Behaviour for Learning policy, Inclusion and SEND policy safeguarding policy, and accessibility plan.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been involved in and contributed to the development of the school ethos. West Blatchington Primary School is an Inclusive school which has a wonderful diverse community. We have an attached Nursery and also have a Facility, which feeds the whole of Brighton and Hove, for children that have an EHCP with ASC as their main area of need.

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

- foster good relations between groups and to promote community cohesion
- advance equality of opportunity and
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;

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

1.2 Our school within the wider context

West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School has an attached ASC facility for Reception, KS1 and KS2 children with an ASC EHCP.

We have approximately 240 pupils, of which 24% are SEND (Special Educational Need or Disability), 38% are Pupil Premium, 47% are from an ethnic minority and 34% have English as an Additional Language (EAL). We also have high mobility across all year groups.

As a school we are committed to having knowledge of our school community and frequently analyse data to ensure we are tracking the attainment and wellbeing of our pupils and groups of pupils. We use this data to plan improvements that will benefit our school community.

The school has a variety of data sources to ensure that all children are making the expected if not accelerated progress and ensure differences are diminished. This is used to track attainment of all groups, to highlight groups and individuals and to ensure provision is targeted correctly. The data also helps the school track bullying and behavioural incidents and enables the school to pick out any patterns related to behaviour/bullying that need to be addressed. Examples of the data sources used are Brighton and Hove Information Pack, Local Authority, Pupil Progress meetings, De track, and intervention and attendance analysis.

1.3 Our vision statement about equality

Our current school vision ensures that all stakeholders involved with the school hold the same ethos and beliefs around equality -

At West Blatchington Primary School we believe in creating a learning ethos where children are actively involved in engaging and stimulating learning experiences. We aspire to create lifelong, reflective learners, equipping our

children with knowledge, skills and understanding to help them to make informed choices throughout their lives.

- Enable all children to become confident, resourceful and reflective learners.
- Foster children's self esteem and help them to build positive relationships with other people.
- Develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- Enable children to develop a 'pupil voice', allowing them to have a say in their learning.

West Blatchington Primary seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequalities, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

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 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 believe we all have equal rights, but may have different needs.

1.4 Overall aims of our Equality Policy

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

- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, sexual orientations, abilities and ethnic origins.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We recognise that it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil or a member of staff by treating them less favourably if they have protected characteristics:

- age (staff only),
- sex,
- race,
- disability,
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy or maternity

We acknowledge at West Blatchington Primary that even young children may have an awareness of their emerging sexual orientation. We challenge all bullying and name calling, including homophobic bullying. We acknowledge family diversity and ensure that children are not picked on if they do not conform to gender stereotype. We consider sexual orientation with the knowledge that some pupils will have lesbian/gay parents and carers and some will grow up lesbian or gay.

We have produced an access plan which addresses our statutory duties to:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of schools to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits facilities and services provided; and
- improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils.

West Blatchington Primary School is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. We wish to show that through

our ethos and curriculum West Blatchington Primary School can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

2 Our approach

2.1 Introduction

West Blatchington Primary school's objectives are written alongside the whole schools School Improvement Plan and the Equalities statement is published on the school's website.

As well as the specific equality objectives that we are working on and are set out the school takes a whole school approach to equality and community cohesion. We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life. We actively seek out opportunities in and outside of the curriculum to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society
- Promotion of community cohesion. We are working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

2.2 Teaching and learning

At West Blatchington Primary School we aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. An effective school will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds pupils' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- Monitor achievement data by the protected characteristics (where possible) and action any gaps and tackle underperformance by any particular group;
- Take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of the protected characteristics, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Lessons and themes across the curriculum that promote common values and help pupils to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping;
- Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own identity and culture and celebrate the diversity within our school community, the local context and wider;

- Seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.
- Contribution to community cohesion to teach pupils to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- An effective voice and involvement of pupils in the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond

2.3 Support for pupils / students and parents

2.3a Auxiliary Aids

As a school we would make any reasonable adjustments necessary to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

2.3b Pastoral Support

West Blatchington Primary provides a varied provision to support groups and individuals. At the beginning of each term teachers are provided with class data enabling them to highlight and be aware of children that are vulnerable, this is updated regularly as required and is a working document. Inclusion team meetings will highlight children who may then be supported as required through, for example, small group or individual work with the Learning Mentor, nurture groups, welfare checks etc. Our vulnerable families that have multi-agencies working with them may be supported through the Early Help process.

At West Blatchington we have an ethos of valuing children and parents/carers and staff are available, when appropriate, to listen/talk to children and/or their families. Classrooms have systems in place that allow pupils to share, and an allocated area in each school building, has a 'voice' box. These are provided to ensure that all children have a safe and confidential way to express their worries and problems.

We are committed to building links with religious leaders to ensure that all our religions are shown to be respected and valued within the school and wider community.

Also refer to PSHCE, behaviour for learning policy.

2.3 c

School to parents and the community:

Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the pupils, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, stay and play in the Early Years, mini monkeys, curriculum evenings/workshops, family liaison work and parent forums

2.4 Admissions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on any of the protected characteristics. Please see our admissions policy. Children in the facility are admitted through the SEND panel and not through Brighton and Hove admissions.

For all state maintained community schools the Local Authority is the admissions authority. Schools must not discriminate against pupils/students in admissions or in their day to day operations, such as the allocation of pupils/students to particular classes, there are a few exceptions:

- Some aspects of admissions to schools which are of a religious character are not covered (currently all schools of a religious nature are voluntary aided)
- School curriculum and collective worship are not covered by legislation affecting discrimination on grounds of religion or beliefs
- Schools may treat disabled pupils more favourable than others if it prevents them being at a disadvantage
- Age discrimination legislation does not apply to the treatment of pupils or provision of education

2.5 Exclusions

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with. See Exclusion data.

2.6 Religious observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils/students and parents/carers, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

2.7 Hiring out our premises

Our Equality Policy includes governors, and members of the public who use and find themselves on school premises as part of the business of the school. This includes after school clubs that are run by outside providers and they have clear guidance provided to them that they must adhere to.

If our premises are used by other organisations to run activities/after school clubs or provide services which are not connected with the school, then we are not responsible for the activities or services provided. However, we will do our best to ensure through our lettings policy that groups contravening the school / college values and Equality policy will not be permitted to hire rooms or use our grounds. Any issues will be passed to the school governors.

2 Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, Inclusion team, learning support assistants, mid-day supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. 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 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 (unless specific requirements are intrinsic to the role) 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. Designated staff have been trained in safer recruitment and are always involved in short listing and interviewing for any new posts.

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. We interpret our duties positively; and will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantage and we will work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Via the Human Resources service purchased from our HR Provider, Brighton and Hove Local Authority, we have access to advice and guidance on equality matters relating to staff through the intranet, bulletins and advice given by HR professionals. See Relevant policies in the appendix 1

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community.

4 The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Head teacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it
- Take appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- In partnership with governors deal with breaches of this policy

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

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

Our pupils/students will:

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

Our parents/carers will:

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

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- model good practice by recognising and challenging prejudice and stereotyping
- promote equality and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of ethnic or national origins, language,

culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.

- respond to and report any equality related bullying and incidents in line with school policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy

5 Responding to harassment, victimisation and bullying

5.1 Definitions

We recognise that hate incidents and 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, transphobia, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

Our Policy defines bullying in the following way:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

We define 'Prejudice related / hate incidents' in the following way:

This is a one-off incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's race or perceived race, gender disability, religion and / or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity. These can also include indirect prejudice driven behaviour that is not targeted at one individual. The impact of this expression of prejudice against an equality group can be damaging and must therefore be responded to as a prejudice related or hate incident.

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 pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore and understand the complexities of equality issues. 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 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. In the case of serious incidents we will support the victim and their family to complete the Brighton & Hove Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Form and if appropriate inform and involve the police. The Brighton & Hove Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Form can be completed online at:

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1251335>

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender or gender identity, religion or belief;

- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, religion or belief;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability gender identity or sexual orientation, religion or belief.

5.2 Reporting, recording and responding to prejudiced based bullying and incidents

All incidents of bullying are dealt with in accordance with the school policy.

If it is agreed by SLT after investigation that it is a bullying or prejudice based incident it is recorded as such on CPOMs and a report form is filled in. This ensures that patterns can be seen clearly and addressed for example whole school/year group as required.

Children can report any incidents in school to class teachers and other members of staff. The learning mentor offers drop ins for KS 2. Also available in each class, and in an area in each school building, is opportunities where children can write down their worries or any incidents in confidence. This will then be dealt and investigated further by the class teacher and/or learning mentor. After investigation a response is made to the children as required and any action taken to address the incident. A variety of methods are used to support pupils following an incident, this may include small group work and problem solving. All staff have had training on how to challenge prejudice. Parents/carers are informed of all incidents related to bullying and prejudice-based incidents.

6. Involving the school community in the development of our Equality practice

We endeavour to involve and listen to a wide range of individuals and groups within the whole school community.

- The school has a strong PSHCE curriculum. Children from Year 1 -6 are on the school council to ensure that the children have a voice. Representatives from the ASC facility are in the school and ECO council. All children participate in the student view survey.
- A school governor is responsible for Equalities and governors are kept up to date with objectives for equalities.
- Parents/carers have access to the Equalities statement via the website and can see the full version of the policy on request.
- Parents/carers are asked to fill out yearly questionnaires and also encouraged to use Parent View. We also encourage an open-door policy whereby parents/carers can come to discuss any concerns with teachers or the Inclusion team
- The school work with all outside agencies including EMAS, Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service, and, when appropriate the traveller service, to support children and families. Interpreters are made available for meetings with parents and coffee mornings/workshops as required. Children are trained as Young Interpreters in to support new to English pupils that have arrived.
- Strong links have been made with a variety of agencies through the Early Help process; this ensures there is good sharing of information as required.
- Local religious leaders are invited to come into school to speak to the children as well as encouraging staff to visit places of worship in the local community.
- A member of staff is allocated as Community Cohesion co-ordinator and works together with the SENCo to ensure the action plan is a working document. The school continues to have events at school that involve all the community

7 How we identify our equality objectives

In line with our statutory duties, we annually publish equality information and also publish our equality objectives. We have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. The equalities objectives are published on the school website and on the newsletters.

To help us to ensure we know our school well, we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways. We use the information gathered from some of the below evidence to inform the equality objective-setting process

- i. From our school policies, SIP and SEF evidence. This helps us review whether what is planned has a differential impact on more than one group (either positivity or negativity). They help to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that the positive duties are promoted. They help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our pupils and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.
- ii. From the following data- we use Local Authority data to inform us about any underachieving groups within the school in comparison to National.
- iii. Behavioural Incidents being regularly recorded, and the Bullying/Prejudice Incident data on CPOMS ensure that we can address issues as required, as well as picking up on patterns of behaviour.
- iv. We also involve relevant people (including disabled people) as described in section 6.
- v. In Brighton & Hove there are a range of services which support the equality agenda and help us to identify our strengths, and those areas requiring action. We have strong links with agencies such EMAS and traveller education and we work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for particular groups of children.
- vi. We have established good links with our local and wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school. 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.

8 Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy was published initially in November 2012 and is reviewed yearly. It will be actively promoted and disseminated. The Equalities statement will be published on the school website and parents can request a copy of the full policy.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

APPENDIX 1

Advice and guidance on equality matters

Safer Recruitment Toolkit (includes equalities in employment issues in schools)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/SaferRecruitmentToolkitISAVBSInformation.aspx>

Schools Absence Management Procedure & Guidance (includes Fact sheets on Absence & Disability and Access to work; Q&As for Managers on Mental Health; Reasonable Adjustment Guidance for Headteachers)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/AbsenceManagementandOccupationalHealth.aspx>

Whistleblowing Policy (and other key employment policies)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HR/Pages/HRSignpostingforHeadteachers.aspx>

Wellbeing Framework (includes guidance on Work-Life Balance, Dignity & Respect at Work and Violence at Work/Incidence reporting)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/HealthSafety/Pages/WellbeingatWork.aspx>

Access to general information on impact on staff of the Equality Act (including the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Disabled Applicants)

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/HR/ManagingTeams/Recruitmentandinduction/Pages/Equalitiesanddiversity.aspx>

Access to main council equality advice through the Wave Intranet –

<https://wave4schools.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supportingyou/Equalities/Pages/default.aspx>

APPENDIX 2**FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

Article 1 (Definition of the child): The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18.

Article 2 (Non-discrimination): The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3 (Best interests of the child): The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

Article 4 (Protection of rights): Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. When countries ratify the Convention, they agree to review their laws relating to children. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as levels of funding for these services. Governments are then obliged to take all necessary steps to ensure that the minimum standards set by the Convention in these areas are being met. They must help families protect children's rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential. In some instances, this may involve changing existing laws or creating new ones. Such legislative changes are not imposed, but come about through the same process by which any law is created or reformed within a country. Article 41 of the Convention points out the when a country already has higher legal standards than those seen in the Convention, the higher standards always prevail.

Article 5 (Parental guidance): Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly. Helping children to understand their rights does not mean pushing them to make choices with consequences that they are too young to handle. Article 5 encourages parents to deal with rights issues "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child". The Convention does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to governments. It does place on governments the responsibility to protect and assist families in fulfilling their essential role as nurturers of children.

Article 6 (Survival and development): Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 7 (Registration, name, nationality, care): All children have the right to a legally registered name, officially recognised by the government. Children have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country). Children also have the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

Article 8 (Preservation of identity): Children have the right to an identity – an official record of who they are. Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 9 (Separation from parents): Children have the right to live with their parent(s), unless it is bad for them. Children whose parents do not live together have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

Article 10 (Family reunification): Families whose members live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

Article 11 (Kidnapping): Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally. This article is particularly concerned with parental abductions. The Convention's Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography has a provision that concerns abduction for financial gain.

Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child): When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. This does not mean that

children can now tell their parents what to do. This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making -- not give children authority over adults. Article 12 does not interfere with parents' right and responsibility to express their views on matters affecting their children. Moreover, the Convention recognizes that the level of a child's participation in decisions must be appropriate to the child's level of maturity. Children's ability to form and express their opinions develops with age and most adults will naturally give the views of teenagers greater weight than those of a preschooler, whether in family, legal or administrative decisions.

Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child): When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13 (Freedom of expression): Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing.

Article 14 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion): Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should help guide their children in these matters. The Convention respects the rights and duties of parents in providing religious and moral guidance to their children. Religious groups around the world have expressed support for the Convention, which indicates that it in no way prevents parents from bringing their children up within a religious tradition. At the same time, the Convention recognizes that as children mature and are able to form their own views, some may question certain religious practices or cultural traditions. The Convention supports children's right to examine their beliefs, but it also states that their right to express their beliefs implies respect for the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 15 (Freedom of association): Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights. In exercising their rights, children have the responsibility to respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others.

Article 16 (Right to privacy): **Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.**

Article 17 (Access to information; mass media): Children have the right to get information that is important to their health and well-being. Governments should encourage mass media – radio, television, newspapers and Internet content sources – to provide information that children can understand and to not promote materials that could harm children. Mass media should particularly be encouraged to supply information in languages that minority and indigenous children can understand. Children should also have access to children's books.

Article 18 (Parental responsibilities; state assistance): Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments must respect the responsibility of parents for providing appropriate guidance to their children – the Convention does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to governments. It places a responsibility on governments to provide support services to parents, especially if both parents work outside the home.

Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence): Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after

them. In terms of discipline, the Convention does not specify what forms of punishment parents should use. However any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behaviour – ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child's level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration. In most countries, laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive. It is up to each government to review these laws in light of the Convention.

Article 20 (Children deprived of family environment): Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language.

Article 21 (Adoption): Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care. The first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether they are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country.

Article 22 (Refugee children): Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees (if they have been forced to leave their home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23 (Children with disabilities): Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support, as well as all the rights in the Convention, so that they can live full and independent lives.

Article 24 (Health and health services): Children have the right to good quality health care – the best health care possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25 (Review of treatment in care): Children who are looked after by their local authorities, rather than their parents, have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate. Their care and treatment should always be based on “the best interests of the child”. (see Guiding Principles, Article 3)

Article 26 (Social security): Children – either through their guardians or directly – have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need.

Article 27 (Adequate standard of living): Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.

Article 28: (Right to education): All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right. Discipline in schools should respect children’s dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child's human dignity. Therefore, governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect. The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.

Article 29 (Goals of education): Children’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parents. The Convention does not address such issues as school uniforms, dress codes, the singing of the national anthem or prayer in schools. It is up to governments and school officials in each country to determine whether, in the context of their society and existing laws, such matters infringe upon other rights protected by the Convention.

Article 30 (Children of minorities/indigenous groups): Minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one's own culture, language and religion applies to everyone; the Convention here highlights this right in instances where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country.

Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture): Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

Article 32 (Child labour): The government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education. While the Convention protects children from harmful and exploitative work, there is nothing in it that prohibits parents from expecting their children to help out at home in ways that are safe and appropriate to their age. If children help out in a family farm or business, the tasks they do be safe and suited to their level of development and comply with national labour laws. Children's work should not jeopardize any of their other rights, including the right to education, or the right to relaxation and play.

Article 33 (Drug abuse): Governments should use all means possible to protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade.

Article 34 (Sexual exploitation): Governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Article 35 (Abduction, sale and trafficking): The government should take all measures possible to make sure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Article 36 (Other forms of exploitation): Children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare and development.

Article 37 (Detention and punishment): No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults, should be able to keep in contact with their families, and should not be sentenced to death or life imprisonment without possibility of release.

Article 38 (War and armed conflicts): Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Children under 15 should not be forced or recruited to take part in a war or join the armed forces. The Convention's Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict further develops this right, raising the age for direct participation in armed conflict to 18 and establishing a ban on compulsory recruitment for children under 18.

Article 39 (Rehabilitation of child victims): Children who have been neglected, abused or exploited should receive special help to physically and psychologically recover and reintegrate into society. Particular attention should be paid to restoring the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Article 40 (Juvenile justice): Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects their rights. Governments are required to set a minimum age below which children cannot be held criminally responsible and to provide minimum guarantees for the fairness and quick resolution of judicial or alternative proceedings.

Article 41 (Respect for superior national standards): If the laws of a country provide better protection of children's rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42 (Knowledge of rights): Governments should make the Convention known to adults and children. Adults should help children learn about their rights, too. (See also article 4.)

Articles 43-54 (implementation measures): These articles discuss how governments and international organizations like UNICEF should work to ensure children are protected in their rights.