

The Federation of Heathfield and St Francis Schools



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STATUTORY POLICY

The Federation of Heathfield and St Francis Schools Equality Policy

Policy by: Jo Rivers, Co-Head of School

Date: November 2020

Signed: 
Chair of Governors: Chris Mouat

To be reviewed: November 2024

This policy is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The articles relevant to this policy are:

Article 2 – The Convention applies to everyone, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, and whatever type of family they come from.

Article 12 – Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 14 – Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this right

Article 20 – If a child cannot be looked after by their family, governments must make sure that they are looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture and language.

Article 22 – If a child is a refugee or seeking refuge, governments must ensure that they have the same rights as any other child. Government must help in trying to reunite child refugees with their parents. Where this is not possible, the child should be given protection.

Article 29 – Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.

Article 30 – Every child has the right to learn and use the language, custom and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 37 – No child shall be tortured or suffer other cruel treatment or punishment. A child should be arrested only as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. Children must not be put in a prison with adult's and they must be able to keep in contact with their family.

Article 40 – A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to help from a lawyer and a fair trial that takes account of their age and situation. The child's privacy must be respected at all times.

INTRODUCTION

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our federation. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole federation community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our federation community and enabling an open culture.

National and Legal Context

We recognise that we have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the federation community to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (applicable only to staff), disability, race, gender, maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual orientation and marital status (applicable only to staff).

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Federation Context

Heathfield and St Francis Schools are a special federation for pupils with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties. All our pupils have either an Education Health Care Plan. Due to the nature of the federation every child has at least one area of special educational needs.

Our staff profile of the federation is largely female with the pupil profile showing a much greater proportion of boys. Our pupil population is predominately White British. A very small percentage of our pupils have English as a second language. We currently have no pupils with refugee or asylum status.

Our catchment area mainly covers Fareham, Gosport and the surrounding area, encompassing a small percentage of pupils from the naval community. The proportion of pupils receiving free federation meals is above average.

PRINCIPLES

To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

1. All pupils, families and staff are of equal value

We see all pupils, potential pupils, their parents and carers, and staff as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and gender identity
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age
- Whether or not they have a connection with the forces community
- Whether or not they have refugee / asylum status
- Whether or not English is their first language

2. We recognise and respect difference

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we understand that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that girls and boys, men and women have different needs
- Religion and belief – we acknowledge that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we appreciate that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers

- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- Positive attitudes and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- An absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

4. We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

5. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

6. We consult and involve to ensure views are heard

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation; and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

7. We aim to foster greater community cohesion

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

8. We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information can be found on page 7.

9. We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every year based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in the separate Equality Objectives documents and take into account both national, county and federation level priorities.

Application of the Principles Within this Policy Statement

The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the federation curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the federation
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider federation community

Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice-Related Bullying

The federation is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the federation complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons
- Support pupils in their class who have additional needs

Equalities Information

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We have considered how well we currently achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

We have also involved staff, pupils, parents and others in the following ways:

- All stakeholders involvement in the development of the federation's visions and values
- Parent questionnaires
- Involvement of the student council
- Staff survey/questions

Pupil-related Data

Governors review annually a range of data including the following:

- Pupil progress against yearly targets
- Comparative data in relation to pupil premium children
- Attendance levels
- Exclusions and rewards
- Rates of bullying/harassment/behaviour related incidents
- Results of parent/carer questionnaires

Staff Data

Where federations/schools have less than 150 staff, the Governing Body will not be required to publish information in relation to their staff. Federations/schools will still require the information on the characteristics of their workforce to enable them to consider the impact of their policies and practices on particular characteristics and to determine whether objectives need to be set in relation to the workforce.