



Policy
Document

Woodfield School

EQUALITY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Date: June 2020

Woodfield School

Equality Policy and Objectives



AIMS

Our primary aims are:

- to educate, develop and prepare our pupils for life in Britain,
- to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other behaviour inappropriate to the Equality Act,
- to promote equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- to foster good relations across all characteristics - between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The governors and staff are committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice.

Discrimination on the ground of gender, ethnicity, cultural background, socio-economic group, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and age is unacceptable in Woodfield School. This applies for pupils, staff and families.

Every member of the school community will endeavour to further these aims by personally contributing to a happy, caring environment and by showing respect for each other as individuals.

All staff will practise equality of opportunity.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

- To achieve the highest possible standard of education for pupils, irrespective of ethnicity, religion and belief, socio-economic group, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age, ability or disability.
- To ensure the curriculum promotes positive attitudes to ethnic and cultural diversity and celebrates diversity/equality and achievement
- To ensure enrichment activities are made accessible to all pupils by considering accessibility and equality when arranging an activity and addressing barriers through planning and risk assessment.
- To encourage understanding and respect for the beliefs, doctrines, and personal circumstances of individuals.
- To involve, as far as possible, representatives from diverse groups in our catchment area in school life.
- To deal swiftly, effectively and firmly with comments and incidents that are detrimental to the well-being of others.
- To seek to employ a range of staff representative of the diversity of our catchment area and with a variety of experience.
- To ensure the correct and appropriate procedures for the recruitment of staff.

We recognise the importance of enabling all our pupils and their families, to have 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, gender reassignment, age, ethnicity, belief or religion, pregnancy and maternity. We try to extend this welcome to everyone, including staff, parents/ guardians, children and the community.

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.

We 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:

- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Physical needs
- Behavioural needs
- Learning needs
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Ethnic background
- Religious background
- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

This will influence our approach to:

- Constructing and delivering the curriculum
- Classroom management
- School ethos
- Involving parents and the local community
- School procedures
- Employment opportunities
- Access to facilities
- Staff Well-being

All pupils are expected to work towards their potential – whatever level that may be. Classroom organisation and planning must have regard for every pupil's needs.

We aim to include reference to equal opportunities through:

- Curriculum and administrative policies
- Budget planning
- School development plan

We are committed to supporting the learning of pupils across the ability range and as such are conscious of the need for fair distribution of resources.

Different pupils will excel in different subjects. Therefore we continue to protect the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to ensure that all pupils have a chance 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 identify trends within year groups and track the progress of individuals and increasingly use data to check that all individuals within the school are achieving their potential. We monitor progress of all pupils individually, and also compare progress of different groups of pupils - e.g. boys, girls, ASD, PMLD, those from ethnic minority groups, pupils with physical impairment, pupil premium, Children Looked After.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

All pupils have access to the full range of the curriculum for their age group. Planning takes account of the need for differentiation to provide full access for pupils with a range of varying needs. Members of the Senior Leadership Team check planning to ensure that provision and resources are appropriate.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Each classroom is made equally welcoming to boys and girls with flexible seating arrangements and a variety of resources to support pupils in their learning. Grouping is appropriate for specific purposes.

A positive classroom ethos is developed with the use of rewards and boundaries and clear expectations of classroom behaviour.

Staff work hard to ensure that 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 are prepared and selected which are free from gender or cultural bias where possible. Audits of resources, against learning outcomes and planning help ensure appropriateness and relevance.

SCHOOL 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. The school and classroom ethos reflect the value placed on every individual child.

The school aim is 'Sharing, Caring, Achieving together'. Adults and children contribute to this ethos by:

- 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 of maintaining a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to provide life skills for all pupils.
- School projects and groups which emphasise the importance of social skills and the development of self-esteem e.g. 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.
- 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.
- Ensuring that school publications reflect our commitment to equal opportunities.
- Providing a communication friendly environment.

INVOLVING PARENTS, CARERS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

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.
- Teacher's reports on pupil progress against individual targets.
- Termly parents' consultation evenings.
- Weekly coffee mornings.
- Training sessions for parents and carers, schools in the Dacorum area and the wider community.
- Supporting pupils with disabilities and their staff in mainstream Dacorum schools by being part of Hertfordshire Outreach Service.
- Fund-raising and social events.
- Attendance at assemblies and concerts.
- Participating in community activities – e.g. Leverstock Green Village Association, Young Enterprise having a stall in the local market, using the local church for services etc.
- Working with partner primary & secondary schools in the local area.

The school will arrange for a translator to attend meetings with parents about their individual child where this is necessary. Relevant documents will be translated into the home language to help parents access and share information.

We provide facilities for an After School Club for our pupils which is run as a charity on four evenings each week after school. Pupils of KS1 and over have opportunity to access this social provision, when ASC staff and parents/carers consider that they are ready to cope with a longer day at school.

A variety of home-life circumstances has an effect upon pupils' 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:

- Attitudes towards fund raising that may affect attendance at various events.
- 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 extra costs that parents might find difficult with inconsiderate timing.
- The need for special food to be provided for religious or medical reasons.
- The need to balance the presence of withdrawal groups with whole class teaching requirements.

We attempt to address these considerations through:

- Providing parents with early notice of trips and additional activities.
- Providing as many lunchtime clubs as possible.
- Consulting parents about the Relationships and Sex Education policy.
- Providing opportunity for pupils to fully participate in religious observance when this is requested by parents.
- Ensuring that school catering provides for different religious requirements.
- Careful timing of withdrawal groups and monitoring of the number and effect in order to minimise disruption whilst also enabling individuals to access the support they need.
- A high profile on differentiation in planning, delivery and resources.
- Appropriate training of staff to ensure understanding of the special requirements of the school community.
- Completion of risk assessments where there are concerns about pupils with particular behavioural or learning needs.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Meeting the needs of groups and individuals

There will be specific times during the school year when special arrangements have to be made for individuals or groups of pupils on the basis of their gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religious beliefs, family background. These may include:

- Provision of a prayer room during Ramadan
- Single-sex health and sex education lessons, and swimming sessions
- Intervention programmes to support pupils with particular needs

We also seek to meet individual needs by:

- Promoting an ethos of inclusion where adaptations are made and flexibility of provision is encouraged around the individual needs of the child.
- Ensuring that the arts, sports and social skills within our curriculum have a high profile in order to enable all pupils to have an opportunity to succeed and develop a sense of self-esteem.
- Adopting a multi-agency approach which seeks to support the work of other professionals whilst also taking advice and keeping informed.

Admissions

Admission to the school is determined by the local authority and is based on the individual's Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP).

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The (staff) Safer Recruitment policy reflects the principles of equal opportunity and is reviewed annually by the governing body. When vacancies arise 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 and procedures with all candidates.
- Provide feedback to all candidates and explain decisions as quickly as possible.

Every attempt will be made to enable candidates to demonstrate their abilities and interviewers will keep an open mind with regard to ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age, religion, marriage and civil partnership, 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, the induction programme supports staff during the initial stages of employment and there are opportunities for all staff to have professional development opportunities at regular times throughout the year. The appraisal process reflects the principles of equal opportunities.

ACCESS TO FACILITIES

The school's access plans are reviewed and updated annually as part of the School Development Plan. These 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 (or staff) may have.

The school was designed for use by young people with disabilities and this is taken into account whenever any adaptations are made to the building.

All classrooms are accessible, and the building is on one level, so there are no stairs and ramps.

The outside area is also level access and step-free, including doors to the exterior and level entry. All doors are wide enough for wheelchair access.

There are separate accessible toilets for pupils and adults.

Specialist changing beds and hoists are available throughout the school.

Many auxiliary aides are used in school to enable pupils to access the curriculum – e.g. touch screens, switches, voice output communication aids (VOCAs), adapted scissors, writing implements and kitchen equipment.

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 as long as they are not to the detriment of the pupils in school.

Guidance on absence is available separately.

We try to enable staff to juggle 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 of staff having the time they need for pursuing other interests. Additional school events are planned well in advance and consultation takes place on time and date.

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 religion, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, age, ability and social background. The majority of our pupils have insufficient awareness of 'self' and 'others' to intentionally harm another by bullying. However, on rare occasions, prejudice-based bullying may occur. We acknowledge its presence and are committed to actively campaigning against it. We aim to tackle it by:

- Maintaining an ethos of respect and tolerance for one another, discussing issues in PSHE and assembly.
- Gathering views from pupils through the School Council.
- Insisting on high expectations of pupil's behaviour towards one another.
- Providing a range of opportunities for pupils to work together.
- Staff setting a good example with positive role models.
- Recording and addressing all incidents that are reported – incidents of ethnicity-based bullying being separately recorded along with any actions taken.
- Taking advice from members of the local community and/ or the LA where there are worrying trends or pressures.
- Applying our behaviour policy and appropriate sanctions when rules are broken.
- Working in conjunction with parents to discuss unhelpful attitudes and difficulties with social skills.

Equally there are times when one pupil may seem to 'target' another, though again, because of the developmental level of pupils, this is unlikely to be intentional – rather a communicative response to e.g. a noise, smell, or action. Such situations are dealt with sensitively – supporting the 'victim' and helping the other pupils to learn a more appropriate response to communicate their feelings.

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 strongly discouraged and actively dealt with.

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor and review this policy and its effectiveness on an annual basis.
- Assess the impact of the policy on the standards achieved within the school.
- Make reasonable adjustments if the premises or employment arrangements limit access to particular community groups or individuals on the basis of their gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, disability, age, marriage and civil partnership, or religion and belief.
- Receive feedback as part of the Headteacher's report and question school practice.
- Give due regard to its own members and recruitment of new governors.

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Keep a record of activities that support pupils to develop understanding of the concept of equality.
- Ensure the equality policy is kept up to date.
- Report to governors on a regular basis.
- Record and deal with incidents of prejudice-based bullying, and other inappropriate behaviour.
- Co-ordinate the curriculum in conjunction with Curriculum Learning Teams to ensure there is equality of opportunity in all areas of learning, as well as in opportunities to access the wider curriculum.
- Ensure that equal opportunities are addressed in lesson planning.
- Provide opportunity for resources to be ordered to support this policy.
- Apply equal opportunities legislation and guidelines in the school's appointment process and general procedures.
- Monitor performance by groups of pupils either through analysis or discussion with other senior staff.
- Continue to monitor and formulate accessibility plans in conjunction with the governing body.

Class teachers will:

- Ensure the implementation of this policy within the classroom and in their own dealings with staff, pupils and the school community.
- Contribute to discussions about equal opportunity issues.
- Monitor their own procedures and routines to ensure that all children and staff are treated equitably.
- Refer incidents and concerns, where appropriate, to the Headteacher or DSP (as appropriate).
- Ensure that resources used are up to date and present positive images that correctly reflect the equality policy of the school.

All school staff will:

- Set an example to pupils in terms of their treatment of one another and display tolerance and understanding towards the beliefs and cultures of others.
- Ensure that policies and procedures are implemented according to the school equality policy.
- Be vigilant for incidents of prejudice and act upon them.
- Encourage pupils to try new activities, challenging stereotypical roles and prejudice.

(Further information about prejudice-based bullying of staff is available in the Harassment and Bullying procedure to be found in Woodfield Policies on the school server)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Key indicators of the efficacy of this policy 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.
- The readiness of pupils to mix with one another in the playground and in team games.
- The readiness of pupils to work in different groups in the class setting.
- The language pupils use towards one another.
- The range of displays demonstrating different cultures in the school.
- The number and range of adults participating in school and social events.