



Equal Opportunities Policy



Revised by:

Date:

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December 2015		
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Equal Opportunities Policy

Aims

- To achieve the highest standards of teaching and learning for all irrespective of ethnicity, religious belief, age, gender, ability and disability or social background;
- To encourage respect for and understanding of the beliefs, doctrines and personal circumstances of individuals;
- To involve, as far as possible, representatives from diverse groups, within our catchment, in school life;
- To consider when defining school policy and procedure the implications for different groups within our catchment;
- To work with other schools 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, learning and religious needs;
- To deal swiftly, effectively and firmly with comments and incidents which are detrimental to the well-being of others;
- To deploy EMA (Ethnic Minority Achievement) staff efficiently in order to address the needs of EAL students, if required;
- To seek to employ a range of staff representing the diversity of our catchment and variety of experience;
- To ensure the correct and appropriate procedures are used for the recruitment of staff.

Rationale

At Newbuildings Primary School, we benefit from the diversity of experience that our staff and 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 here to inform and enrich.

We invite visitors into our school to describe their own faiths, beliefs and ways of life. The children 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 children feel confident in discussing their own experiences and sharing their beliefs. We recognise the importance of enabling all our children and their families' equal access, as far as possible, to the facilities and activities we have to offer.

We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any gender bias and promoting equality of opportunity.

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, race or religion. We try to extend this welcome to all our catchment including staff, parents/guardians, children and the community.

Some of our children 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.

Definitions

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:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Disability or Physical needs
- Behavioural needs
- Learning needs
- Ethnic background
- Religious background

This will influence our approach to:

- Constructing and delivering the curriculum
- School Ethos
- Involving parents and the local community
- Sharing our experiences
- School procedures

- Admissions
- Employment
- Access to facilities
- English as an Additional Language, when appropriate
- Staff Well-being

Constructing and delivering the curriculum

Setting standards for all

All students are encouraged 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
- School Development Plan
- Staff up-skilling, training and retraining

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

Different students will excel in different subjects. As such, we continue to protect the broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that all children 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 a good understanding of what our children have learnt and how we can support them in the next stage of their learning. We emphasise the importance of involving children in self-assessment and enabling a genuine culture of consultation and involvement.

We identify trends within year groups and track the progress of individuals, increasingly through the use of data to check that all groups within the school are achieving their potential. Standardised testing in the core subjects balanced against CAT (Cognitive Abilities Tests) is an effective method of highlighting any areas for development.

Assessments are analysed to identify any emerging issues in relation to the performance of girls/ boys, children with special needs, travellers and children according to their ethnic origin. The information from these assessments is analysed to create a tracking tool for individuals and groups.

Discussion with the class teacher is an important feature as are 'focus' opportunities where time is taken to assess the needs of individuals.

Provision for children with English as an additional language will be separate from that provided for pupils with SEN.

Curriculum planning

All pupils have access to the full range of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to gain confidence in non-stereotyped 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. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of each other through carefully planned and regular, Circle Time lessons, PATHS lessons, PDMU lessons and RE lessons.

Senior management, core subject leaders and the SENCO regularly check planning to ensure that provision and resources are appropriate.

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 Mission Statement reads:

At Newbuildings Primary School we want to inspire all our pupils to believe in themselves and their abilities and that they can achieve throughout their whole lives. We want children to begin their school life with a high sense of self-esteem and we believe that building block is essential for being successful in school and in life. Our School Motto is 'Believe and Achieve'.

All adults and children in 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, cooperation 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;
- A positive behaviour policy where every opportunity is taken to praise and reward and encourage a sense of community and shared responsibility

- 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 reflects the value placed on every individual child.
- School publications reflect our commitment to equal opportunities
- That we have a communication friendly environment.

Collective Worship

All pupils have the opportunity to participate in collective worship. Pupils are encouraged to explore questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs.

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:

- Policy Consultation
- Volunteer workers
- School website
- Interacting on Facebook and/or Twitter
- Written communications such as newsletters/bulletins
- Parents information classes for the curriculum
- Annual consultations
- Parents' and open evenings
- Fund-raising and social events
- Attendance at assemblies
- Attendance at and participating in school events

Where parents are willing to assist with clubs we encourage them to do so. We encourage community use of our premises to provide facilities and support.

We host a daily Breakfast Club and After School and Homework Club (wrap-around care) in order to accommodate working parents and are committed to principles of the extended school.

Sharing our Experiences

Displays around the school which reflect a range of positive images and do not only feature the 'best' but ensure that we give every child an opportunity to show their work if they wish to.

We also aim to share our experiences with other schools, and when possible, meet with other schools to share and disseminate good practice.

Through this collaboration we have also built strong ties with the local secondary and grammar schools.

School Procedures and Considerations

A variety of home-life circumstances may have 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 consideration will be given to those engaging in community, family and faith based activities. We see these as an enrichment of the lives of our pupils and where possible, will work towards integrating these experiences into the school life.

Meeting the needs of groups and individuals

There are times during the school year when there will be specific allowance for individual children on the basis of their gender, religious beliefs, family background etc.

These include:

- Single-sex health and sex education lessons
- Intervention programmes to support children with individual needs;
- Ensuring that the arts, sports and music programme are celebrated to enable non-academic children to succeed.
- Adopting a multi-agency approach which seeks to support the work of other professionals
- Providing for and supporting parents who may have their own literacy and numeracy difficulties.

Admissions

The school will act in accordance with the admissions criteria approved by the EA and our Board of Governors. See Admissions Policy for details.

Employment

The staff recruitment policy reflects the Equal Opportunities Policy and is reviewed when necessary by the Board of Governors.

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 any candidate who wishes to receive it and endeavour to inform candidates of decisions as soon as possible.

Every attempt will be made to enable candidates to demonstrate their abilities and interviewees will keep an open mind about ethnicity, gender class, religion and disability.

Experience and maturity will be recognised 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.

Access to Facilities

The school's access plans are reviewed and updated regularly. 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 may have.

English as an Additional Language

In the event of the admission of ELA pupils attending the school, reasonable adjustments will be made to support and integrate all pupils, providing a full and balanced curriculum with consideration to specific needs. At present we have no children with EAL.

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. Time is allocated for meetings through 'Directed Time'.

We aim to support staff in maintaining a healthy work/life balance and recognise the value pursuing other interests.

Additional school events will be planned well in advance with consultation for all staff who will be required to attend.

When it goes wrong – dealing with issues

We take pride in the way in which our children work together irrespective of differences of religion, ability and social background. We are not ignorant to the fact that on occasions, racism, sexism and bullying may occur. We acknowledge its presence and are committed to actively campaigning against it. (See Anti-Bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, PDMU and RSE Policy)

We aim to tackle it by:

- Maintaining an overall positive school ethos
- Insisting upon high expectations in relation to children actions towards one another;
- Providing a range of opportunities for children to work
- 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;
- Taking advice from our stake holders and/ or the EA where there are worrying trends or pressures
- Applying our Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies and applying appropriate sanctions where rules are broken;
- Working in conjunction with parents to discuss unhelpful attitudes and difficulties with social skills

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 Board of Governors will:

- Ensure that there is an Equal Opportunities Policy in place and review its content and efficacy on a regular basis;
- 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, gender or religion.
- Ensure that where possible, existing staff are adequately trained to meet the needs of the pupils, and if necessary, additional staff or resources are deployed in the school
- Plan to increase the accessibility of the school to disabled pupils
- Give due regard to its own members and recruitment of new *Governors*

Policy Review

This policy will be approved by the Board of *Governors* and be reviewed as often as is necessary to stay within the realms of public law and legislation.