Heathfield Schools' Partnership

Equal Opportunities

Policy Statement

We at Heathfield Schools' Partnership understand "equal opportunities" to describe an environment in which no child or adult is prevented from taking a full part in the life of the school as a result of:

- age
- gender
- physical needs
- behavioural needs
- learning needs
- ethnic background
- religious background
- sexual orientation

At our school, we benefit from the diversity of experience that our pupils bring. We welcome differences and celebrate culture, respecting the needs of the individual, the group and the school community as a whole. We seek to share the different cultures represented here to inform and enrich.

We recognise the importance of allowing all our pupils and their families equal access, as far as possible, to the facilities and activities we have to offer. High standards are possible for all and we seek to ensure that our expectations are challenging everyone, whatever their level of intellectual or physical ability, gender, race or religion. We try to extend this welcome to our staff, parents and guardians, pupils and the community.

Our pupils and families may have unequal starting points and may need special attention and provision in order to work with others on a more equal basis. We seek to provide these opportunities and raise awareness within the community of the needs that they have.

It is important that we encourage the active involvement of our pupils and help them to understand their rights as well as the need to respect the rights of others. We actively engage with our community to ensure that prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping are challenged and to provide a harmonious working environment in which everyone feels valued.

The Aims of the Policy

We aim to:

- achieve the highest standards of teaching and learning for everyone, irrespective of ethnicity, religious belief, age, gender, ability and disability or social background
- encourage respect for and understanding of the beliefs, doctrines and personal circumstances of individuals
- involve, as far as possible, representatives from diverse groups within our catchment in school life
- consider, when defining school policy and procedure, the implications for different groups within our catchment
- work with other schools in order to share strengths and seek ideas for improvement
- seek to promote the welfare in school of individuals who have specific physical, emotional, learning and religious needs
- deal swiftly, effectively and firmly with comments and incidents that are detrimental to the well-being of others.

Procedure

Responsibilities

It is expected that all staff, pupils and adults will pay due regard to the feelings of others and their needs and will implement this policy to the best of their ability. A spirit of fairness and openness will be encouraged and negative stereotyping is prohibited.

School Staff

All school staff are responsible for:

- setting an example to pupils in terms of their treatment of one another and by displaying tolerance and understanding towards the beliefs and cultures of others
- ensuring that policies and procedures are implemented
- being vigilant for incidents of racism, sexism and prejudice and acting upon them
- encouraging pupils to try new activities that challenge stereotypical roles and prejudices.
- contributing to discussions about equal opportunity issues
- monitoring their own procedures and routines to ensure that everyone is treated equitably
- referring incidents and concerns, where appropriate, to the Head

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is responsible for:

- ensuring that the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is kept up to date
- reporting to governors on a regular basis
- recording and dealing with incidents of racism, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour
- co-ordinating the curriculum in conjunction with curriculum teams to ensure equality of opportunity is represented in the core and foundation subjects
- ensuring that equal opportunities is covered within all subject policies and plans
- providing opportunity for resources to be ordered to support this policy
- monitoring performance by groups of pupils through data analysis
- ensuring the application of the borough admissions policy
- continuing to monitor and formulate accessibility plans in conjunction with the governing body
- continuing to monitor the progress of actions identified on the disability equality scheme and the race and gender equality scheme
- being instrumental in the review of the disability and the race and gender equality scheme.

The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- ensuring that there is an equal opportunities policy in place and reviewing its content and efficacy on an annual basis
- assessing the impact of the policy on the standards attained by different groups within the school
- receiving feedback as part of the Head's report and questioning school practice
- giving due regard to its own membership and the recruitment of new governors
- participating in the preparation and implementation of the Accessibility Plan.
- preparing and monitoring the race equality statement
- assessing the impact of this policy

Pupil Attainment and Progress

All groups of pupils in the school are carefully monitored to ensure that they make the progress expected and achieve their targets.

Class teachers track the progress of all pupils from assessments carried out according to the assessment policy and procedures. Analysis is carried out to identify any pupils who are falling behind and need additional support. In some cases, this will be individual support; in others, it will be an intervention programme as part of a group.

Barriers to learning such as difficulties with attendance and/or family circumstances are highlighted and passed onto the Inclusion manager. Various support can be accessed depending on circumstance or need in order to support pupils with social and emotional needs.

Analysis may highlight a whole school area of improvement, which then becomes a focus for the SIP and more detailed action plan developed to implement.

Following the performance of all groups of students and ensure the information is carefully analysed and comparisons are made. Conclusions are drawn from:

- the contextual information
- comparison with the targets set
- National statistics.

Classroom organisation and planning must have regard to every pupil's individual needs. In order to ensure this is the case, we aim to include reference to equal opportunities through:

- curriculum and administrative policies
- budget planning
- the SIP.

We continue to protect the broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that all pupils have a chance to succeed and have their skills and abilities recognised.

Our assessment policy sets out procedures ensuring that we have a good understanding of what our pupils have learnt and how we can support them in the next stage of their learning. We emphasise the importance of involving pupils in self-assessment.

Assessment of English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils is completed in the autumn term by teachers. Trends and individual progression are highlighted from the termly tracking of pupils. Provision for pupils with EAL is separate from that provided for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Constructing and Delivering the Curriculum

Curriculum Planning

Curriculum planning aims to provide a stimulating, relevant and exciting curriculum that will motivate and enthuse our students. Pupils are encouraged to gain confidence in non-stereotyping curriculum areas and mixed gender groups are part of the school's normal working practice. Planning takes account of the need for differentiation to provide full access for pupils with a range of varying needs. Leaders monitor planning and assessment, teaching and learning to ensure that provision and resources are appropriate.

We include in our plans:

- opportunities for pupils to explore the local environment outside the school and work with the local community
- topics and projects that look at different groups, religions and cultures
- opportunities for pupils to exchange views and recognise the different perspectives that other groups might have.

Classroom Management

Each classroom is made equally welcoming to boys and girls with flexible seating arrangements and a

variety of resources made accessible to support pupils in their learning.

Grouping is appropriate for specific purposes and positive discrimination is adopted in order to meet every pupil's rights under equal opportunities. A positive classroom ethos is developed with the use of rewards and boundaries and clear expectations for classroom behaviour. A well-established behaviour policy supports teachers in the maintenance of an environment conducive to learning.

All pupils feel valued, have individual targets and are clear about what they need to do next to make the progress expected of them.

Resources

Resources are prepared and selected that are free from gender or cultural bias, where possible. Regular audits of resources help ensure appropriateness and relevance. Where bias is identified, attention will be drawn to this and may be used as a teaching point to provoke discussion.

Developing Our Ethos

School ethos is set by the quality of relationships within a school and the sense of vision that the school has as a whole.

All adults and students within the school contribute to our ethos. The key factors are:

- the examples they set through relationships and actions
- the organisation of the school and the extent to which it values involvement, co-operation and consultation
- curriculum development and improvement, with a priority placed upon maintaining the broad and balanced curriculum
- school projects and groups that emphasise the importance of social skills and the development of self-esteem, eg circle time, social skills groups, school council
- a positive behaviour policy, where every opportunity is taken to praise and reward and encourage a sense of community and shared responsibility
- the scene set during assemblies and other collective opportunities
- discussion of issues with pupils as part of the PHSE and citizenship curriculum
- taking every opportunity to celebrate our successes and strengths as a school
- that school and classroom ethos reflect the value placed on every individual student
- that school publications reflect our commitment to equal opportunities
- that we have a communication-friendly environment.

Listening to Our Pupils

The school council is only one way in which we enable our pupils' views to be shared. We place priorities on ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to express their views regularly and that actions are taken that reflect how they feel. This means including consultation and evaluation as part of every lesson and in all aspects of school life.

We actively encourage all groups to share their views through creating a listening environment, circle time, school council and questionnaires. Listening to what pupils have to say alerts us to issues in the school and helps us to address these as they arise.

Involving Parents and the Local Community

We seek to involve as many parents and members of the local community in our school as possible. We encourage active involvement through:

- written communications, such as newsletters, information for parents and guides to the curriculum
- parents and open evenings
- drop-in sessions and coffee mornings
- fundraising and social events
- attendance at assemblies

- attendance at concerts and other school events.

Where groups of parents seem less well represented in school, we set up activities and events that will encourage them to participate.

We offer translation into community languages where necessary.

Where parents are willing to help organise clubs and groups, the school aims to provide facilities and support. We encourage the letting of our school buildings and playing fields. We are committed to the principles of the extended school and host a range of clubs out of school hours.

Sharing Our Experiences

Our school is fortunate to have a richness of culture and a diversity of ethnic origin that enables pupils to learn firsthand what it means to have different religious beliefs. Opportunities are taken within school to share these experiences through:

- assemblies/class activities where pupils can share their experiences about their faith
- religious education lessons where pupils are encouraged to share their experiences
- discussions during circle time where any misconceptions can be addressed
- the celebration of religious festivals in assemblies
- displays around the school that reflect a range of positive images.

Circle time provides a good opportunity for pupils to discuss issues relating to equal opportunities in a sympathetic environment. Opportunities to share experiences within the community include:

- inviting speakers into school from different faiths, charities and organisations
- arranging trips within the locality, eg to local farms, arts centres, museums and parks

Awareness of some of the difficulties relating to stereotyping and discrimination is important. Opportunities should be taken to discuss these through the curriculum as well as on a pastoral basis as the need arises.

School Procedures — Considerations

Home circumstances have an effect upon pupils' experiences in school. We take into account the differences that exist and that may place extra pressure upon particular pupils at particular times. Special factors that need consideration include:

- the difficulties that some pupils experience in finding quiet zones to complete homework
- parents' difficulties with literacy and numeracy
- attitudes towards fundraising and how this might affect attendance at events
- any faith-related implications for the curriculum,
- ways in which the school year might be affected by religious festivals
- requests for money for trips, charities and other extras that might cause difficulties for parents

We address these considerations through:

- providing parents with early notice of trips and additional activities, with an option of a payment plan
- keeping the cost of any trips as low as possible
- consideration given to ways to provide top up funding for trips where insufficient funds can be raised
- providing as many lunchtime clubs as possible
- timing events after school so that they do not coincide with family commitment
- being aware of the implications of religious festivals for attendance
- providing appropriate training of staff to ensure that they understand the special requirements of the school community

- drawing up access management plans to help us ensure that the school provides physical access for all
- providing information or sessions to give guidance on how families can support their children with learning at home and homework

Admissions and Exclusions

As a community school, our local authority (LA) is the admissions authority. Our governing body acts in accordance with the admissions arrangements determined and published by our LA. We recognise our role in admitting pupils from all sections of the community with a broad range of individual needs. We are committed to working actively with other services to avoid the need for permanent exclusion.

Access to Facilities

The school's access plans are reviewed and updated regularly. These aim to make the school more accessible and able to provide for the variety of physical and sensory disabilities that current and future pupils may have.

Race Equality Scheme

This school is committed to race equality. As such, it has published its own race equality policy and the aim of the policy is to:

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

It is reviewed annually.

English as an Additional Language

We have provision in the school to support pupils with language needs. A specialist teacher helps staff to provide focused support and to target pupils whose first language is not English. In recent years, the range of languages spoken has increased and every attempt is made, where necessary, to secure advice and support from an adult who speaks the pupil's first language.

The main purpose of this support is to ensure that our EAL pupils receive an education commensurate with their ability. Particular attention is paid to understanding in reading and writing. This might be pursued through support across the curriculum, particularly where speaking and listening opportunities exist.

A timetable of support is reviewed according to the following principles.

- Focus time needs to be built in to assess and address the needs of individual EAL pupils.
- Recognition that small group work with speaking and listening activities is often of benefit to pupils with language needs.
- Pupils who are falling behind, and not making the progress expected, need to receive targeted support.

Dealing with Issues

We take pride in the way in which our pupils work together irrespective of differences of religion, ability and social background. If any incidences of racism or bullying occur we aim to tackle them by:

- maintaining an overall school ethos of respect and tolerance for one another
- insisting upon high expectations in relation to pupil conduct towards one another
- setting a good example ourselves as positive role models
- recording and addressing all incidents that are reported — when incidents of racism occur record them separately along with any actions taken
- providing feedback on trends in incidents to the governing body
- taking advice from members of the local community and/or the LA
- applying our behaviour policy and appropriate sanctions where rules are broken

- being alert to signs of racial harassment and bullying
- developing an ethos where concerns can be raised and discussed
- maintaining awareness of issues relating to harassment and bullying.

This Policy

A copy of this policy is stored in the policy folder on the server in the information folder in the infant school and the teacher folder in the juniors.

Has it been Successful?

The following questions will be asked by the reviewing group to ascertain the success of the policy.

- How many racist incidents have been recorded?
- How many referrals for bullying have there been?
- How many positive comments have there been by adults visiting the school about the behaviour of the pupils?
- What do observations of playground staff suggest about the way pupils play together at lunchtime?
- What do lesson observations suggest about the way that pupils work together in class?
- How much do pupils understand about one another's communities, their beliefs and lifestyles?
- Do the displays around the school reflect the languages that the pupils speak?
- Do the resources available for class teacher reflect the experiences of the local community?

Reviewed by the Governing Body autumn 2022.

Next review to take place autumn 2025.