

## **PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Introduction**

The overall objective of our Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities. Through this Equality Policy, we seek to ensure that no member of the school community or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, socio-economic background, where the person lives or spent convictions.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the extended school community - students, staff, governors, parents and members of the local community.

### **The School's Context**

Mayfield School is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive foundation school situated in the south east of the London Borough of Redbridge approximately 2,000 learners on roll. Average prior attainment of our students on entry to the school is below the national average for maintained mainstream schools although we are well aware that students come to us with a variety of prior attainment and learning experience. We are pro-active in assessing the needs and potential of our students and seek always to provide learning experiences that will challenge all appropriately to enable them to make the best possible progress.

Our student population is a diverse one:

- 96% of our students come from minority ethnic groups, 70% having English as an additional language (as at May 2021);
- there are 73 different first languages spoken by our students;
- Around 24% of the total student population qualifies as eligible for free school meals;
- 33% of the total student population are Pupil Premium students;
- 9% of our students are identified as having special educational needs.

### **Aims and Values**

#### **Statement of Shared Values**

We believe that:

- each member of the school community is an individual, an exception and to be valued regardless of race, social background, gender, sexual orientation or ability;
- good relationships lie at the heart of this school and support each individual to do his or her best academically and personally. Fairness, trust and mutual respect are essential to us in creating and encouraging a positive community;

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- all members of the school community have the right to be safe, cared for and supported;
- learning is a partnership between students, parents and school. It can only take place in a calm, ordered environment;
- all members of our school community have joint responsibility for the success of the school and its students and for building trust and a positive relationship between our school and its wider community;
- working together, staff and students, will develop a culture of excellence within our school;
- being vigilant in identifying all forms of discrimination is at the heart of what we do and this enables us to be proactive in eradicating them;
- we can develop and maintain a learning environment that fosters a sense of engagement and belonging to a thriving and purposeful community;
- we provide a secure environment in which all can flourish and where every child matters;
- we should prepare students for life in a diverse society in which they are able to take their place as active members of a community that is local, national and international.

## **The School's Overall Approach**

### **Teaching, Learning and Curriculum**

We aim to teach students to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

- Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel all contributions are valued. Where groups or individuals are marginalised, the teacher takes positive steps to include them.
- Teachers ensure that they are aware of the language abilities and needs of all their students.
- Teaching is responsive to students' different learning styles and takes account of their experiences and starting points, in order to engage all students.
- Student grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under continual review and are analysed by ethnicity, gender and background.
- Teaching styles include collaborative learning so that students appreciate the value of working together. All students are expected to question, discuss and collaborate in problem solving tasks.
- Teachers encourage students to become independent and to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers challenge stereotypes and foster students' critical awareness and concepts of fairness, enabling them to detect bias and challenge inequalities.
- Resources and displays reflect the experience and backgrounds of students, promote diversity and challenge stereotypes in all curriculum areas. They are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect the inclusive ethos of the school.
- Personal, social and environmental issues are taught through the tutorial programme and also permeates the work of the school both within and outside the curriculum.

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## **Equity and Excellence**

We aim to ensure equal opportunity for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

- Any pattern of underachievement of a particular group is identified through monitoring assessment and other data.
- Underachievement of individuals or groups is addressed through targeted curriculum planning, teaching and support.
- The school ensures, where possible, that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias.
- Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess student progress. Baseline assessment is used appropriately for all students.
- Staff have very high expectations of all students and they continually challenge them to reach higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.
- Self-assessment provides all students with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.

## **Community Cohesion**

- The school is fully comprehensive and proud of its inclusive and cohesive school community where all members accept difference.
- The school's links with partner primary schools support broader community awareness.

In order to create and maintain a cohesive community, we aim to:

- encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community;
- understand the needs and aspirations of all its communities;
- tackle discrimination;
- increase life opportunities for all;
- ensure teaching and the curriculum explore and address issues of diversity;
- provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally which includes the opportunity for students to become involved in trips locally, nationally and internationally.

## **Race, Ethnicity and Religion**

The school's commitment to race, ethnic and religious equality includes:

- ensuring that all students and staff are encouraged and able to achieve their potential;
- respecting and valuing differences between people;
- preparing students for life in a diverse society;
- making the school a place where everyone, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, feels welcomed and valued;
- promoting good relations between different racial and cultural groups within the school and within the wider community;
- ensuring that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained;
- acknowledging the existence of racism and taking steps to prevent it;
- opposing all forms of racism, racial prejudice and racial harassment;
- being proactive in tackling and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

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## **Disability**

We aim to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability and Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life;
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

## **Gender**

We aim to:

- eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity between males and females.

## **Socio-Economic Disadvantage**

We aim to:

- identify students whose progress may be affected by socio-economic disadvantage and take active steps to ensure they make appropriate progress to their ability;
- ensure that students are not disadvantaged in any area of school life through lack of resources at home.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **General**

- The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equality legislation.
- The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- The Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy and that the policy is fully implemented and monitored.

### **Specific**

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- be vigilant in all areas of school life for any form of harassment or bullying;
- deal quickly and effectively with all incidents from overt name-calling or harassment to more subtle forms of victimisation arising from perceived differences;
- identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in all aspects of school life;
- promote equality of opportunity and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion or belief, age, disability and sexual orientation;
- promote an inclusive curriculum and ethos which reflects the diversity of Mayfield and our community.

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