

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. At Hawkes Farm we aim to achieve an environment where every individual:
 - a. respects others and is respected
 - b. exercises choice
 - c. achieves his/her potential
 - d. develops skills essential to life
 - e. takes part in the life of the school

without direct or indirect discrimination connected with:

1. sex
2. race
3. religion
4. disability
5. socio - economic group
6. age
7. marital status
8. sexual orientation

As an employer Hawkes Farm School aims to achieve an environment where every adult working in school, in whatever role:

- a. respects others and is respected
- b. is able to develop without direct or indirect discrimination regarding 1 - 8 above.

It is recognised that equal opportunities for pupils is inextricably linked with equal opportunities for staff, since staff act as role models for pupils and it is unreasonable to promote equal opportunities for pupils if they do not have equal opportunities themselves.

2. COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The school recognises that while much in the school already constitutes good equal opportunities practice, prejudices and stereotypical attitudes in society nationally and locally cannot easily be remedied. All members of the school community need to accept the responsibility for maximising equal opportunities through a constant commitment to development in this area.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The review of policy should be the responsibility of:

the Governors

the Headteacher

the Person who has overall responsibility for equal opportunities

the Person with a subject responsibility should include a statement in policy documents in the drafting process before adoption by Governors.

All Governors and members of staff receive a copy of this document.

Through its links with parents and the community the school makes known its commitment to equal opportunities and encourages a view of school life which is without prejudice or stereotyping.

5. **PASTORAL CARE**

All members of staff have a vital role in fostering respect and raising consciousness. Clear guidelines should be set encouraging pupils to treat one another with respect and firm action should be taken with cases of bullying and harassment, especially on the grounds of 1 - 8 above. Staff should attempt to be aware of individual needs and strive to give time, care and respect to all pupils without discrimination.

Assemblies can be an important focus for drawing attention to equal opportunities. Issues may be discussed to do with aspects of inequality and prejudice. Role models here may be influential e.g. gender.

Staff should avoid stereotypical assumptions and language when writing reports and profiles.

The Personal Health and Social Education policy/programme has a vital role to play in equal opportunities, as pupils explore issues to do with inequality and prejudice in the world around them and in society at large. They are encouraged to challenge their own and others' prejudices, develop self respect, respect their personal relationships and respect others in a multi-cultural world.

6. **THE CURRICULUM**

The National Curriculum states that all pupils should have access to a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, relevant to individual needs and which promotes spiritual, moral, mental and physical development.

To facilitate and enable this, equal opportunities should be at the fore-front of curriculum planning and implementation, and underpinned by the school's Special Needs Policy and Race Equality Policy.

In writing and up-dating other policy statements, each subject should address its own specific needs, with particular reference to the following areas:

1. the content and culture of the subject
2. the context in which it is taught
3. the teaching styles and classroom management
4. the selection and allocation of resources
5. the physical environment
6. the marking, recording and assessment
7. pupil responses which may reflect attitudes relevant to equal opportunities
8. the principles of inclusion

7. **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The school offers a generous range of extra-curricular activities which seek to cater for all pupils.

The school recognises that many activities depend on parental support in terms of time, help and money, and is alert and sensitive to cases where pupils are or could be disadvantaged in this respect.

8. **SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS AND PRESS COVERAGE**

Good equal opportunities practice is followed in the publication of school brochures, newsletters and letters home.

Care is taken to ensure a broad range of aspects of school life is reported in the press without bias in any one area.

9. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND LEGISLATION**

The school pays heed to the four main Acts on discrimination:

Equal Pay Act

The Sex Discrimination Act

The Race Relations Act

Human Rights Act

10. **SEX AND RACE DISCRIMINATION**

1. Legislation covering sex, race and culture is very similar.
There is no minimum period of employment required for employees to bring claims to tribunals under sex or race discrimination legislation, but as with unfair dismissal, claims must be brought within three months of an event taking place.
2. The Human Rights, Sex Discrimination and the Race Relations Act make it unlawful to discriminate against persons on the grounds of race, culture or sex by treating them less favourably in employment, recruitment, training and promotion.

Direct discrimination occurs against:

- a man or woman if on the ground of that person's sex another person treats him or her less favourably than he/she would treat a person of the opposite sex; OR
- a married person of either sex if on the ground of his/her marital status another person treats him/her less favourably than he/she treats or would treat an unmarried person of the same sex or vice versa; OR
- a person if on racial grounds another person treats him/her less favourably than he/she would treat other persons.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs if, for example a condition applies equally to men and women and different racial and cultural groups; BUT:

- which is such that the proportion of women who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of men who can comply with it; AND Vice Versa
- which cannot be shown to be justifiable irrespective of the sex of the person to whom it applies, AND
- which is to his/her detriment because he/she cannot comply with it.

The employer can avoid indirect discrimination if it can be proved that the requirement or condition was justifiable - for example, showing that English language fluency is an essential requirement of the job.

Positive discrimination

Positive discrimination is can be permitted to improve access facilities for training or to encourage ethnic groups or other disadvantaged groups to apply for particular posts.

Harassment

A number of tribunal decisions have confirmed that harassment falls within the terms of the Human Rights Act, Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act where:

- harassment has been a detriment to promotion.

Employers are liable for the acts of their employees whether or not these acts were endorsed.

Employees who harass others are liable to be dismissed without redress.

Harassment occurs in those situations in which hostile, derogatory, hurtful, insulting and generally negative remarks or jokes are made about a person. In some cases this may take the form of physical abuse.

Offensive behaviour may manifest itself through racist/sexist jokes, physical or mental abuse, shunning minority employees, offensive and hostile language.

The intention to offend

It is the perceptions and feelings of the injured party which are of prime importance. What one person may accept, may cause distress to another. Harassment and other offensive behaviour, or any discrimination does not depend on the intention of the offender, but upon the impact of that behaviour on the person suffering it.