



School Policy 3 - Equal Opportunities in Education

The Governors' Committee responsible for this is the Ethos and Pastoral Care Committee.

The person in the school who prepares the text of this policy for the Governors is the Headteacher. This policy was last reviews in June 2024, and is reviewed annually. The next review is due in June 2025.

Introduction

This policy brings together a number of different areas in which the school is responsible for providing equal opportunities for all pupils, students or staff. This relates particularly to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, with regard to the nine protected characteristics of: ethnicity, religion and belief, disability, sex (gender), sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, age, marriage/civil partnership, to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. The school also recognises its duty to promote community cohesion and, as a church school, to reflect its calling to value all people equally as human beings created in God's image.

Rationale of this policy

To ensure that all members of the school community are equally valued, that difference is recognised and respected and positive attitudes and relationships promoted, together with a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.

To promote open consultation and wide involvement throughout the school community.

To establish good practices in the area of staff recruitment, retention and development. To reduce and remove any existing inequalities or barriers and encourage pupils and students to participate fully in public life in a way which benefits society as a whole.

Responsibilities:

- Governors set this policy in the light of Local Authority and Southwark Diocesan Board of Education advice, ensuring that the school complies with legislation; they review it formally through the publication and review of specific, measurable objectives at least every 4 years; these objectives are informed by evidence relating to them which is collected and published by the school each year. They also ensure that the principles listed above inform the setting of policy in the different areas of school life.
- The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.
- All senior leaders have responsibility for implementing the policy in their areas of responsibility.
- Heads of Department make sure that all pupils can access the curriculum in their area and that the schemes of work, choice of topics and themes, organisation of learning and types of assessment used allow for this aim to be fulfilled. They are supported in this by staff with particular responsibilities for pupils with Special Educational Needs, English as an Additional Language, Looked After Children, those who are Disadvantaged and other such groups of pupils.
- Subject teachers are responsible for giving all pupils in each class good opportunities to learn well, participate fully in the lessons and complete work to a high standard; a consistent standard of discipline, high levels of concentration, attention to details in pupils' work and the ability to engage their interest and inspire them to work hard are all important for achieving this.

- Heads of Year make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to progress and achieve well as they move through the school. They monitor this progress through the use of relevant progress and attainment data as well as half-termly progress checks and annual reports. They are aware of factors at home or at school which might hinder a pupil's ability to do well and they are quick to alert colleagues and make arrangements to help overcome such hindrances, where possible. Heads of Year also have the responsibility of dealing with any incidents involving bullying or prejudice and promoting a just and charitable attitude towards others in pupils' dealing with one another and with those with whom they come into contact as part of school life.
- Form Tutors assist Heads of Year in these responsibilities with their own Tutor Group.
- All staff have the responsibility of promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos within the school, of dealing with any incidents related to prejudice or the unfair treatment of others which may occur and of supporting pupils with particular needs, disabilities or difficulties, which may in some cases arise from such prejudice or unfair treatment by others, in or out of school. Every member of staff has a role to play in making the school a genuine community in which all people matter equally and are treated justly.
- Pupils and students are also expected to play their part in making such a community possible and the School and Student Councils take a lead in this. Pupils are encouraged to report any concerns in relation to equal opportunities through their Tutor to their Head of Year. Parental concerns should also be addressed to the Head of Year in the first instance.

Principles

There is an ethical as well as a legal dimension to the school's responsibility to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities in their schooling. This affects policy and practice across different areas of school life. It means, for example, choosing teaching resources appropriately, being aware that pupils need challenging and encouraging to think through what influences their attitudes towards others and their perceptions of them. It affects the practical organisation of the school (such as seating plans or classroom displays, for example). It requires concepts such as equality, diversity and community cohesion to be properly explained and discussed, the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents to be respected and consideration given to reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. It also means making sure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Review, monitoring and evaluation of this policy is undertaken by the Governing Body annually, in the light of evidence relating to the school's progress towards its publicly stated equality objectives and of data provided for their consideration by the school and from other sources such as Raise-Online.

A separate policy relating to racial equality is appended to this policy (3a). There is also a separate policy relating to gender equality (3b) and one relating to disability equality (3c). These were put together in the past in response to particular legislation and have been updated since.