



Yewtree Primary School

Equality Policy

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Aims

- To achieve the highest standards of teaching and learning for all irrespective of ethnicity, religious belief, age, gender, ability and disability, sexual orientation or social background so that all are encouraged to achieve their full potential
- To encourage respect for and understanding of the different cultures, beliefs, disabilities and personal circumstances of individuals and to create a positive atmosphere in which there is a shared commitment to valuing diversity
- To prepare pupils to be full citizens in today's multi-cultural society and provide them with positive role models of respect and understanding
- To involve, as far as possible, representatives from diverse groups within our community in school life and the services we offer
- To consider when defining school policy and procedure the implications for different groups within our community and to take specific action to tackle any differences in opportunities or attainment between groups
- To work with other schools and services in order to share strengths and seek ideas for improvement
- To seek to promote the welfare in school of individuals who have specific physical, emotional, cultural, learning and religious needs
- To challenge and prevent all forms of prejudice and discrimination, to deal swiftly, effectively and firmly with comments and incidents which are detrimental to the wellbeing of others and to promote good relations between people from different groups.
- To seek to employ a range of staff representing the diversity of our community and variety of experience
- To ensure the correct and appropriate procedures are used for the recruitment, pay and career progression of staff in accordance with current equality legislation*

* The Employment Equality(Age) Regulations 2006; The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995, 2003 & 2005; The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975, 2003 & 2007; The Race Relations Act 1976 & 2000; The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003; The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003; The Equality Act 2006; The Equality Act 2010 and non-statutory guidance set out by the government in December 2011 and March 2012.

Rationale

At our school we benefit from the diversity of experience that our children 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 in our community to inform and enrich. We also seek to extend the understanding of our pupils in order to prepare them for an adult life in a multi-cultural society which may be more ethnically diverse than our own local community at the present time.

In addition we invite visitors into our school to describe their own faiths, beliefs and ways of life. The pupils in our school are taught to respect such visitors and approach these opportunities with a real spirit of enquiry. We encourage a sense of pride and aim to help pupils feel confident in discussing their own and others' experiences and sharing their beliefs.

We recognise the importance of enabling 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 whatever the level of intellectual or physical ability, gender, age, race, religion or family background. We try to extend this welcome to all our community including staff, parents/ guardians, children and local residents.

Some of 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 they have.

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

Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Positive Behaviour Policy
- The Collective Worship Policy
- The Curriculum Policy
- The SEN Policy
- The Performance Appraisal Policy
- The Pay Policy

Definitions

We understand equality 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
- Family Circumstances

This will influence our approach to:

- Constructing and delivering the curriculum
- School ethos and values
- Involving parents and the local community
- Sharing our experiences
- School procedures
- Admissions
- Employment: recruitment and career progression
- Access to facilities
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Staff Well-being

Constructing and delivering the curriculum

Setting standards for all

All pupils are expected to work towards their potential - at whatever level that may be. 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 School Plan

In terms of academic achievement, we are committed to supporting the learning of pupils across the ability range and as such are conscious of the fair distribution of resources.

Different pupils will excel in different subjects. As such, we continue to protect the broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that all pupils have opportunity to succeed and have their skills and abilities recognised.

Our assessment policy sets the standard in terms of ensuring that we have 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 and enabling a genuine culture of consultation and involvement.

We identify trends within year groups and track the progress of individuals, using data to check that all groups within the school are achieving their potential. Assessments are analysed to identify any emerging issues in relation to the performance of girls/ boys, children with special needs, travellers, Children Looked After and children of different ethnic origin.

Discussion with class teachers is an important feature as are opportunities where time is taken to assess the needs of individuals as part of the Personalised School Contract (PSC) process. Provision for children with English as an Additional Language is separate from that provided for pupils with SEN.

Curriculum planning

All pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Children 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 and learning preferences.

We follow the National Curriculum Inclusion Statement which states that teachers are required to follow three inclusive principles:

- Setting suitable challenges
- Responding to pupils' needs
- Overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils

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 child's rights under equal opportunities. A positive classroom ethos is developed with the use of rewards, sanctions and boundaries and clear expectations for classroom behaviour.

All children 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 which 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. Our vision statement is:

Aspiration and Achievement
Learning and Laughter
Safety and Security

All adults and pupils 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, commitment and consultation
- Curriculum development and improvement with a priority placed upon maintaining the broad and balanced curriculum
- School projects and groups which emphasise the importance of social skills and the development of self-esteem e.g.: circle time, 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 children 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 child.
- School publications reflect our commitment to equal opportunities and success for all
- That we have a communication friendly environment

Collective worship

All pupils have the opportunity to participate in collective worship. Collective worship celebrates important religious events and festivals throughout the year, it also links in with opportunities for PHSE and Citizenship. Through pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development pupils are encouraged to explore questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs.

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, our school website and parent leaflets
- Parental help in the classroom and on trips
- Parents evenings and open classrooms
- Surveys of parent opinion
- Fund-raising and social events
- Attendance at productions, concerts, assemblies and sports events
- Parent and community representation on the Governing body

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

All users of our school are expected to adhere to our high standards of respect and understanding of others, regardless of differences, as outlined in this policy.

Sharing our experiences

Our school is part of a multicultural county with a richness of culture and a diversity of ethnic origin, which enables children to learn what it means to also have different religious beliefs. Opportunities are taken within school to share these experiences through:

- Assemblies where visitors explain about their faith
- RE lessons where children are encouraged to share their experiences
- Discussions during circle time where any misconceptions can be addressed
- Celebration of religious and cultural festivals in assemblies
- Multicultural days/ weeks focusing on different parts of the world
- Displays around the school which reflect a range of positive images

Circle time provides a good opportunity for children to discuss issues relating to equality in a sympathetic environment. Other opportunities to share experiences within the community include:

- Taking children out into the local community to provide entertainment e.g.: music, singing, dancing
- Inviting speakers into school from different faiths and charities
- Arranging trips within the locality e.g.: Ashridge; Tring Museum; Hindu temple etc

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. Discrimination and omissions noted in books and other resources should be discussed openly.

School procedures - considerations

A variety of home-life circumstances has an effect upon children's experiences in school. We aim to take into account the differences that exist and that may place extra pressure upon particular children at particular times. Special factors that need consideration include:

- The effect of excessive homework when children have commitments after school for religious observance or are in care and are seeing parents
- Uniform rules that may conflict with religious dress codes
- Any implications for the curriculum in terms of the faiths present in our school e.g. swimming, changing for PE/ games, Sex Education
- Ways in which the school year might be affected by religious festivals
- Requests for money for trips, charity and other extras which parents might find difficult with inconsiderate timing
- The need for special food to be made available for religious reasons
- The need to balance the presence of withdrawal groups with whole class teaching requirements

We try to address these considerations through:

- Providing parents with early notice of trips and additional activities
- Providing as many lunchtime clubs as possible
- Being aware of the implications of religious festivals in terms of attendance
- Providing opportunity for children to fully participate in times of religious observance
- Ensuring that school catering provides for different religious requirements
- Careful timing of withdrawal groups and the effect, in order to minimise disruption whilst also enabling individuals to access the support they need
- A high profile for differentiation in planning, delivery and resources
- Appropriate training of staff to ensure understanding of the special requirements of the school community and individuals needs (e.g. Visual Impairment; Autism; Dyslexia)
- Completion of risk assessments where there are concerns about children with particular behavioural or learning needs

Meeting the needs of groups and individuals

There are times during the school year when specific provision may need to be made for pupils on the basis of their gender, religious beliefs, family background and abilities. These include:

- Provision of alternative lunchtime arrangements during Ramadan
- Single-sex health and sex education lessons
- Intervention programmes to support pupils with particular needs
- Ensuring that the arts, sports and social skills have a high profile within our curriculum to enable less academic pupils to develop a sense of self-esteem
- Promoting an ethos of inclusion where adaptations are made and flexibility of provision is encouraged around the individual needs of the pupil
- Adopting a multi-agency approach which seeks to support the work of other professionals whilst also taking advice and keeping informed
- Supporting parents who have difficulties with their own literacy and numeracy or with communicating

Admissions

As a community school our Local Education Authority (LEA) is the admission authority. Our governing body acts in accordance with the admission arrangements determined and published by our LEA.

Employment

(This section should be read in conjunction with the Hertfordshire County Council Personnel Guide to which we adhere). The school strives to provide a working environment in which all staff members are able to give of their best and are treated with dignity and respect, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which decisions will be based on merit. Infringements of these principles will be challenged and could lead to formal disciplinary measures (see "Staff Grievances & Discipline Policy").

The Appointments Policy reflects the principles of equality, fairness and diversity and is reviewed annually by the governing body. No staff member or applicant will be treated unfairly on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religious belief or sexual orientation.

When vacancies occur we:

- advertise the position sufficiently widely to allow a reasonable number of applicants

- ensure candidates are made aware of the school's selection procedure, criteria and candidate specification
- shortlist according to agreed criteria
- interview, applying the same principles to each candidate
- provide feedback to all candidates and explain decisions made as quickly as possible

Every attempt will be made to enable candidates to demonstrate their abilities and interviewees will keep an open mind with regard to ethnicity, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, religious belief and disability. It will not always be assumed that a higher level of qualification makes a candidate more appropriate for the post. Experience and maturity will be recognised for their value alongside enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. Appointments will be made on the basis of merit and suitability for the post. Financial considerations will, wherever possible, be kept to a minimum.

Once in post, an induction programme supports staff during the initial stages of employment and opportunities for staff development are made available to all members of staff on an annual basis. The Performance Appraisal process reflects the principles of equal opportunities.

Access to facilities

When written the school's Access Plans will be reviewed and updated annually. These will provide a short, medium and long-term view in order to make the school more accessible and able to provide for the variety of physical and sensory disabilities which current and future pupils may have.

There are a variety of strategies that the school can use if required:

Written

- Large lined books
- Use of voice recorders
- Interesting age appropriate reading books
- Writing frames
- Alphabet arcs, displays for spelling and appropriate resources
- Study packs to support pupils with SpLD
- Writing slope

Physical

- Visualiser
- Large ruler
- Large font keys on key boards
- Specialised key board
- Large, coloured balls
- Large mice
- Support (for toileting)
- Light diffusers
- Teacher awareness of light direction
- Quiet areas
- Visual timetable
- Seating arrangements at lunchtime

Curriculum

- Touch typing lessons
- Differentiation
- Speech therapy sessions
- Occupational therapy sessions
- Family Support Worker sessions/Art therapy/Counselling
- Attendance at Nurture Group
- EP/DESC/Extended roll
- Referral to outside agencies for additional advice

English as an Additional Language

We provide focused support and target pupils new to the school whose first language is not English and who need to develop fluency. 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.

It is important to recognise the distinction between EAL needs and special educational needs. Every attempt is made during the assessment process to distinguish between the two and address each set of needs appropriately. When needed, the support of a mother tongue speaker will be used to enable this process.

Staff Well-being

We pride ourselves on acknowledging the needs of staff not only in terms of their role as educators within school but also as parents, children and individuals. As such we will try to accommodate staff requests involving family demands where appropriate and not to the detriment of the children in school. Guidance on absence is available separately.

We try to enable staff to juggle effectively their home and school responsibilities, maintaining the drive for school improvement whilst limiting the number and duration of meetings. We aim to support staff in maintaining a healthy work/life balance and recognise the value pursuing other interests. Additional school events are planned well in advance.

When it goes wrong - dealing with issues

We take pride in the way in which our pupils and staff work together irrespective of differences of age, religion, ability and social background. However, on occasions, racism, sexism and bullying do occur. We acknowledge its presence and are committed to actively campaigning against it. We aim to tackle it by:

- Maintaining an overall school ethos of respect and tolerance for one another
- Insisting upon high expectations in relation to staff and pupils' conduct towards one another (see Pupil Code of Conduct)
- Providing a range of opportunities for pupils to work together and for staff to support each other
- Setting a good example ourselves with positive role models
- Recording and addressing all incidents that are reported - incidents of racism being separately recorded along with any actions taken (see Anti-Racism Policy)
- Providing feedback on any trends in incidents to the governing body and LEA
- Taking advice from members of the local community and/ or the LEA where there are worrying trends or pressures
- Applying our Behaviour Policy (or Staff Grievances and Discipline Policy) and appropriate sanctions where rules are broken
- Working in conjunction with parents to discuss unhelpful attitudes and difficulties with social skills

Race Equality

This policy forms part of our response to the Race Equality Duty which has been in force since 2001 and replaces previous policies relating to this issue. We are committed to the promotion of good race relations and are proactive in challenging all forms of racism, prejudice and stereotyping.

We are aware that some pupils may be less understanding of different cultures and more prone to stereotyping and prejudice than those who have greater experience of different racial groups. We are conscious that education plays a vital role in influencing young people because the views and attitudes they form as pupils are likely to stay with them for the rest of their lives. We therefore take seriously our role in modelling positive behaviour and challenging negative attitudes related to race and take every opportunity to teach our pupils respect and tolerance.

Gender Equality

This policy forms part of our response to the Gender Equality Duty which has been in force since The Equality Act 2006 and the revised Equality Act 2010 and replaces previous policies relating to this issue. We are committed to the terms of the act in seeking to be proactive in eliminating discrimination and harassment, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between men and women/ boys and girls.

We are a mixed school with both boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 11 years. All our pupils follow the same curriculum, regardless of gender, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities are available to all. We are aware of the different needs of boys and girls, especially at this crucial stage in their development, but seek to ensure that each individual has the best opportunity to develop and thrive as a person, without resorting to generalisations or gender stereotyping.

Likewise, we are conscious of a national shortage of men in the teaching profession, especially in schools with younger children, or in small schools which may lack sufficient promotion prospects. We are aware of the need for male role models for our pupils and seek to be proactive in recruiting male applicants for posts in order to redress the current imbalance. We also seek to ensure equality of treatment for men and women working in the school with regard to family commitments and career progression.

Disability Equality

This policy forms part of our response to the Disability Equality Duty which has been in force since 2006 and replaces previous policies relating to this issue. We are committed to the terms of the act in seeking to be proactive in promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people; eliminating discrimination and disability-related harassment; promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging their participation in public life through developing in ways which take their disabilities into account.

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 prohibited.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that there is an Equality Policy in place and review its content and efficacy regularly
- Provide leadership and support and ensure the accountability of the Senior Leadership team in communicating and implementing the Equality Policy
- Assess the impact of the policy on the standards attained by different groups within the school
- Make reasonable adjustments if the premises or employment arrangements limit access to particular community groups or individuals on the basis of disability or gender
- Plan to increase over time the accessibility of the school to disabled staff, pupils, parents and members of the community (see appendix: Access Plan)
- Receive feedback as part of the Headteacher's report and question school practice
- Celebrate good practice and promote it throughout the school and wider community
- Provide appropriate role models for all managers and staff
- Give due regard to its own members and recruitment of new governors
- Ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties and provides the required reports to the LEA

Senior Leadership will:

- ensure the place of equality within the School Development Plan
- ensure that the "Equality Policy" and procedures are regularly reviewed and kept up-to-date, consulting with staff and stakeholders and ensuring effective communication
- ensure that the governors are provided with an annual report,
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy, holding staff accountable
- ensure that staff and managers are trained as necessary to carry out the policy
- provide appropriate role models for all staff, pupils and stakeholders, leading by example and praising or challenging behaviour as necessary
- record and deal with incidents of racism, bullying and other cases of inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour
- coordinate the curriculum in conjunction with subject leaders to ensure equality of opportunity is represented in the core and foundation subjects and highlight good practice
- provide opportunity for resources to be ordered to support this policy
- apply equal opportunities legislation and guidance in the school's appointment process and general procedures
- monitor performance by groups of children in their subject either through analysis or discussion with other senior staff
- ensure the application of the admissions policy
- continue to monitor and formulate Accessibility Plans which can cover Race Equality, Gender Equality and Disability Equality, in conjunction with the governing body (see Appendix)

Class teachers will:

- ensure the implementation of this policy and the Accessibility Plan within the classroom and in their own dealings with staff, pupils and the school community
- contribute to consultations and discussions about equal opportunity issues
- monitor their own procedures and routines to ensure that pupils are treated equitably
- refer incidents and concerns, where appropriate, to the Headteacher

All school staff will:

- set an example to pupils in terms of their treatment of one another and display of respect, fairness and understanding towards the beliefs and cultures of others, following both the letter and the spirit of this policy
- ensure that policies and procedures are implemented according to the equality policy
- be vigilant for incidents of racism, sexism and prejudice and act upon them
- encourage pupils to try new activities challenging stereotypical roles and prejudice

Monitoring and Evaluation

Key indicators of the efficiency of this policy and the Accessibility Plan appended include:

- The balance and profile of staff employed
- The number of racist incidents recorded
- The number of referrals of bullying
- The behaviour and attitude of pupils to a range of adults around the school e.g. showing courtesy to all adults
- The readiness of pupils to mix with one another in the playground and take part in team games
- The language pupils use towards one another
- The range of displays demonstrating the variety of cultures present in the school
- The number and range of adults participating in school and social events

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed in November 2021. The Accessibility plan should be reviewed annually.