



Solefield School

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

By celebrating diversity and actively promoting equality, we want pupils and staff to feel valued, know that they are valued and respect others within a culturally inclusive environment. In order to ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the core of the school's ethos. We aim to promote inclusion, actively tackle any form of discrimination and actively foster social cohesion in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards creating a cohesive community.

Links

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by government publications and other external guidance, including:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (KCSIE)
 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (updated Feb 2019)
 Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (updated Aug 2018)
 Teacher Standards 2011 (introduction updated 2013)
 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
 Independent School Standards Regulations 2014
 Statutory Framework for EYFS (updated July 2020)
 Data Protection Act 2018 Overview and GDPR (updated Aug 2020)
 Equality Act 2010 (updated June 15)
 Charities Act 2011

This policy works in conjunction with a range of internal school policies and procedures, including:

Safeguarding Policy
 Staff Code of Conduct
 Behaviour Policy
 Anti-Bullying Policy
 Cyberbullying Policy
 Online Safety Policy
 IT Acceptable Use Policy
 RSHE Policy
 Staff Recruitment Procedures

Whistleblowing Policy

Admissions and Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy is available on the school website and can be made available on request from the Headmistress. All school policies can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

Scope

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of the school community, including parents and visitors.

The school is committed to a zero tolerance policy in relation to less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic under The Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are defined as:

Age
Sex
Gender
Disability
Gender identity or reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership
Pregnancy and maternity
Race and ethnic origin, including colour
Religion or belief
Sexual orientation

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes (including 'banter') that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated.

Policy Aims

The aims of this policy and the school's ethos as a whole are to:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics

Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language

Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community

Comply with the school's equality obligations contained in The Equality Act 2010

Provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

Provide a learning environment and curriculum where all individuals feel valued and feel they have a sense of belonging

Celebrate and value diversity at school and in society as a whole

Prepare pupils for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and global community

Include and value the contribution of all families and our wider community to our understanding of equality and diversity

Provide and promote positive information about the diversity of UK society

Actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of the school community learn from these experiences

Embed equality and inclusion throughout staff development, our curriculum and cocurricular provision

To achieve our aims we will:

Involve, where reasonably practicable, all members of the School community in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures

Publish and share school policies to the whole School community

Collect and analyse data (such as admissions and recruitment data, examination results, engagement in school and community initiatives, pastoral records) to monitor any potential disadvantage amongst the pupil or staff body and to ensure processes are bias-free

Promote openness at all stages of engagement of the admissions and recruitment processes, recognising that early awareness of need leads to better provision and arrangements

Help to overcome any potential barriers to learning by providing for pupils' diverse needs and learning styles including any learning or pastoral support needs and/or disabilities a pupil may have, including exam access arrangements

Offer a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that provides equal opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of difference, to maximise their potential and thrive.

Ensure RSHE, assemblies, form times and the wider school curriculum promote and celebrate equality and diversity, remaining aware of a hidden curriculum and agenda and subjects that may suggest unconscious gender bias

Operate a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour

Become an equality champion and community leader in promoting equality and cohesion, challenging discrimination and celebrating diversity

Actively challenge stereotyping, bias and discrimination within all aspects of school life and literature, ensuring we learn from these experiences

Work in partnership with staff, families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and help tackle discrimination, recognising that inclusion cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community

The Legal Framework

Discrimination can take the following forms, including:

Direct Discrimination - This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their (or a family member's) actual or perceived protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination - This occurs by applying a provision, criterion or practice, which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Victimisation - This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.

Harassment - This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose OR effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Disability Discrimination - This includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Discrimination by association - This includes treating a person less favourably because they are linked or associated with a protected characteristic.

Responsibilities

It is the Governors' responsibility to:

Ensure that the school complies with its equality obligations

Ensure that the school's policies and procedures are monitored in light of this policy and the school's wider equality obligations

From time to time be involved alongside the Head in dealing with serious breaches of this policy.

It is the Senior Leadership Team's and Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator (DK)'s responsibility to:

Ensure effective implementation of this policy and its procedures

Ensure that all staff are sufficiently aware and trained within equality & diversity

Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice within the school, be it by staff, pupils, parents or visitors

Have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimization or harassment

Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, this policy.

Monitor school data to identify where bias may be playing a role in decisions or outcomes, a number of areas will be routinely monitored, including: admissions data, bursary applications, recruitment data, examination results and post 18 destinations. This will be done within the GDPR and confidentiality of personal information protocols and will be reported in such a way that does not identify any individuals.

Ensure transparency in assessing the impact of the school's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and accountable for future goals.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

Positively role model inclusive and anti-discriminatory behaviour, including a spirit of reflection and willingness to be open to challenge.

Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy

Be alert to and actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimization, harassment or bullying, including banter

Promote an inclusive curriculum, identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture, taking all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation from taking place

Make effective and reasonable adjustments where appropriate to meet the individual needs of staff, pupils and visitors

The school expects staff to commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

It is important to appreciate that an employee is personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment, whether or not the employer is also liable.

Any attempt to instruct, cause or induce another person to discriminate, harass or victimise a third person will also amount to unlawful discrimination and any employee doing so will be subject to disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of pupils to:

Positively promote inclusive and anti-discriminatory behaviour, including a willingness to reflect on attitudes and/or behaviours and be open to challenge.

Support any measures introduced by the school to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and report any issues associated with equality and diversity to their form tutor, Pastoral Lead or the Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator.

Be alert to and actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimization, harassment or bullying, including banter. This includes identifying and using the school's reporting systems to challenge bias and stereotype within the curriculum and in the school's culture, taking all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation from taking place.

These responsibilities run alongside the school's behaviour expectations.

The school places a high premium on:

Respect for Self (Value Yourself)

Respect for Others (Value Others)

Respect for our Environment and our Community (Value our World)

This is fundamental to all that goes on at Solefield. Any actions, words or attitudes which show a lack of respect for others will be taken very seriously. Instances of discrimination and bullying will be dealt with firmly and sensitively. We require pupils to avoid any form of unfair bias, discrimination and unkindness to another member of the community. We also require anyone made aware of any such behaviour to report it. Incidents are recorded on our Behaviour/ Anti-Bullying Log. The school's approach to wellbeing means we aim to educate, help and support pupils to understand their responsibility towards others, feel heard and valued and learn from their experiences. Bullying and discrimination will not be tolerated. Anyone who continues to bully or discriminate against others will have their membership of the school community reviewed by the Headmistress.

Inclusion within the life of the school

No pupil or staff member should be made to feel uncomfortable because they differ from the majority, e.g. in ethnic or social background, in terms of academic ability, neurodiversity, being from financial disadvantage, having English as an additional language or a special educational need and/or disability.

Pupils with particular areas of disadvantage, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities will be given assistance to achieve their potential by differentiation of

tasks, positioning in the classroom, equipment that supports academic progress and additional support where appropriate.

Curriculum

The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for pupils, including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for traditionally and newly disadvantaged groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and wider curriculum. The curriculum will aim to:

Normalise diversity in the content and examples utilised

Stress the contribution and achievements of all kinds of individuals and cultures, actively challenging bias and stereotyping

Reinforce the importance of embracing difference and of equality of opportunity as a desirable aim

Provide inclusive and accessible activities, including educational trips and co-curricular provision.

Resources and activities should be monitored for possible bias, reinforcing stereotypes and ethnocentric elements.

Pastoral Care

The school's pastoral care system promotes respect and understanding of ourselves and others, acknowledging that our community is strengthened by diversity. Wellbeing, social cohesion and academic resilience underpin the sense of belonging and acceptance our pupils need to overcome challenges effectively and develop a strong sense of self. Whilst all staff are responsible for the pastoral care of our pupils, Pastoral leaders and Form Tutors have a duty to ensure equality, diversity and inclusive practice are upheld.

Pastoral Leaders and Form Tutors should aim to:

Acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact of diversity within year groups, tutor groups and Houses.

Deliver dedicated assemblies and tutor time activities stressing the school's shared values of inclusion, tolerance, kindness, care and unconditional respect for members of the school and wider community.

Actively challenge and report bias and stereotyping during tutor time and pupil interaction outside the classroom.

Encourage pupils to celebrate their unique contribution to the school through pupil voice, leadership roles and participation in initiatives that shape the future of the school, such as School Council and the Inclusion Committee

Understand the impact of discrimination on pupil wellbeing and mental health, remaining alert to our own bias and the impact of power dynamics between dominant and minority groups. This includes having an awareness of how intersectionality (understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine) can create different modes of discrimination and privilege.

Use data from attendance records, reporting, rewards and sanctions and pastoral systems to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the grounds of protected characteristics.

Provide inclusive and accessible support systems, ensuring that access to counselling, mentoring and external agencies reflect the diversity within our community.

Work with parents regarding factors such as caring responsibilities, disability, gender reassignment and family relationships to reduce barriers to learning and support equality of opportunity.

Encourage pupils to develop their own voice through lessons, RSHE, councils, surveys and pastoral activities.

Training and Development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school will endeavour to:

- provide relevant, up to date training
- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution made by our staff, trustees, parents, pupils and wider community
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions to discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote inclusive behaviour generally
- ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy
- respond to changing and emerging training needs, providing opportunities for reflection, feedback and shared learning
- review curricula to include greater diversity of content and presenters

The Look and Feel of the School

Ensure that the everyday look and feel of the school reflects our diverse pupil body.

Ensure that our caterers are celebrating our diverse culture regularly and the types of food offered reflect the diverse community of the school and the whole world

Ensure that our behaviour code, staff dress code and uniform code takes into account issues of diversity and inclusion.

Ensure that school events, visiting speakers and whole school initiatives reflect our diverse pupil body and the whole world

Links with the wider community

Community links are at the heart of what makes this a strong and safe environment.

All visitors to the school whether in a teaching role or as visitors, contractors or casual users of school premises will be expected to act in accordance with the principles of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

All members of the school community will be expected to act in accordance with the principles of this policy when in contact with others, outside the school.

Staff supervising visitors or on educational visits may need to support pupils with bias encountered in the wider society, reporting this through our pastoral system.

Admissions

The school treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The school accepts applications from, and admits, pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.

Parents must inform the school when completing the registration form of any special circumstances affecting their child (such as learning support needs) which may affect the child's ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school.

Religious Belief

Although the school's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the school welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or no religion or faith).

Absence from school for religious observance is allowed and should be marked as authorised where the school is satisfied that the day has been set aside by the religious body and the parents of the child are members of that religious community.

The school recognises that religious observance has an important part to play in valuing the spiritual development of all members of our community, strengthening social cohesion, developing a strong sense of self and celebrating shared values.

Adaptations will be made to the school's uniform code for religious observance.

Where possible religious observance will be facilitated, perhaps through allocation of prayer space or provision for resting whilst fasting.

Reasonable Adjustments

The school acknowledges its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage, for example by taking positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting a group because of a protected characteristic. For example, taking positive action to support pupils if there is evidence that they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual harassment or stricter behaviour or effort expectations for a particular gender.

The School will inform and consult with pupils and parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School are able to make for their child. The School will carefully consider any proposals for additional resources or changes to provision that support full access to school life.

The School has a duty make reasonable adjustments (case by case considerations) for staff or pupils who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid, are undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.

The school is not legally required to make alterations to the school's physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustments duty. However, the School monitors and reviews the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to pupils or staff with disabilities and neurodiverse pupils or staff.

Raising Concerns

The school will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who believe they have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment.

Pupils should report discrimination through the pastoral system or directly to the Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator. Staff should report discrimination to the HR Department

Any member of the school community who harasses another on the grounds of any protected characteristic will be subject to the school's disciplinary measures in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

If parents or visitors feel this policy has been breached they should raise their concern with the Head.

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the School's Senior Leadership Team. We recognise that pupils need to learn from mistakes to develop a strong sense of self and an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others. Ill-considered, rather than deliberate, incidents should therefore be dealt with immediately and informally,

where possible taking the opportunity for a teaching or tutor discussion. These should all be reported through the pastoral systems.

Intentional and/or sustained incidents should be reported directly to the Form Teacher and Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator within 24 hours of the incident.

Pupil infringements of this policy will be recorded on the school's Anti-bullying Log.

Staff and visitor infringements of this policy will be reported to HR.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate discrimination.

This policy document will be reviewed and publicised, at least annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant incidents or new developments in national, local and organisational policy, guidance and practice.

Staff Recruitment

The school is committed to:

ensuring that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.

increasing the ethnic diversity of the teaching staff, and increasing the diversity of all staff, with a focus on underrepresented groups – such as the ethnic diversity of staff

recognising that diversity broadens people's range of role models, helps others overcome unconscious bias and improves organisational change.

Application and recruitment processes will be monitored to actively target a more diverse applicant pool.

Helen McClure
Headmistress
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Review 01.09.24