

WOLFRETON SCHOOL and SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Policy Document EQUALITY POLICY

Written in July 2012 by:	
Headteacher	
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1. Mission statement

At Wolfreton School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of students will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Wolfreton, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice

The school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways:

Teaching and learning:

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all students 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 race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- Seek to involve all parents 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 students.

Admissions and exclusions:

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

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

3. Equal Opportunities for Staff

At Wolfreton we are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

Employer duties:

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

4. Equality and the law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by every school in line with legislation from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Disability Equality Duty (2005) and Equality Act (2006).

4a. Race Equality:

This section of the policy reflects the general and specific duties of schools as detailed in The Race Relations Act 1976 and as amended by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The school must give the highest priority to functions that have the potential to affect different racial groups in different ways. This will include;

- admissions and attendance
- behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- curriculum
- student's personal development and pastoral care
- staff recruitment and professional development.

Admissions and Attendance:

- Admission of students to Wolfreton is open equally to students from all racial groups.
- The attendance monitoring of all students is well established. Patterns of absence are identified and investigated for all students. The school recognises the right of students to take time off for religious observance according to the attendance regulations.

Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions:

- The school has a clear behaviour and discipline policy which seeks to be consistent and fair to all students irrespective of ethnicity. An investigation of a disciplinary incident would include examining and taking account of any complaints of alleged racial harassment.
- Exclusions are managed and monitored by the Headteacher according to DfE Guidance and they are analysed for patterns and trends. All exclusions are monitored and an annual analysis for Governors will include exclusions by ethnic group. Monitoring for particular groups will ensure that no group is disproportionately represented. Parents are informed of their legal rights and their right of appeal when a student is excluded from school.

Curriculum:

- All students have access to the full National Curriculum in Key Stage 3 and to a broad and balanced National Curriculum at Key Stage 4 which includes a core curriculum studied by all and an equal opportunity to choose optional subjects.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities which is fully accessible to all students. Similarly, extra-curricular opportunities are available and accessible to all interested students.
- Student progress and attainment is closely monitored at each key stage using prior attainment data. The progress of all students is monitored with target setting to ensure all students fulfil their potential.

Pastoral Care:

- The school's system of pastoral care is designed to provide support and guidance for all students to enable them to fulfill their potential.
- Any incidents of racial harassment or incidents which could be perceived or interpreted as racial harassment are investigated by pastoral staff promptly and are resolved and recorded in the school's Racist Incident Log (retained by the Headteacher) and reported to the ERYC LA and the governors. Support from senior staff will be available to any victims of racial harassment. Perpetrators of racial harassment will be disciplined.

Staff Recruitment and Professional Development:

- Recruitment and selection procedures are consistent with the statutory Race Relations Code of Practice for elimination of racial discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity and applications for teaching and non-teaching posts are open to applicants of all races.
- Job descriptions are clear and explicit and skills, knowledge and experience required relate directly to the tasks needed to perform the job. Interviews for all jobs are conducted by more than one person and interview notes are retained for at least a year.
- Professional development is available to all staff to develop their skills and career prospects.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Assess the impact of our policies, on pupils, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these pupils;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such pupils, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

4b. Disability

Definition of disability:

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

The DDA 2005 has also extended the definition of disability as follows:

- People with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities;
- Section 18 has been amended so that individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well-recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal duties:

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 placed a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people;
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Ensure there is an inclusive approach to all pupils so that they are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the Student Senate; fund raising etc;
- Provide opportunities so that disabled children can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE and dance and assemblies;

- Provide additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. providing a sign interpreter for a deaf parent; ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible parts of the school to support wheelchair users);
- Support disabled pupils in the period of transition between primary and secondary school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;

4c. Gender Equality

The Gender Equality Duty 2006 places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Under our general duty we will actively seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex and gender reassignment;
- Promote equality between men and women.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Support staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on a person's race, gender or ethnicity;
- Keep a record and report how these incidents are dealt with to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis;
- Review our approach to race, gender and disability bullying and harassment whenever we review our policy on behaviour.

4d. Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act 2006 made provision for regulations to be introduced to extend protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief to sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007, and they make discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

4e. Community cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

5. Consultation and involvement

It is a requirement that the development of this policy and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, students and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the policy:

- Feedback from parent questionnaire and parents' evenings;
- Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / CPD;
- Feedback from the school council, PSHEE lessons, whole school surveys;
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Governing body meetings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of governors

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender and disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

The role of the headteacher:

- It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Policy and he is supported by the Leadership Team and the Governing Body in doing so.
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Policy, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching:

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Assistant Headteacher/Support.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

7. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability, socio-economic status or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class Assistant Headteacher/Support where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headteacher and racist incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of discriminatory incident:

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;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic 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 or sexual orientation;
- 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 or sexual orientation.

Responding to and reporting incidents:

Staff who witness any incidents of this nature should tackle those involved immediately calling upon other colleagues as required. Dealing with incidents should be seen as vital to the well-being of the whole school. Details of the incident should be recorded and passed to the Assistant Headteacher/Support.

8. Publishing the plan:

In order to meet the statutory requirements to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme, we will:

- Publish our policy on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the policy through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications;
- Make sure hard copies are available.