

# Equality and Community Cohesion Policy

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## **This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:**

Equality Information, Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan

Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour Principles and Policy

Sex and Relationships Education Policy

Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

Medical Policy

Pupil Premium Report

Pay Policy

Performance Management (Appraisal) Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

**Throughout this policy 'parents' denotes those with parental responsibility.**

## **1. Context of the Policy**

### **1.1 Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (sometimes also referred to as the 'general duty') that applies to maintained schools and which extends to all protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to **have due regard to the need to:**

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We also recognise that, although not a protected characteristic, economic circumstances may also limit opportunity and therefore take steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relation between people of different economic backgrounds.

### **1.2 Specific duties for schools**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we welcome our general duty to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations, and our specific duties to publish information every year about our school population, to explain how we have due regard for equality and to publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities, and reduce or remove them. The specific duties are addressed via the school's Equality Information, Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan (which also addresses the statutory requirement for an Accessibility Plan)

### **1.3 Availability of the policy**

This policy is available on the school website. Should parents or other interested parties like an alternative copy of this policy, please contact the School Office.

The Policy and associated Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan aim to be a living document, which will take into account the views of staff, pupils, parents, carers, governors and visitors to the school. If any member of the community would like to be involved and give their views, or requires further information, this can be done in the following ways:

- By contacting the head teacher, Elaine Lacey or Chair of the governors' Community Committee;
- By offering to become a member of a focus group to help in establishing priorities and monitoring progress of the objectives and plan;
- By raising awareness of the policy amongst pupils, staff, parents and other members of the community.

## **2. Mission Statement**

We are committed to working in partnership to provide high quality education for **all** our children believing it to be their right to receive the best education the School can provide, and access to all educational activities organised by the School. We recognise the diversity of our school community and are committed to promoting cohesion within it; ensuring that all individuals are valued and educating our children and informing our parents regarding their individual rights and responsibilities; to ensure there is clarity about what they can expect and the school and community can expect in return. We believe all individuals within the School are entitled to learn, teach, work or otherwise participate in a non-discriminatory and supportive environment. We welcome our duty to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations within our community. We are proactive in showing how we plan to tackle inequalities or unacceptable behaviours to reduce or remove them, with reference to the particular make up of our school population. We recognise that people have different needs and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same. We are committed to working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities, and where strong and positive relationships exist and are continually developed in the School and in the wider community.

We believe that the development of community cohesion is the building of communities with four key characteristics:

- A common vision and sense of belonging.
- The valuing of diversity
- Similar life opportunities for all
- Strong and positive relationships developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the School, our community and wider community.

## **2.1 Aims**

Our School is committed to equality both as an employer and a service provider. We aim to:

- Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with acceptance and respect;
- Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment in which self-esteem is nurtured;
- Foster an ethos which enables all members of the School Community to celebrate its diversity;
- Provide a Curriculum which enables all children to learn effectively and challenges stereotypes;
- Ensure that all children are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities and extra-curricular activities afforded them at Belmont;
- Know all children and adults as individuals and avoid making assumptions about the characteristics and behaviour of any group;
- Provide extra support where necessary to help children and employees to achieve and be successful;
- Promote equal opportunities in regard to staff recruitment, career development and performance management reviews;
- Ensure the School is as accessible as possible for children and members of our community with a disability within the limitations of the School's physical environment;
- Make sure that people from different backgrounds are consulted and involved in our decisions and given the opportunity to share their heritage and experience in order to promote respect and understanding;
- Ensure that no-one experiences less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their gender identity or reassignment; their marital or civil partnership status; being pregnant or having recently had a baby; their religion or beliefs; their sexual identity and orientation;
- Deal promptly and effectively with any identified unacceptable attitudes and behaviours.

We recognise the importance of addressing and narrowing any gaps in achievement, which may affect amongst others:

- Pupils from certain cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Pupils who belong to low-income households and pupils eligible for free school meals
- Pupils who are disabled
- Pupils who have special educational needs
- Pupils who are, or have been, in care

## **2.2 Admissions**

The School's criteria for admission are set by the our Local Authority, the London Borough of Hounslow, in line with other community primary schools and are applied fairly in line with LA policy.

## **2.3 Policy Statements**

The School has clear statements on unacceptable behaviours which affect the rights of others to respect, courtesy and fairness of treatment with zero tolerance to incidents of prejudice, racial or social discrimination, bullying or harassment.

### **2.31 Anti-Bullying Statement**

We believe that bullying of any form is unacceptable and damaging to individuals. We therefore do all we can to prevent it within our School and, if it occurs, to deal consistently, fairly and effectively with all parties involved to prevent repetition. We show support to individuals and record the action taken and the names of those involved.

### **2.32 Anti-Racist Statement**

We do not accept any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we act immediately to prevent any repetition, record the action taken, and the names of those involved and follow the specific requirements for reporting racial incidents in line with Local Authority practice. Should anyone at our school be a victim of racism, we will do all we can to support that person and help them overcome any difficulties they may have. We actively endeavour to make our school welcoming to all ethnic minority groups and promote understanding.

### **2.33 Gender Equality Statement**

We have high expectations of all pupils and promote attainment and gender equality within a supportive ethos. Through our teaching and other educational activities, we address the specific needs of groups and individuals and challenge stereotypical views relating to gender. We recognise that there are, within our school community, alternative family groupings and parenting roles, including same-sex couples and actively endeavour to make our school welcoming to all and promote understanding. The use of homophobic language is not accepted and dealt with in line with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **2.34 Disability Equality Statement**

We aim to promote equality within our school community for anyone with a disability. We actively seek to eliminate discrimination and harassment, to tackle stereotyping and promote positive attitudes to disability. We believe all members of our school community are to be valued for their individual contributions and enabled to participate fully in the life of the school, regardless of any disability they may experience.

## **3. Teaching and learning**

We promote an understanding of one another through the Curriculum and teach and model the attitudes, values and respect that we expect members of our community to show one another.

We are responsible for equipping our children with the skills, understanding and tolerance needed to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds and life experiences. We strive to develop a strong respect for diversity and also promote shared values, encouraging our children to actively engage with others to understand what they all hold in common, promoting and developing the skills of participation and responsible action. The opportunity to explore issues around equality and community cohesion is specifically (but not exclusively) addressed in Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Religious Education (RE). Activities outside the curriculum also play a significant part in promoting equal opportunity. Strategies include:

- time given to all to express opinions and explore ideas about identity and diversity e.g. circle time as part of work in PSHE;
- activities promoting non-stereotypical role models;
- provision of positive images of race, gender, age, disability, culture etc.;
- resources that reinforce positive attitudes, challenge stereotypes and are reflective of our diverse community e.g. stories about families of different and mixed race and culture, with single parents, same sex parents etc.
- sharing of cultural and other experiences (writing, drawings, music, artefacts, books, plays, pictures and talks by children and visitors);
- role play activities addressing issues of race, gender, disability, age etc.;
- differentiation to meet individual needs and overcome barriers to inclusion, including support for pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those with special educational needs;
- displays reflecting the school's diversity of language, culture, religion etc.;
- specific encouragement to ensure equal participation in traditionally gender related activities and action to address issues in areas of the curriculum where boys or girls are underachieving nationally and/or in the context of the school;
- awareness of group structures within the classroom with regard to equality of opportunity;
- use of assembly times to reinforce equal opportunity issues and promote the engagement of learners and a shared understanding of the school values;
- study of the importance of religious customs and life styles to members of the major world faiths;
- children working in groups towards a shared goal with children having opportunities to take a range of roles within the group;

- initiatives such as the Anti-Bullying Week are part of the school's response to also addressing issues of Domestic Violence and;
- use of topical material from the media – newspapers/magazines/films etc.
- celebration of the contribution of individuals (both children and parents) from our own and different communities e.g. community awards assembly;
- recognition that people have a range of cultural backgrounds and hold different ambitions, aspirations, beliefs and life experiences e.g. through RE and PSHE focus weeks, Black History month etc;
- focus on the progress and attainment of individuals (including those of vulnerable groups); setting targets so as to enable every child to achieve their potential;
- provision of life opportunities beyond the scope of existing expectations such as a wide range of school visits and meetings with members of the wider community (with financial assistance if required) e.g. visit to Sikh temple, Remembrance day activities;
- links with other schools, groups of children and community groups, including schools overseas
- partnership work with other schools and community groups e.g. sporting and musical activities, debates, cultural celebrations

Resources are regularly monitored to ensure their continued appropriateness.

### **3.1 Positive behaviour management**

It is our belief that a safe and tolerant school ethos can be achieved by publicly and privately rewarding positive and inclusive behaviour. We also seek to create a strong sense of trust in our school to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests

This belief is reflected in our Behaviour Principles and Policy and Procedures. Both children and adults within the School Community are expected to behave courteously, and not to engage in behaviour that is, or is likely to be, prejudicial to the good order or to the reputation of the school and its aims and values.

### **3.2 Extra-curricular opportunities**

Staff and the School Council monitor the use of the playground for sports, games and recreational activities at playtime and lunchtime to ensure that there is equal access to both genders, and to different age groups, making adjustments where necessary.

A rich variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities before, during and after the school day is made available and the School Business Manager monitors this range to ensure that clubs are available for children of different age, gender and ability as well as interest. Accessibility by different groups, such as those with special educational needs or disability or from ethnic minority groups, is also monitored to ensure there are no barriers to inclusion. Provision is also made through the BHSA and the Pupil Premium Grant is used to subsidise clubs or music lessons for all Pupil Premium children to enrich their learning opportunities.

## **4. Partnerships**

We strive to build positive relations and provide opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.

### **4.1 Partnership with parents**

We believe it to be very important that this Policy has the support and involvement of parents and that parents and staff work in partnership, sharing clear expectations and providing a consistent framework in which the children can develop as caring, responsible and self-disciplined members of the community. We encourage parental participation in the life of the School and value parents' involvement to support the Equality Objectives in many ways, challenging stereotypes in talking to pupils about careers or achievements, sharing family experiences around a cultural or religious event etc.

We engage with parents and promote community cohesion through coffee mornings, home school partnership evenings, workshops and courses for parents. We are proactive in seeking to involve families who may be less confident in the school context and supporting those who may need

assistance to access services and opportunities within or outside school. Our extended services include on-site childcare available before and after school, through breakfast club and aftercare, as well as a wide range of clubs, including homework clubs for older pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Parents' views are sought, and acted on, through parental surveys, Belmont Home School Association meetings and informal discussion and may be sought more specifically through focus groups.

#### **4.2 Partnership with pupils**

We endeavour to make sure that the children in our school have an effective voice through forums such as School Council, class or group circle time etc. We also regularly seek the children's opinions through pupil surveys which include questions on equality issues. We teach our children to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond e.g. through taking positions of responsibility, performing to local residents, raising money for charity.

#### **4.3 Partnership with other schools**

Partnership with other schools enables the sharing of good practice and provides opportunities for staff to develop their skills in providing high quality education to all groups. The School's local partnerships offer children the opportunity to engage in activities with children from other schools, e.g. Hounslow Sports Days and Music Festival, enrichment opportunities for Gifted and Talented pupils. It also enables shared use of facilities and resources. Less local partnerships enable children and staff to benefit from listening to the experiences of other schools who have different characteristics and to further develop an understanding of being a national and global citizen.

#### **4.4 Partnership with community groups**

The school's work with the community, which may include links via parents, makes it possible to bring community representatives into school to work with the pupils e.g. police and fire brigade, members of local faith groups or to facilitate visits e.g. to Chiswick Business Park. It also ensures that the pupil and parent voice is heard and able to effect change e.g. involvement of focus groups for canteen and playground development. In addition, children participate in voluntary community based activities, such as providing gifts to senior citizens and the homeless at Harvest time, and visiting local residential homes for the elderly.

#### **4.5 Partnership with external professionals**

The School maintains strong links with other local agencies, particularly through the Early Intervention Service, a Local Authority multi-agency approach involving education professionals, family support and social care, whose professionals provide assessment, advice and support as appropriate for children, staff and families. The School liaises with health professionals such as speech and language and occupational therapy, where appropriate, and obtains advice and training from the Hounslow Language Service to support children with English as an additional language.

### **5. Staff**

Procedures for staff recruitment, appraisal and promotion are set out clearly in the schools Pay and Performance Management (Appraisal) Policies. The School has adopted the Local Authority policies and procedures for matters of staffing. The governors' Resources Committee monitors and evaluates all issues relating to pay and recruitment, whilst the Community Committee monitors matters relating to professional development and performance management. Both committees report the full Governing Body. The Head Teacher reports to all governors about staffing matters, through the termly Head's report.

#### **5.1 Recruitment and selection**

The School is committed to promoting and managing equality and diversity through recruitment and selection. Good practice is pursued in the area of staff recruitment and selection to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants. Job vacancies are advertised in line with London Borough of Hounslow policy. Positive action measures will be taken where necessary.

In the event of a complaint of discrimination from either internal or external applicants for vacancies, the governor or Head Teacher leading the selection is expected to detail the criteria on which the selection decision was founded and demonstrate that the successful applicant was the one who most

closely met the criteria. Part-time, temporary and fixed term contracts may be considered subject to the nature of the post, the level of qualifications, skills and experience required and the wider school context.

Where probationary requirements are applicable to an appointment, their implementation, including orientation, training, monitoring, guidance and recommendation for permanent appointment is managed fairly and without discrimination.

## **5.2 Professional development and training**

It is the policy of the school to provide appropriate training and development for all its employees in line with the School Development Plan. Training needs of staff related to performance management are monitored and reported to governors in line with this policy to ensure equality of opportunity.

Staff are committed to developing their teaching skills, and for raising the achievement of any pupils who are at risk from under-achievement, including those with special educational needs and/or disability, English as an additional language or eligible for Pupil Premium. To ensure equality of access to the curriculum, the school will provide appropriate professional development to enable staff to meet the needs of these pupils, which may include in-school or external courses and/or the involvement of external professionals.

## **5.3 Performance Management and career progression**

Those responsible for undertaking performance management ensure that no employee has any reason to believe that unlawful discrimination has been an element in any decision, under the School's Performance Management (Appraisal) Policy.

## **5.4 Grievance**

The school ensures that any grievance relating to discrimination is treated seriously and promptly. Staff who believe that they have been discriminated against can pursue the matter by raising a complaint, in accordance with the LA grievance procedure applicable to their post.

# **6. Roles and responsibilities**

## **6.1 Governors**

Governors have responsibility to:

- oversee the implementation of the Equality and Community Cohesion Policy;
- ensure the school complies with all appropriate legislation including the publication of Equality Information and Objectives and an Accessibility Plan;
- monitor progress towards the fulfilment of the Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan
- ensure the policy is monitored and reviewed and that necessary revisions are undertaken;
- allocate sufficient resources to ensure effective implementation and fulfilment of the Policy's aims and objectives;
- have named governors for grievance and disciplinary procedures.

## **6.2 Head Teacher and Deputy Head**

The Head Teacher, with the Deputy Heads, has responsibility to:

- implement the Equality and Community Cohesion Policy on a day-to-day basis in accordance with the agreed procedures, and ensure that people are aware of it;
- ensure everyone within the school community has access to this policy and is aware of their responsibilities;
- advise the governors on the implementation of the policy;
- ensure that there are appropriate resources and training for the implementation of the policy within the context of whole school development planning;
- take appropriate action in the case of contravention of the policy in line with School Policy;
- evaluate progress and attainment by analysing assessment data to keep track of the relative performance of different groups and then instigating intervention strategies to tackle underperformance by any particular group.
- present the Equality Information annually to the Governing Body and report on actions and impact under the Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan

## **Subject Leaders**

Teachers need to ensure that equality is promoted within the subject that they lead by:

- provide support and advice to colleagues on equality issues within their subject;
- maintain current awareness of policies, initiatives and issues relating to equal opportunities related to their subject area and disseminate to colleagues;
- ensure that displays reflect the school's diverse community.

## **6.4 All Staff**

All members of teaching and support staff have responsibility to:

- follow the school's policy on equality and equal opportunities;
- treat all members of the community with respect and courtesy;
- provide a positive role model by observing the principles of this policy;
- create and foster an ethos of respect and appreciation for the diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion within our school community;
- enact the school procedures for dealing with incidents contrary to the school policy on equal opportunities.

Failure to comply with or conform to the Policy is treated as a serious matter. The School will follow the LA Disciplinary Procedures and, if necessary, Capability Procedures.

Teachers have additional responsibility to:

- ensure that all children have equal access to a broad and differentiated curriculum that allows them to achieve their full potential;
- monitor the resources used to ensure that the curriculum reflects the principles of this policy.

Note: according to Government guidance, where individual teachers are concerned, having a view about something does not amount to discrimination. It is not unlawful for a teacher to express personal views e.g. on religion or sexual orientation, provided that it is done in an appropriate manner and context (for example when responding to questions from pupils, or in an RE or PSHE lesson). However, the School makes clear that school teachers are in a very influential position and their actions and responsibilities are bound by much wider duties than the equality legislation, and expects all staff to remember this. A teacher's ability to express his or her views should not extend to allowing them to discriminate against others.

## **6.5 Children**

Children in the School have a responsibility to:

- treat all members of the community with respect and courtesy;
- work to the best of their ability and allow others to do the same;
- provide a positive role model to their fellow pupils;
- respect other people's cultural, ethnic and religious heritage and all aspects of the community's diversity, in order to promote understanding and positive attitudes

## **6.6 Parents**

It is expected that parents take responsibility to:

- treat all members of the community with respect and courtesy;
- be positive role models for their children;
- be aware of the Equality and Community Cohesion Policy and support its implementation within the School and the wider community.

Should any parent be in breach of this Policy, the Head Teacher will see him/her in the first instance, and reinforce the school's expectations. If incidents persist, governors will write to the parent. As a last resort, parents may be banned from the school site.

## **7. Policy Review**

This Policy is monitored through the School's Equality Information and Objectives which are reviewed, updated and published annually in the spring term, thereby giving analysis into the impact of this Policy and of actions taken, as well as enabling forward planning for the next stage of development to improve practice further.

This policy will be reviewed according to the cycle agreed by the governors' Community Committee.