

DOWN HIGH SCHOOL

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY



“NOTHING ACHIEVED WITHOUT EFFORT”

Title	Equality and Inclusion Policy
Summary	This policy sets out the school’s commitment and approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
Purpose	To ensure that all pupils, parents, and staff are aware of this policy and its application in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all pupils and staff.
Operational Date	September 2022-June 2026
Frequency of Review	Every 4 Years

1. Introduction

Down High School is committed to equality and inclusion.

We recognise the value of a diverse school environment and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics. There is an ethos and culture of inclusion in our school for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Down High School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people and where all members of our school community are treated equally.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment. As a school community, we

recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our school.

Down High School believes that education is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to and advancement in employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment.

All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities.

2. Mission and Values

At Down High School, **“we believe that through high aspirations, perseverance and commitment every pupil can enjoy school life as they succeed and fulfil their potential”**. We value the positive relationships that exist within our school community and believe this helps to create a high trust culture which allows positive behaviour to prevail. **There is an ethos and culture of inclusion in our school for all pupils and staff, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation**. The aims of the school reflect our commitment to creating an inclusive school community.

We aim to:

- Promote wellbeing by providing a safe, caring, and supportive environment for every member of our school community.
- Nurture life-long friendships and positive relationships through respect for diversity and sensitivity towards others.
- Foster personal qualities such as kindness, optimism, integrity, and respect.
- Develop leadership, independence, confidence, and resilience in every pupil.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and resourcefulness in pupils who, as fully engaged learners, embrace the knowledge and skills required for a changing world.
- Inspire participation, effort, and excellence in the rich extra-curricular life of the school.
- Raise pupils’ awareness of the world around them and their wider responsibilities as members of society.
- Celebrate the strong partnerships within the Down High School community.

Down High School has developed this policy as a statement of its commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within our school community. It seeks to ensure that all members of the school are valued equally and that our community is enriched by the diversity that everyone brings and are committed to creating a safe, welcoming environment for all, knowing that differences are respected.

3. Equality and Inclusion – School Policies

It is our belief that equality and inclusion is central to all our policies and that we maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all. This ensures that all staff, pupils, and their families feel valued and supported and makes sure that equality and inclusion is evident in everyday school life. Inclusion underpins all our school policies, including,

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- Assembly Themes
- School Development Plan

4. Responsibilities

The Down High School **Board of Governors** have overall responsibility to:

‘Promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school’ ‘Every school a good school – the governors’ role’ (Department of Education NI, August 2019)

The Governors have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

The **Principal** is responsible for:

- Ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation.
- Ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.
- Following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- Ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff.
- Ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

The **School Senior Leadership Team** is responsible for:

- Putting the school’s equality and diversity policies and codes into practice.

- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out.
- Following the relevant procedures and taking action where necessary.

The School's Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Team (led by the Designated Teacher) will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal.

All School Staff (Teaching and Non-Teaching) have a responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

Pupils/students are responsible for:

- Respecting others in their language and actions.
- Following all the relevant school policies in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.

5. How do we promote Equality and Inclusion?

Down High School promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following activities:

School Practices

- Continue to develop a whole school approach to promoting equality and inclusion
- Our mission statement is inclusive
- Promotion of inclusion and diversity through school and year assemblies
- Use a range of resources and teaching approaches
- Use appropriate terminology and language
- Tackle stereotypes
- Challenge homophobic, transphobic, racist, sectarian or any other type of bullying
- Increase the visibility/role modelling of minority groups
- Set clear expectations about acceptable behaviour
- Have Diversity and Inclusion as an annual topic at Board of Governor meetings
- Have Diversity Training for all staff
- Discussing how the school promotes equality and inclusion with the School Council
- Support pupils appropriately with Access Arrangements for internal and external examinations

Facilities/ Services

- Have allocated accessible parking
- Have accessible toilets/changing facilities
- Have an accessible main entrance and building
- Have flexible payment schemes when planning trips and extra-curricular activities
- Help young people to access advice from support organisations including notice boards with clear and accessible information and contacts

- Promoting and using interpreting services
- Using translated documents and services where necessary

Curriculum

- Examining where and when themes around inclusion and diversity might be embedded into topics within each curriculum area
- Holding inclusion and diversity themed events
- Participating in Shared Education
- Ensuring that staff with specific areas of responsibility consider the implications of Equality and Inclusion with their teams

6. Monitoring the Success of the Equality and Inclusion Policy

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods:

- School Council meetings to have Equality and Inclusion as an agenda item.
- The number of bullying incidents by equality characteristic to be monitored and appropriate action taken, as necessary.
- Embedding of inclusion and diversity across the Personal Development curriculum to be monitored
- Number of comments and complaints in relation to equality, inclusion, and diversity to be monitored.
- A record of diversity and inclusion training / information presented to staff/ pupils to be kept.
- Positive stories on equality and inclusion to be highlighted.
- Feedback from pupils, staff, parents, and the wider community to be sought.

7. Complaint's Procedures

The school has a robust and transparent complaints procedure. If a complaint is made regarding equality or inclusion, the complaints process will be fairly and systematically applied. Access to the complaints procedure can be found on the schools website at https://storage.googleapis.com/siteassetswd/129/docletter/20200811062254_80_DHS_Co_mplaints_Procedure_Revised_2020.pdf

8. Review cycle of policy

The Equality and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed and, if required, updated every **four** years in line with our school policy review cycle.