



Equal Opportunities Policy

September 2017

Adopted by Governors on:

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Equalities Policy

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Ferryhill Station Primary School is proud to be a Rights Respecting School and as such value highly the UN CRC on the Rights of the Child. The convention is important to us in our policies and our daily lives here at school and equality of opportunity is a thread that encompasses all of the CRC. Article 1 – *Every child has all of the Rights contained in the Convention* and Article 2 the *Convention applies to everyone, whatever their race, religion and abilities.*

1. Introduction

We need an Equal Opportunities Policy because inequalities exist in our society. This can make the achievement of some people's full potential considerably more difficult to attain than others. Equal opportunities, in a school situation, means ensuring that every individual has equal access to an education or to career development in education. Equality means having the same rights and status as everybody else.

The law gives us guidance and provides positive duties for schools to promote equality.

This policy outlines how our school ensures that equality is being promoted, outlines what provision is available and what action is to be taken.

Ferryhill Station Primary School takes its commitment to the duty to promote community cohesion very seriously.

It is the responsibility of the whole school community to abide by our policy.

2. The Aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy

At Ferryhill Station Primary School we believe that every member of our school community has the right to receive education or employment in an environment that is free from prejudice. Every pupil has the right to receive the best possible education. We are committed to providing all our children with an equal opportunity to thrive in a setting free from discrimination in all its forms. We strive to be a school where adults and children, whatever their race, religion, gender, abilities, family and social circumstances, will find safety and respect for themselves, their families and their traditions. Our policy should ensure that every member of our community respects others and is respected, achieves his or her full potential and is welcomed and valued.

To make this commitment real, we aim to develop policies and practices based on the particular needs of our school and its community.

We aim to:

- *Ensure that children have the opportunity to reach their potential in all areas of school life*
- *Ensure that parents and children can make choices free from prejudice and stereotyping*

*Oppose any form of racism, sexism or any other form of discrimination
Value every pupil's language and cultural background promote respect between cultures*

3. Ethos and Atmosphere

The school positively values all the staff and children and welcomes diversity.

We seek to promote the achievement of all children. Teaching staff make time to praise children for their behaviour, contributions and their work. Each week we hold a merit board assembly where children are publicly awarded for achievement in all areas of school life. All children will have examples of their work displayed in classrooms and corridors.

Our assemblies and Religious Education promote justice, fairness and equality as well as informing children of many different religious stories, traditions and beliefs.

We have a School Council made up of children from each year group Y2-Y6 (with all ages represented), which meets regularly to discuss concerns and suggestions raised in classes. Each class elect their council members in a democratic way. The council initiates many discussions and makes contributions to the decision making process of issues concerning children in the school.

As per our Rights Respecting Policy, children and class teachers write their class charters and agree expectations at the beginning of each school year and address equal opportunity and how they are going to ensure equality in the classroom.

Playground behaviour is monitored and unacceptable behaviour challenged to ensure that children are safe and free from harassment. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with immediately. We have developed systems to deal with playground incidents, bullying and with racism. All staff follow these systems, and incidents of racism will be reported to the Local Authority each term in line with the authority policy. Offensive remarks or behaviour based upon prejudice or misinformation are always challenged.

4. An Inclusive Curriculum

At Ferryhill Station Primary School children have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills, concepts and experiences through their participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We have high expectations of all our children and do not make assumptions about ability or areas of interest.

The school aims to deliver an inclusive curriculum. Teachers have due regard to three key principles:

1. Setting suitable learning challenges;
2. Responding to children' diverse learning needs;
3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children.

The focus is far wider than disability and special educational needs. It includes children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The Foundation Stage makes the same commitment to meet the diverse needs of children through:

- careful planning;
- appropriate teaching strategies and support;
- providing a safe environment where racial, religious, disability, class and gender stereotypes are challenged.

An awareness of multi-cultural issues informs all our planning. Through geography and history topics, children learn about different societies, environments and cultures. Religion is taught within certain topics as well as in assemblies and as a subject in its own right.

Religions, cultures, traditions and societies are presented by the teacher with equal respect and value. When discussing these issues, teachers focus upon similarities as well as on differences.

Children who speak English as an additional language and those who have been identified as having educational or physical needs are considered in all aspects of planning, teaching and assessment.

Observing inclusive teaching strategies is a key element of the Senior Leadership Team's annual programme of monitoring.

5. Classroom Management and Organisation

All class teachers develop strategies to ensure appropriate access to classroom equipment and resources that include many strategies to support different learning styles and needs.

In the classroom, teachers regularly mix groups working together to enable children to work with a variety of class members.

6. Pupil Welfare and Guidance

Children are offered sympathetic support by their class teacher and other members of the school community.

We have a carefully planned programme of personal and social education that includes sex education.

There are planned opportunities, often arising from English and humanity topics, to discuss equality issues, to challenge stereotyping, discrimination and harassment.

This ensures that these issues are dealt with pro-actively, not just after an incident. We have developed a Respectful Relationships (Behaviour) and an Anti-Bullying policy which includes positive strategies and monitoring procedures.

7. Child Protection

Our utmost priority is the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care. The school based Child Protection Officer, the Headteacher, is always made aware of any concerns staff may have and appropriate steps are taken for the child's protection. Teaching staff receive regular training and support on how to act when suspicions of child abuse are raised and how to proceed with sensitivity if a child discloses information. The Headteacher, as Child Protection Officer, works closely with other agencies to promote the safety and well-being of the child.

A governor has been nominated to oversee Child Protection and Safeguarding at the school, and the Headteacher and designated governor have undertaken mandatory Safer-Recruitment Training in order to strengthen our recruitment procedures.

8 Resources

The term "resources" is used to include all the learning materials used in school. KS2 children are encouraged to challenge stereotyping, prejudice and omissions in existing resource material.

We aim to meet specific resource needs for children of different abilities. Please see the Special Needs Policy for further information.

9 Staff

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. Further details of some relevant legal provisions are set out in section 15 of this policy.

The school is concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

A commitment to equal opportunities is included in the selection criteria for all posts.

All new staff are given full access to policies from the outset. Key policies are also published on our website.

Teaching and support staff are encouraged to further their professional careers by attending courses suited to their posts.

10. Parents, Carers and the Community

We acknowledge and support the varied family circumstances in which our children live and we try to ensure that all carers and parents are always welcomed at our school. A regular newsletter is sent home to parents and carers (including separated parents when requested) and is uploaded to our website, detailing current events and other information about school life. This and the school website are our key forms of communication. In addition specific letters are sent home each term to inform parents of work being undertaken in their children's classes and in advance of class trips. A formal written report of children's progress is provided once a year. We will give help with understanding, or translate, any of the above if necessary.

Language can sometimes be used to exclude certain groups, therefore, we aim to use appropriate and accessible language in all written and verbal correspondence.

We hold three official Parent Consultation Evenings each year. Parents' commitments and availability are taken into consideration: therefore, as well as a parents' evening, appointments can be made directly with class teachers where required. Parents are also invited to make appointments with class teachers throughout the term to discuss particular concerns or issues. The parents of children who have additional special educational needs meet regularly with staff to develop support plans or review work completed (see SEND policy).

11 Equal Opportunities Affecting Particular Groups

There are times when an individual or group of people need additional support to assist them in reaching their full potential. It is our aim to recognise these areas for concern and to act accordingly. We have identified particular groups and we aim to address equality in the following ways:

Class

The school values all its staff and children. We are not judgmental of our families regarding their employment status and all people are valued regardless of social background and social or economic needs.

We recognise that some families have difficulty paying for school trips and arrangements can be made to provide support. We have a system of collecting dinner money that is sensitive and does not cause embarrassment for those receiving free provision.

Gender

The school recognises that girls and women have been, and in many cases are still discriminated against. We specifically encourage girls to achieve in curriculum areas such as Sport, Science and Information Technology that have in the past been dominated by male students. We actively encourage boys in activities that have traditionally been seen as in the female domain.

We encourage all our boys and girls to be assertive and articulate and to be proud of their abilities.

Resources should portray women and men, boys and girls in a wide range of roles and language used should always be non-sexist.

Language

Bilingualism is seen as a positive advantage.

We understand that children need time in which to feel secure and that they may experience a "silent" period. We recognise, however, that some bilingual children may also have special educational needs. Children are encouraged and given opportunities to use their first language.

Learning Ability

Ferryhill Station Primary School is proud to be a true "community school" and welcomes and provides for children of all levels of attainment. We recognise that all children are entitled to follow a broad and balanced curriculum and we aim to ensure that all children have access to such a curriculum.

Much time and care is put into the identification of children with educational needs, the planning, implementing and assessing of Quality First Teaching Notes and Support Plans. Children with an Education and Healthcare Plan or a statement of need are treated with equal respect and value. All staff have high expectations of all children.

There is a wide range of resources available to cater for children of all abilities and work is differentiated so that children can achieve personal goals.

Physical Ability

The school welcomes staff and children with differing physical abilities. We try to use resources that challenge stereotypical views of those with different physical abilities.

The terminology used to describe forms of physical ability should not be offensive. Staff are made aware of children's individual needs and how to cope with them (e.g. asthma attacks) in a safe, sensitive and practical way.

For more information about how the school meets the needs of children with differing learning or physical abilities, please see the SEND policy and Health and Safety Policy.

Race

Britain consists of a racially diverse population and we recognise that our multi-cultural society enriches schools in a positive way. All staff and children are encouraged to adopt a respectful awareness of other cultures and languages, to be thoughtful, tactful and to examine and be critical of their own racial prejudices. It is important to remember that racism can take place on a conscious and unconscious level.

Resources should give a positive view of our multi-racial society and encourage respect for people as individuals. Resources should present a global view of the world.

Religion

We welcome families of any religious or non-religious persuasion. All individuals have the right to express their religious views and practices within the constraints of the National Curriculum, whilst maintaining respect for the belief of others.

Lessons and assemblies regarding religion give children opportunities to learn about the variety of world religions. Children are encouraged to accept and respect a variety of religious and cultural views within the religions studied. Children are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and discuss diversity.

Displays and resources should reflect the diversity of religions. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from R.E. lessons and collective worship.

Sexuality

The school welcomes parents, carers and staff, whatever their sexual orientation.

Mental health and drug/alcohol abuse

The school is sympathetic to the needs of families with mental health issues or drug or alcohol abuse. Information given to teachers is treated with sensitivity and only passed on to other members of staff who have contact with the child and/or may need to be aware of a particular home situation as part of our commitment to safeguarding.

When teaching children about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, teachers are sensitive to the experiences of children in their class. We aim to give factual information in a balanced non-judgemental way. We encourage children to discuss issues and develop their own opinions.

Offensive language is challenged and staff explain why certain language is considered offensive to groups of people.

12. Dealing with Harassment

Harassment on account of ability, gender, race, religion, sexuality or social background are unjust and totally unacceptable. Harassment can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

We aim to take all incidents of harassment seriously and the school has a statutory responsibility to deal with racial and sexual harassment.

We have developed a clear procedure for dealing with complaints and grievances including those regarding harassment. For more information, please see the Complaints Procedure.

13 Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy was written with a great deal of thought and co-operation from members of our school community. The teaching staff and governing body have been consulted.

The Headteacher and Governors monitor the policy, its effectiveness and any issues arising.