



POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION

Rationale

The school is required to conform to the wishes of the Equal Opportunities Commission that opposes all forms of discrimination and states that schools should provide equal opportunities for all children and staff. The philosophy of 'inclusion' encompasses equal opportunities for all.

OUR AIMS

1. To promote equality and inclusion

Our school will promote equality of opportunity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.

2. Equal Protection

Our school will provide equal protection to all members by tackling any incident of discrimination.

3. Participation

Our school will work in partnership with all local agencies, public bodies, schools and others to foster a sense of belonging to an integrated and mutually supportive society in which diversity is valued and welcomed. We will promote civic awareness through PDMU and our Pastoral Care work.

4. Dialogue

Our school aims to support and encourage dialogue, shared learning and mutual understanding of different faiths and cultural backgrounds.

5. Capacity Building

The school will encourage an understanding of the complexity of our history through participation in the Shared Education Programme. We will support cultural projects which highlight the complexity and overlapping nature of our identities and our global connections.

6. Disability Provision

As a school we aim to secure training, advice and support for all staff to promote disability awareness. We continually review specialist resources and provision, to ensure needs are met and inclusive practice is supported. We will work in close partnership with parents / carers to support the inclusion of their children with needs and/or disability.

We aim, within Woods Primary School, to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices - in particular those relating to gender - do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

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 bias or stereotyping and promoting equality of opportunity.

Gender

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.

Teaching and other groupings, such as dinner queues, assembly seating, lines for dismissal, classroom seating and playground areas are organised on the basis of criteria other than gender, for example, class, ability, friendship. Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and children.

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

We will ensure that no staff member is discriminated against because of his or her gender. All teaching and non-teaching posts are not sex-specific. Both men and women are encouraged to teach all age groups and each Key Stage.

Race or cultural background

Under the amended 'Race Relations Act' (2001) it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of his or her race. In following this through we will ensure that children/parents/staff from different ethnic groups, cultures, religions and background are provided equality of opportunity and are not discriminated against either openly or covertly. Through our teaching we take positive steps to promote mutual understanding and respect for people from different backgrounds.

Age

We make efforts to ensure that children of different ages are provided with appropriate activities and that children are not excluded from activities solely on the grounds of their age. We will ensure that all staff are given equal opportunities within the school regardless of age.

Ability

We want all our children to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes and practices do not prevent any child from reaching their potential whatever their ability. We will make every effort to ensure that all children receive equality in teaching time and support.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as "physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". Disability is not about wheelchair users only; it includes dyslexia, epilepsy, dysphasia, dyspraxia, diabetes, ADHD, sensory impairment and cancer. These exemplars are not exhaustive.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, places new duties on all Boards of Governors of schools to avoid discrimination against disabled children. It also makes it unlawful to be discriminated against because of a disability in areas of employment or access to goods, facilities and services.

We will endeavour to provide appropriate access both physically and through the curriculum, for all children with disabilities with appropriate support when required, from the local authorities and outside agencies. Staff with disabilities will be afforded the same support.

Equal opportunities for all children

We will:

- Encourage all children and staff to value each other and build up and maintain co-operative working relationships both within school and in the community, based on mutual respect for each other.
- Ensure all children will have equal opportunity within and equal access to all areas of the whole school curriculum. This includes both the programmes of study and attainment targets for the Northern Ireland Curriculum and outside areas such as extra-curricular activities.
- Take account of pupils' cultural backgrounds, language needs and different learning styles in learning and teaching
- Encourage all children to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.
- Ensure all learning materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and overt or covert discrimination.
- Ensure teacher time, specialist support, attention and all resources are given equally to all children as appropriate to their needs.
- Encourage all children to work and play freely with each other

- Ensure discipline procedures - notably rewards and sanctions - are the same for all children in each class.

Parents

We will ensure that each parent/carer is treated in a manner that ensures they have full and equal access to support, information and resources.

Staffing

We will ensure that in appointing staff we endorse the statements set out in this policy and will avoid discrimination by gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, culture or age. All staff have equal access to in-service training and posts of responsibility.

Monitoring and review

All members of Staff when auditing aspects of Ethos throughout the school will regularly review practices and approaches involving equal opportunity in terms of age, ability, disability, gender, religion, race or cultural background. We will also audit our school policies to ensure they take account of inclusion and equal opportunities for all. Practices and procedures will also be amended in light of any changes to legislation. We will monitor pupil attainment/achievement and progress to ensure that we have equally high expectations of all pupils and no pupil is underachieving because of race, gender, ability, disability, age or culture. The Principal will be responsible for the overall monitoring and reporting of issues relating to equal opportunities.

Reviewed 10th January 2019

Agreed 17th January 2019

Next Review January 2022

Signed: _____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

_____ (Principal)