

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY - CHILDREN

1. STATEMENT

We make a positive move towards eliminating all aspects of discrimination in education. We believe that non-discriminatory education should be cross curricular. It should not be seen as an isolated topic or subject within school. We aim to reduce all stereotyping, enabling each child the opportunity to grow and function within a diverse society, respecting all other individuals.

Equal Opportunities is about: -

- Widening life choices;
- Acknowledging individual needs;
- Fostering talents;
- Ensuring no-one is disadvantaged or discriminated against;
- Dispelling stereotyped ideas about expectation;
- Managing change for the benefit of all;
- Capitalising on investment;
- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and respect for all.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

1. The staff regard this document as a point of reference for future discussion and development.
2. To reflect current practice and thinking about Multicultural Education and Equal Opportunities.
3. To guide staff in their approach to Equal Opportunities.
4. To encourage and promote a team response which will demonstrate a sharing of ideas, skills and expertise.
5. To reflect a common purpose and practice amongst the staff towards Equal Opportunities that will be informative to: - Parents, Governors and Inspectors.

3. OUR BELIEFS

We believe that:

- Every child has the right to be recognised as a worthwhile individual who has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.
- Each pupil has the right to an education which enables them to feel understood, valued and supported.
- The images children form of themselves may be determined by the models presented by others both in and out of school.
- The images children form of themselves may be influenced by the character of the curriculum they are offered as well as the choices available to them.

We are committed to promoting genuine equality of opportunity for all regardless of:

- Race
- Gender
- Class or social background
- Physical ability
- Aptitude or ability
- Religious beliefs

3.1 AIMS

We have a responsibility to be aware of what constitutes discrimination and recognise that it is our duty to try and eliminate it.

We value the diversity of experiences which the children enjoy, and openly promote equality and justice.

We aim to:

- Establish a climate which actively encourages every child to achieve their potential without discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping;
- Give each child the confidence to cope with a variety of situations;
- Promote each child's individual concept of self worth;
- Enable each child to make informed choices and decisions in the future.

3.2 THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

1. We have a clear behavioural policy that promotes fair and equal treatment of both sexes.
2. Teachers give time to children who want to talk about anything either individually, in a group or as a class.
3. Our PSHCE policy and RE policy contain the moral elements of concern and care for others and children caring for themselves.
4. The staff are encouraged to be open and honest about their feelings, needs and concerns. This, combined with the emphasis on team work amongst teachers, non-teaching and support staff is intended to foster an atmosphere of collegiality where everyone's contribution is valued.
5. Newly qualified members of staff are given support and advice by a mentor.
6. The importance of the individual professional development of the staff is recognised and valued.
7. Parental support is of paramount importance and this is outlined in our 'Helping in School booklet' and Parent Partnership Policy document.

3.3 STAFF AWARENESS

- Meetings and discussions at various intervals to share ideas/views with a move towards greater personal awareness and self-evaluation.
- Staff to attend relevant CPD as appropriate.
- Incorporation of reference books and reading books on gender issues/anti-racism/disability etc. and also highlighting other cultures.
- Raising awareness of all support staff including Midday Supervisors by sensitive individual interaction.
- Conducting regular audits in school on issues.

4. THE CURRICULUM

At Crosshall Infant School Academy Trust we seek to provide a curriculum that is universally accessible.

The curriculum is constantly reviewed to ensure that it is: -

- Appropriate;
- Relevant;
- Differentiated;
- Inclusive;
- Representative;
- Sensitive;

We endeavour to provide a curriculum which endorses an understanding and equality of respect for all.

We seek to provide a curriculum which prepares children to take their place in a multicultural society.

5. CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

We actively promote all anti-sexism/racism throughout our teaching day and introduce other cultures within our topic based planning.

6. SPECIAL NEEDS

All children who have special educational needs are given support within the school in order to ensure they have equal access to the curriculum. The school funds additional support for children who have learning difficulties.

7. ORGANISATION

We use collective times such as assemblies to promote awareness of other cultures - reflecting traditions and beliefs which may be Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Jewish, maintaining a balance between them.

Children of all religious faiths are welcome in our school. Our assemblies are based on the Christian faith with one of the above cultures being introduced. In line with the RE curriculum.

A variety of other cultures will be introduced to the children through music, dance, literature, art work and festivals.

8. RESOURCES

8.1 BOOKS

The influence exerted by messages and pictures in books can be very powerful. The deeper aims of multi-cultural education in eradicating ignorance, prejudice and racism can be fostered if the books children use help them to recognise and confront stereotypes and acquire understanding of other cultures.

We choose books carefully to reflect a balanced view of all cultures. This is essential if young people are to participate fully in today's world. The way of life of social minority groups such as travellers, as well as the many ethnic minority groups who are resident in this country, maintaining the identity of their own language and culture, needs to be presented sensitively. We feel this is important whether or not ethnic minority groups are present in the school community.

We look to eradicate racism/sexism when buying books for school. We also buy books which show disabilities as well as alternative cultures/lifestyles. We engage children in discussion about stereotyping in books rather than ignoring this - make children aware of fairness.

8.2 VISITORS

People from all cultures are welcome in our school. We try wherever possible to show alternative gender - typing e.g. if a doctor/dentist is to be linked with a topic, or show female and male doctor/dentist etc. We challenge stereotypes such as "men become doctors, women become nurses".

8.3 DRESSING-UP CLOTHES

Provision is made for showing alternative clothing e.g. saris. We also provide clothes for "male nurses", for example, and posters/books/teaching materials incorporating these messages.

8.4 CHOICE OF SONGS IN MUSIC LESSONS AND ASSEMBLY

All songs chosen, do not promote sexism/racism in any form. We sing songs from a variety of cultures.

9. LANGUAGE

All staff monitor their use of sexist/racist language (not linking certain ideas such as "pretty girls", "strong boys") and always try to challenge sex-role stereotyping ("strong girls" "gentle boys").

10. EXPECTATIONS

- Staff are aware of their expectations in terms of gender or race, and how this might affect children's education.
- Girls are encouraged to play with "traditionally" boys toys and vice-versa.
- The choice of children to do certain tasks is monitored e.g. try to choose girls to move tables, boys to sweep floor etc. thereby challenging sex-role stereotyping.

11. HOME BACKGROUND

We make ourselves aware of the children's home background and do not demean this, whilst providing a positive contrast when a specific occasion arises. Where possible, "helping parents" within the class are encouraged to respect the school's policy on this matter. School Governors are also informed so that we can all work together to reduce sexism/racism and promote equal opportunities.

12. SCHOOL LITERATURE

Letters and home/school booklets aim to support our policy, using the notations he/she, s(he) or "she" rather than "he" to demonstrate that the school holds boys and girls to be equally important as each other. We include a statement of our commitment towards offering equal opportunities, and a well-informed, sympathetic understanding of the world in which we live, in our Prospectus.

13. PREJUDICE

Dealing with incidents of overt racism and sexist behaviour

All prejudice related incidents are logged in the Prejudice Reporting for Education and information is sent to the Local Authority and reported to the Governing Body.

Such incidents can provide valuable teaching opportunities. Discussion with the class or groups of children often reveals that they are themselves aware of the inappropriateness of their behaviour.

We seek to lead such discussion in a non-judgmental, unemotional manner, remembering we are dealing with key values and attitudes. We challenge prejudice and bias by guiding the children to discover and recognise the injustice for themselves.

As teachers we monitor not only the curriculum and resources but also our behaviour.

This document will be reviewed annually and the checklists in Appendix 1 and 2 will be used to focus our minds on the important issue of 'equal opportunities' throughout the school.

Approved: April 2025

Next Review Due: April 2026

APPENDIX 1

1. REVIEW QUESTIONS

1.1 ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

- Are expectations of children high regardless of disability, ethnicity, gender and social factors?
- Does all monitoring take account of the above?

1.2 ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOUR AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Are positive attitudes rewarded and encouraged?
- Are prejudicial incidents monitored and acted upon?
- Does the school encourage positive partnerships?

1.3 TEACHING

- Does curriculum planning take account of all backgrounds and particular needs of children?
- Do activities challenge stereotypes and assumptions?
- Do classroom arrangements motivate or inhibit performance of particular groups?
- Are steps taken to ensure that assessment is free of stereotypes and biases and suitable for children with special educational needs?

1.4 CURRICULUM

- Are any children denied access to the curriculum?
- Does the planning of the curriculum reflect social, cultural and religious perspectives of all pupils?
- Are parents aware of their right to withdraw pupils from certain activities?

1.5 SPIRITUAL, MORAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL

- Are all cultures represented and all beliefs respected?
- Are similarities and differences taught in a way which promotes respect?
- Is the school behavioural policy sensitive to the range of views and beliefs within our community?
- Are all visitors made welcome in school?

1.6 SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PUPILS' WELFARE

- Are all behaviour incidents recorded and dealt with promptly?

1.7 PARENT PARTNERSHIP

- Do we encompass links with the wider community?
- Are home school liaison procedures effective?
- Are all parents/carers made to feel welcome in the school?

1.8 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Are there high expectations of all pupils?
- Does school planning take account of the needs of all people?

1.9 STAFFING, RESOURCES AND ACCOMMODATION

- Are all staff given equal support and opportunity to progress?
- Do all pupils have access to resources and provision?
- Does the staffing of the school reflect equality of opportunity for development, promotion and support?

- Are resources appropriately free of stereotypes and promote positive images in relation to gender, ethnicity, culture and ability?

1.10 EFFICIENCY

- Does financial planning take into account the needs of all pupils regardless of the above?
- Are staff and resources deployed to maximise support to pupils who may have particular needs?

APPENDIX 2

CHECKLISTS TO REVIEW ASPECTS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SCHOOL

Classroom Organisation for Equal Opportunities

AS TEACHERS WE WILL:

Integrate boys and girls at desks/tables.

Integrate children for activities in and out of the classroom, e.g. P.E., lining up.

Record boys' and girls' activities in the same way.

Encourage similar behaviour from girls and boys in the same school situation.

Use drama/history to explore different roles and help the pupils in developing empathy and understanding of each other.

Introduce new equipment and toys in a non-stereotyped way.

Actively challenge children when they behave and play in stereotyped ways, and present alternatives e.g. by modelling different behaviours.

Eliminate any prejudicial bias in school resources - reading schemes, topic work, wall displays.

Introduce information on the achievements and contributions of women, men, ethnic groups and people with disability.

Plan a programme of activities to develop a child's visual/perceptual and spatial skills alongside language and number skills.

Continue to be aware of the extensive research which shows that in mixed sex classes boys demand and receive more teacher time and attention whilst girls' contributions are constantly under-valued and underplayed.

Be aware of prejudicial attitudes among pupils and actively support anti-sexist and anti-racist attitudes and behaviour in the classroom.

Be sensitive to the relative effects of competitive and collaborative work and to the style of discipline used in the classroom.

Be aware of institutional pressures which might cause me to compromise my professional standards regarding equal opportunities for girls and boys.