

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Introduction

Forest Park School is committed to ensuring that all pupils experience the same opportunities. We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil, on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

Practices and procedures

We recognise that all pupils are of equal worth regardless of cultural/ethnic background, religion, social circumstances, gender, ability and disability. The curriculum and whole ethos of the school demonstrate, that diversity is understood, is welcomed and appreciated within the school. Equal opportunities means that all children have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum which requires differentiation according to children's needs. It is not enough for such a curriculum to be offered by the school: it must be fully taken up by every pupil.

The school follows an Admission Policy, which does not permit gender, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission.

We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school and ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

In order to make access to the whole curriculum a reality for all pupils, we foster a climate in which equality of opportunity is supported and in which positive attitudes to equality are actively promoted.

We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning. 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.

Consideration is given to areas such as the careful choice of books for the library, displays and staff development involving self-assessment to raise awareness.

Resources are chosen that reveal positive images of individuals, groups and cultures which may not normally be represented, but whose inclusion would add to a wider, truer vision of society as a whole.

Pupils' names are accurately recorded and every effort made to pronounce them correctly. Pupils are encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

We recognise that school may be the only place where children are exposed to informed and balanced multi-cultural education. We are also aware that a changing proportion of our children come from ethnically diverse backgrounds and that we should use this as an opportunity to help enrich our school life.

The informal curriculum includes all other aspects of school life and covers areas such as children's behaviour and attitudes towards each other and between staff and children. It also concerns teaching styles, access to information and resources and organisation in the classroom and in the school in general.

We need to be sensitive to the fact that not all children will share the same beliefs as the main school culture.

We also make use of initial assessments of ability in comparing the success of groups of children as they undertake end of year tests. Any differences in the performance of boys and girls in standardised tests is evaluated and reported to the governors. Any relevant information is then be used to shape future planning.

There are many ways to demonstrate our commitment to equal opportunity. Some examples are listed below:

- Encouraging children to be flexible and democratic in group work.
- Registers to be arranged alphabetically.
- Monitoring the use of facilities to ensure equal access.
- Inviting all children to perform tasks such as moving equipment, tidying duties and serving refreshments at school functions.

Gender

The school's aims are to:

- Provide equal access to the whole curriculum for all pupils.
- Include opportunities to work in a variety of groupings undertaking a variety of roles including leadership, within those groupings.
- Have equal access to educational equipment and resources including practical equipment, the library and information and communication technology.
- Give pupils access to questions, instructions and teacher response.

We are aware that as children mature and their relationships with peers of both sexes develop their perception of sex roles alters. We also recognise that such perceptions are influenced by other factors including home, peer group and the media.

Children of both sexes have equal opportunity within, and equal access to, all areas of the whole school curriculum. This includes National Curriculum subjects; other subject areas currently outside the National Curriculum and areas such as extra curricular activities. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.

- Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of gender bias in both our teaching and learning materials and our teaching styles.
- Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid sexual stereotypes and gender bias.
- Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to boys and girls.
- All children are encouraged to work and play freely with others of both sexes.
- Opportunities are given for children to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of both sexes.

Teaching and groupings, such as assembly seating, lines for dismissal, classroom seating and playground areas are organised on the basis of criteria other than gender, for example, age, ability, friendship, alphabetical order, mix of ages.

Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting achievements.

- Discipline procedures – notably rewards and sanctions – are the same for both sexes.
- Children and all staff are encouraged to value each other and build up and maintain co-operative working relationships both within school and in the community, such relationships being based on mutual respect for each other.

Any differences involving gender which arise inside or outside the classroom are dealt with sensitively and are discussed with the children.

Race

At Forest Park School we aim to:

- Celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.
- Challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.
- Ensure that all pupils achieve as much as they can, and get the most from what is on offer, based on their individual needs.

Culture

At Forest Park School we aim to:

- Prepare children for life in a culturally diverse society.
- Provide an informed and balanced multi-cultural education.
- Ensure that bilingual pupils gain access to the whole curriculum.

Religion

At Forest Park School we aim to:

- Provide a religious education which is in line with the National Curriculum
- Inform children objectively about a variety of world religions and related issues.

Forest Park School is committed to tackle any issues surrounding racial discrimination at the school, and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations across all areas of school activity. With an up-to-date attitude and approach it has a strong traditional background with time honoured beliefs and moral standards. In providing a warm, happy, comfortable and stimulating environment all children are able to pursue their studies and activities, and achieve their full potential. Forest Park School has a strong and successful academic reputation with pastoral care a priority. Children are given a thorough grounding in core subjects and also benefit from a wider range curriculum to give them a wealth of experiences that will prepare them for their futures.

We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping may be caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

We endeavour to make our school welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of different cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So for example in the religious education curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children study the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

To receive the best education the school can provide, providing access to all educational activities organised by the school. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately. We will do all we can to support the victim. In order to prevent any repetition of the incident the following actions will be taken:

- The teacher will initially deal with the incident. A record of the incident will be made on the 'Racist Incident Sheet' (in the staff room). This will then be given to the Head or Deputy Head.
- The Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher will deal with the matter.
- If the incident happens at lunchtime, the children involved will be kept apart from each other, the allegation investigated and recorded on the form (in staff room), and a report made by the lunchtime staff to the Head or Deputy Head for investigation.
- The 'Racist Incident' form will be kept in the incident folder in the Head teacher's room.
- The child who caused the incident will be made aware that the incident is being logged and warned about future conduct. Where there is a pattern of racist behaviour from a child the parents will be asked to come to school for a meeting with the Head teacher.

The themes within the policy will be promoted in assemblies, classroom teaching and in the playground by all staff.

Disability

At Forest Park School we aim to:

- Welcome and include children and adults with disabilities.
- Educate all children to an understanding of the needs, feelings and rights of disabled people and an avoidance of negative assumptions and the promotion of positive attitudes.

Physical disability will not be used to prohibit any pupil from participating in school activities. Health and safety must always be a major consideration however, when deciding the extent to which physically disabled pupils can participate in any activity.

Social Circumstances

The school recognises that our catchment area draws children from a variety of social backgrounds. The school's aim is to create a caring school ethos where all individuals are treated with respect so that children are not affected by their financial, social or other circumstances.

Curriculum Organisation

Equal Opportunity is a dimension of the curriculum that not only pervades the entire curriculum and our delivery of it, but also requires specific teaching.

Examples of good practice could include:

- Focusing on another country as part of a study unit.
- Making and maintaining links with another country/culture through correspondence.
- Discussion of women's and ethnic minorities under-representation in history (e.g. Second World War or Medieval Realms).

- Analysing texts with children for bias.

The Role of the Governors

The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated fairly and with equality.

The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities.

The governing body will receive report on racist incidents within the monthly report.

The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or disability a child may have.

The Role of the Head Teacher

It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities and anti-racist policy and s/he is supported by the governing body in so doing.

It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The head teacher 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 in all aspects of school life, for example, in the assembly, where respect for other people is a regular theme, and in displays shown around the school.

The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

The Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child.

When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues.

All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We discuss the incident with the perpetrator and support the victim. We record all incidents on the school report form. All serious incidents are drawn to the attention of the Headteacher or Deputy Head who may involve parents in formal discussions with the child. Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

The school will regularly monitor the effectiveness of the policy on a weekly basis during the staff meeting. Relevant issues, problem areas and individuals will be discussed, recorded and if necessary an action plan formed.

Extra-Curricular Activities

A range of activities will be offered which will appeal to a variety of pupils' interests. Pupils will not be excluded on the basis of gender. Some activities will be restricted by age to ensure that all children do have opportunities to belong to a club.

School Council

The School Council will provide a voice for pupils. School Council views will be taken seriously and responded to sympathetically. Further information about the School Council is contained in the Staff Handbook.

DISSEMINATION

All members of staff and Directors will receive a copy of this document. Copies may be reviewed by parents on request to the school office

PROCEDURES FOR POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed, evaluated and updated annually to assess its relevance and effectiveness.