



# Oaklands School

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Main School and EYFS

#### **Basic Principles**

This policy is based on the Equality Act 2010, with latest updates in June 2014, together with the aims of the school.

Every member of the school is of equal worth and importance, irrespective of:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion and/or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

A good education for all our pupils is possible only if equality practices are an integral feature of the life at the school.

#### **Definition of equal opportunities**

Equality of opportunity is concerned with upholding the basic right of every individual to be treated and valued equally.

We recognise that society for all age groups contains inequalities and that it is important to educate against discriminatory practices that create negative feelings, cause frustration and limit individual potential.

The major barriers to equality in society are assumptions made about individuals or groups based solely upon class, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age and gender. Real equality can be achieved only when such assumptions are recognised and eliminated.

We count on the support of pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community in forming a policy that ensures that all members of the School community are valued and treated fairly.

This policy is informed by the Equalities Act 2010.

#### **Aims**

At Oaklands School we aim to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged because of class, ethnicity, religion, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, home language, special educational needs or ability.

Our aims in providing equality of opportunity are that all pupils will:

- feel valued as worthwhile individuals
- experience success and approval and make significant progress
- receive equal opportunities and equal access to all curriculum areas
- develop the skills and attitudes to recognise and take up new opportunities
- discuss and debate equality issues and make fair judgements
- learn about and value the talents and skills of women and men in Britain and throughout the world
- learn to recognise and challenge harmful stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes
- show respect and consideration for all members of our school and community.

### **Principles of the teaching and learning of equal opportunities**

Equality of opportunity is important because:

- it complements the ethos of our School that fosters regard for individuals and strives to reflect attitudes which value all cultures, especially those of our own pupils
- pupils need to learn to understand the need for an inclusive society and to behave appropriately.

Any member of the school acting in a manner contrary to the spirit of the policy should be made aware of the unacceptable nature of his/her behaviour. If necessary any incidents will be dealt with as per the relevant school policy, including the school's behaviour policies for pupils and staff.

### **Strategies for dealing with Equal Opportunities**

The curriculum for equal opportunities is organised on a spiral basis wherein equal opportunities plays an integral part in the discussion, planning and implementation of the whole curriculum. It also forms an essential part of our school organisation and practice.

Co-operative group work, individual work and class teaching are used where appropriate. The main emphasis is on presenting positive images of all members of society and enabling pupils to acquire the skills and confidence necessary to tackle new opportunities, role play, group discussion and circle time are strategies which will help them to achieve this.

Equal opportunities is relevant to all areas of the curriculum but has particular links with PSHE, behaviour and RE. Assembly time and items covered by the media can also assist in promoting and reinforcing equal opportunities issues.

The effectiveness of inclusive practice will be monitored by lesson observations, analysis of test data and discussion at staff meetings. Inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged by staff members if they hear or read adverse comments or statements from a child/children against another/others. This may be reinforced through the PSHE or SMSC programme within the classroom or through class/school discussions and assemblies.

The school has devised a detailed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy that explains how the individual needs of all children will be met (including how those children who are disabled or have special educational needs, will be included, valued and supported, and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them).

### **Strategies for ensuring progress and continuity**

Planning for equal opportunities is a process in which all teachers are involved.

The Headmistress and other members of the SLT monitor policy development and the production of schemes of work across the curriculum ensuring progression and continuity in equal opportunities throughout the school. They will support colleagues in their planning and in the implementation of the various schemes of work, and will take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for equal opportunities. They will keep up to date with developments in equal opportunities and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.

Acquisition of skills and attitudes necessary to create equality of opportunity is difficult to assess formally but the power of strategies to influence opinions and promote awareness of choices will be regularly monitored and revised where necessary. It is important to eliminate bias, in content, resources or attitude, which could disadvantage pupils or staff and inhibit their full development.

Feedback to pupils about their own progress in equal opportunities matters is achieved through the marking of work and individual or group discussions, as appropriate.

### **Daily Procedures**

Teaching materials and other forms of communication are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance with this policy.

Positive action, especially by pupils, will continue to be reviewed and made known to the wider school community.

Assembly times will reinforce good behaviour in the area of Equal Opportunities.

Staff meetings will include Equal Opportunities issues, with particular reference to this policy and its inclusion in curriculum policy.

Clear and constant messages will be given regarding the School's values and disciplinary procedures – in line with the Anti-bullying Policy.

### **Practice around the School**

- All pupils should have work displayed at some time during the school year
- Pupils with SEND must be given equal access to the curriculum
- All pupils should have equal access to extra-curricular activities
- All staff need to have an awareness of the demands of each individual, and should endeavour to give equal attention and speak in the same manner to all pupils, avoiding bias when praising or disciplining pupils.

### **Management and Organisation**

- We aim to review all policies to ensure that each area, whether a whole School issue or a curriculum subject, takes account of the specific ways in which Equal Opportunities applies
- We aim to monitor all exam results.

### **Ethos**

- To ensure that displays around the School reflect a variety of positive images
- To plan a programme of assemblies that include opportunities to enhance understanding of our multi-cultural society
- To encourage adults from a broad spectrum of society to visit the School, particularly to demonstrate role models that are non-traditional for their sex, ethnicity or disability

- To ensure that rewards and sanctions used in the School are the same for boys and girls and are applied equally
- To ensure that the school publications reflect the commitment to Equal Opportunities and are free from gender or cultural bias
- To encourage and develop positive links with the local community
- To make all visitors feel welcome.

### **Classroom Practice and Delivery**

- To ensure equal access to toys, equipment or resources
- To take steps to build the skills and confidence of the children in areas where they may traditionally be lacking in confidence
- To ensure Equal Opportunities for talking and listening in whole class discussion, group work and paired work
- To divide time equally between boys and girls
- To create an environment in which co-operation is central and in which children will work in a range of grouping contexts (single or mixed sex, mixed ability, random or compatible) comfortably and with purpose
- To teach pupils the skills to resolve conflicts and become assertive.

### **Curriculum Planning and Design**

- To review the School Curriculum and actively seek opportunities to address the issues of Equal Opportunities
- To ensure that the organisation of the School is sensitive to the needs of all
- To acknowledge the richness and diversity of our culture and society and to help prepare pupils for the part they will play
- To develop a positive attitude to equal opportunities by all staff, parents, pupils and all who participate in the School.

### **Assessment**

- To monitor assessment procedures to ensure that they are not distorted by stereotyped attitudes and expectations.

### **Resources**

- To prepare and select resources that are free from cultural or gender bias wherever possible.

### **Reviewing, Monitoring and Evaluating**

- The effectiveness of the School's inclusive practices that promote and value diversity and difference will be monitored on a regular basis by the SENDCo, Senior Leadership Team, Headmistress and/or Managing Principal.
- The Equal Opportunities Policy will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis by the same team, with changes made and published on the School's website.

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ALL STAFF**

### **Introduction**

As a staff we must not only be aware of areas where equality issues may need to be addressed, but also be equipped to deal with them effectively. All staff are entitled to equal consideration and respect for their needs and preferences.

Staff recruitment, Performance Management, training and promotion will be carried out fairly, in accordance with ISA guidelines relating to equal opportunities in employment and the School performance management guidelines.

Any staff member who feels he or she has a grievance that constitutes an issue covered by the Equalities Act 2010, has the right to demand positive action to eliminate the discrimination. Incidents relating to harassment, sexist comments or behaviour, conditions of employment or promotion opportunities should be reported to the Headmistress.

### **Working to maintain equality**

Our equal opportunities policy requires that we treat all individuals as of equal value. Discriminatory attitudes are unjust because they can limit the choice of individuals or groups and create low self-esteem.

It is our responsibility to encourage pupils to achieve their maximum potential in all aspects of their development and to help them become responsible and caring members of society. These guidelines relate to general issues concerning gender, race and equality as in reality these issues often overlap. First and foremost we must treat all people as unique individuals with their own personal identity. To counter preconceptions, it is important to observe and listen to what people actually say and do when interacting with others.

Inappropriate attitudes and practices by children towards other children should be challenged by staff and, if appropriate, discussions should take place to ensure attitudes are redressed.

It is vital to be aware of social hierarchy and areas where resources are manipulated by dominant personalities. We should establish rules to encourage a more balanced use of resources by all members within the School.

### **Working with parents and other agencies**

It is our responsibility to work with parents and other agencies to ensure that children with SEND have the opportunity to access all aspects of our curriculum.

### **SEND Code of Practice**

It is the responsibility of the SENDCo, Mrs Michaela Ridgeway, to ensure that the School follows the SEND Code of Practice. Details of the School's implementation of the SEND Code of Practice are available in the School's SEND Policy.

### **The Curriculum and Classroom Practice**

Staff should:-

- ensure that all pupils are involved equally in classroom tasks and decision making
- provide opportunities for pupils to raise and debate equality issues
- work towards a collaborative framework where pupils learn from and with each other and acquire mutual respect for each other's point of view

- enable pupils to experience a full range of teaching styles commensurate with their needs and abilities and to take on different roles in a variety of learning situations, as outlined in the teaching and learning policy
- should lead by example in promoting language which is free of gender, racial or other biased attitudes
- ensure that resources used should reflect all groups in society in a positive way
- ensure that all individuals have equal access to resources, space and teacher time
- allow pupils to experiment and take risks in a safe and caring environment
- create awareness that people's occupations, interests and attitudes are not pre-determined, (e.g. by race, gender, disability or class) but are a matter of individual choice
- impress on pupils that it is unjust to make assumptions based solely upon considerations of race, gender, disability or class.