



HOSPITAL AND HOME EDUCATION **LEARNING CENTRE** **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

Statement of Intent

The policy of The HHELC is to ensure equality and justice for all and in accordance with the Human Rights Act of 1988 no person shall be denied the right to education. This policy underpins all other curriculum policies.

What is 'Equal Opportunities'?

Ensuring that people are not treated in a prejudicial way because of disability, race, religion, age, gender or sexual orientation.

Respect for all human beings implies opportunities for all. Race, sex, disability and age may in the past have been commonly used to segregate and differentiate between individuals. Such action denies equality of opportunity. We must become cognisant of and respond to the deprivation that such action has brought about. Part of this response must be the awareness, for example, of the multi-racial nature of British society. Rather than indifferent acceptance, it is important to make a positive response towards it. This richness and diversity of culture and experience that we now enjoy is our heritage, providing a unique opportunity to share in and understand the ways of others and their various responses to life.

Discrimination inevitably affects everyone as it is embedded in our society and influences daily interactions, attitudes and expectations. The process of acquiring and practising such attitudes is subtle and largely unconscious. It is often only extreme behaviour, which is perceived as unacceptable. The strength of discriminatory messages in what occurs informally and subconsciously in schools dictates that tackling the problem must be the responsibility of all.

All members of the school need to play a part. Passive support for or lip service to the notion of equal opportunities is not sufficient to challenge stereotyping and all forms of discrimination in society at any level.

It is the staff of educational establishments who must give the lead to pupils if our future society is to avoid division and strife. All forms of discrimination are socially divisive and hinder individual development.

Schools are not only places of learning but also places of employment. Equality of opportunity is important for staff as well as pupils. Genuine equality of opportunity will not be achieved by mere compliance with the relevant legislation. It can be achieved only if those concerned have the will to formulate equal opportunities policies that are fully implemented, carefully monitored and reviewed.

The school is committed to the following:

- The policy of the school is to maintain an organisation and management structure, which is value free in terms of gender, ethnic origin, and sexual orientation. This applies to both staff and pupils.
- The organisation will be non-discriminating in terms of pupil selection for activities and groupings of pupils.
- Programmes of work shall reflect the individual assessment of needs and preferences. Inherent in this is the recognition and acceptance of individual differences.
- Teaching methods and resources shall reflect the flexibility of approach necessary to meet individual needs.

Aims of the Equal Opportunity Policy

It is the aim of the school to:

- Provide equal educational opportunities for all children
- Counter discrimination based on class, gender, race or disability
- Promote mutual understanding, tolerance and respect among pupils of all backgrounds
- Monitor and evaluate this policy and effect appropriate change as and when necessary.

Statement of Philosophy

Our curriculum is open to all pupils; we will work with an understanding and respect for:

- Social, economic, cultural and religious differences
- Racial equality
- Gender equality
- Sexual orientation
- Those with disabilities and learning difficulties

Statements of Principle

- Discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, sex or ability is unacceptable in this school
- Every pupil, teacher and staff member endeavours to further this objective by personally contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for and appreciation of each other as individuals
- The primary objective of this school is therefore to educate, develop and prepare all our pupils, whatever their sex, colour, origin or ability, for life in Britain and beyond.
- All staff practise an equal opportunities philosophy
- The school acknowledges the complexity of British society and recognises that it would be failing the pupils if it did not prepare them for their integral part in society.

- The school is committed to emphasising the common elements and values of different cultures rather than highlighting conflicting areas
- The school is committed to encouraging all our children to value, respect and celebrate cultural and faith diversities.

We see our first task as equipping pupils with an awareness of an increasingly diverse society and of presenting the world as it is and as we would like it to be.

Specific aims related to our setting

- We aim to offer continuity and normality of education which will help pupils to experience positive aspects of our school and will protect them from further educational disadvantage.
- Whilst recognising that our pupils may have medical challenges which affect their learning, we will focus on their strengths and abilities, developing self-confidence and self-esteem.
- We will offer a sympathetic yet structured approach to difficulties. Individual programmes will be specific to each pupil's needs, strengths, weaknesses and understanding.
- We will recognise this specialist setting to support and address any areas of difficulty previously encountered or acquired as a result of the pupil's medical condition.

We will also:

- Establish links with mainstream schools to enable continuity of educational practice.
- Ensure maximum curricular access by employing a wide variety of learning and teaching styles.
- Differentiate work provided so that educational progress can be made.
- Maximise the potential of 1:1 teaching and small group situations.

The Need for an Equal Opportunities Policy

We believe that our Equal Opportunities Policy should extend to all pupils, staff (teaching and nonteaching) parents, visitors and contractors to our school.

Equal Opportunities – Gender

We aim, within HHELC to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us.

As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes and practices – in particular those relating to gender – do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and confidence by positively working to reduce any gender bias and promoting equality of opportunity.

At the same time we are aware that as children mature and their relationships with peers of both sexes develop, their perception of sex roles alters. We also recognise that such perceptions are influenced by other factors including home, peer groups and the media.

Children and young people of all gender orientations have equal opportunity within and equal access to all areas of the whole school curriculum.

Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of gender bias in both our teaching and learning materials and our teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid sexual stereotypes and gender bias.

Children and all staff are encouraged to value each other and build up and maintain cooperative working relationships both within school and in the community, such relationships being based on mutual respect for each other.

Any differences involving gender, which arise inside or outside the classroom, are dealt with sensitively. All teaching and non-teaching posts are not sex specific. All staff have equal access to in-service training and posts of responsibility. All members of staff regularly review practices and approaches involving equal opportunity in terms of gender issues.

Equal Opportunities – Race

We aim, within HHELC to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices – in particular those relating to race – do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any race bias and promoting equality of opportunity.

In the event of Racial Harassment, the school will follow accepted procedures from the Local Authority; such incidents with pupils are recorded and reported to governors.

We aim to prepare all children for life in a multi-cultural society, building upon the strengths and richness of cultural diversity.

To do this we must ensure that:

- Each person retains the security and self-confidence deriving from her/his own culture while furthering her/his ability to participate fully in the community as a whole.
- Groups achieve recognition of their identity as valued elements within diverse but mutually supportive society.
- We recognise that racism affects everyone by preventing the individual's full development and to acknowledge that tackling racism is everyone's responsibility.
- We provide for all the individual needs of the learners, having regard to their ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and historical background.
- To ensure that the learning experience is free from bias in its portrayal of either ethnic minorities or the majority culture.
- To raise the achievement and attainment levels of ethnic minority learners in all areas of the curriculum.
- To monitor and evaluate this policy and effect appropriate changes as and when necessary.
- To promote a positive ethos based on values such as respect, empathy and understanding which contribute to racial harmony, justice, equity and equality.
- To ensure that all staff have access to Equal Opportunities training.
- Display work within the school should actively promote race equality.

Equal Opportunities – Disability

We aim within HHELC to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes and practices – in particular those relating to disability – do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any disability bias and promoting equality of opportunity.

The pupils at HHELC all have a recognised medical need, many of which can be considered a temporary or permanent disability, therefore Equal Opportunities for this group are core to everything the school stands for.

Equal Opportunities in Action

Admission

The HHELC admission criteria does not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as a factor for admission.

Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school are to be treated seriously; a careful note must be kept of such incidents. It should always be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Pupils

All incidents are referred to the Heads of each site and consideration is given to involving the parents. Parents should be aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities.

Staff

The school values diversity amongst staff. In all staff appointments, the best candidate will be appointed, based upon strict professional criteria. All staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

Employment

The Equal Opportunities Commissions (EOC) recommends the establishment and use of consistent criteria for selection, training, promotion, redundancy and dismissal which should be made known to all employees both teaching and non-teaching. Without such consistency, management decisions may be subjective, leaving the way open for unlawful discrimination to occur. The school follows guidance planned by the LA in all areas of employment.

Recruitment

It is unlawful, unless the job is covered by an exception to discriminate directly or indirectly of the grounds of sex or marriage:

- In the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered a job.
- In any term of employment.
- By refusing or omitting to offer a person employment.

It is recommended that:

- Each individual should be assessed according to his or her personal capability to carry out a given job.
- Any qualifications or requirements applied to a job which effectively inhibit applications from married people should be retained only if they are justifiable in terms of the job to be done.
- Any age limits should be retained only if they are necessary for the job (an unjustifiable age limit could constitute unlawful indirect discrimination, for example, against women who have taken time out of employment for child rearing).

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when a person is treated favourable on the grounds of sex than others are, or would be, treated in the same circumstances.

Example: Refusing to employ a woman because she has children where a man with children would be employed. (Selecting a man for a position rather than a woman, the decision being based on the grounds of gender).

Indirect Sex Discrimination

This occurs when a requirement or condition is applied to employment, which has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group. It is very important to understand the definition of indirect discrimination since this is the way most discrimination occurs. Often such practices appear fair but have unintended discriminatory effects. If the employer cannot justify the requirement or condition to the satisfaction of a tribunal, then this constitutes unlawful indirect discrimination.

Genuine Occupational Qualifications

There are occasions when to specifically select an employee because of sex can be lawful. Such exceptions are Genuine Occupational Qualifications (GOQ).

The Role of the Management Committee

As a result of recent legislation, school and college governors (for HHELC Management Committee) have increased responsibilities for educational provision in their institutions. These include duties concerning:

- Employment
- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Resource allocation
- Implementation of the National Curriculum

Our Management Committee takes this responsibility most seriously and endeavours to ensure that they discharge their responsibilities without sexual discrimination.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that this Policy is implemented and adhered to within the Education Bases.

Reviewed by Chair of Governors, Judith Ward on 23/03/2017