

New Generation Schools Trust 



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Rationale

At our schools we are committed to providing the best education that we can for *all* our pupils, according to their needs. Our philosophy is built upon the firm belief that all adults and children are valued for the rich diversity they may bring in terms of race, culture, age, gender, faith or background, and we are committed to ensuring all members of our community are of equal worth.

Within our inclusive ethos we do not tolerate bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination of any kind. This policy helps to ensure that our school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The expression of challenging and sometimes uncomfortable ideas in their proper context, with a proper respect for the listener, is a necessary part of education. Nothing in this policy is intended to hinder this.

Aims and Objectives

We are committed to:

- Providing a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum for all pupils, irrespective of race, sex, class, religion, disability or intellectual ability.
- Promoting an ethos that values and respects all pupils and their backgrounds; creating an atmosphere of support and confidence.
- Working positively to eliminate all forms of discrimination.
- Promoting self-esteem by recognising an individual's worth.
- Monitoring and reviewing school practices to ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional.
- Working to establish effective communication between schools, parents and the community.

We aim to:

- Promote the individuality of all our pupils, staff and families.
- Provide a wide curriculum that fosters positive attitudes, fairness and justice towards all.
- Reflect upon diversity in our community and the wider world.
- Create a positive and inclusive ethos based on respect for diversity.

1. Race Equality

Racism can be defined as conduct or words which treats an individual or group less favourably

than those not of that group, on the grounds of their colour, culture, nationality or ethnic origin, and which is capable of :

- Interfering with their peace and comfort.
- Threatening their safety.
- Impacting on their self-esteem or quality of life.
- Demeaning them.

If such conduct (or words) is reported the matter will be investigated thoroughly and appropriate action taken, in line with our Behaviour Policy, to ensure that the incident is not repeated. The incident will be recorded and reported to the Governing Body and forms part of data return to the Local Authority.

It is acknowledged that such conduct, or talk, may sometimes occur through lack of knowledge or understanding, particularly on the part of young children. If this is thought to be the case, the opportunity to educate rather than punish will be taken.

2. Gender Equality

The school adopts the general principle that conduct which treats people differently from, and less favourably than, others on the grounds of their sex or sexual orientation is unacceptable, whether the conduct is that of children or adults, staff, visitors or parents.

A particular aspect of this policy is that boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum according to their individual needs, irrespective of their gender. Senior staff monitor progress and attainment and highlight any trends that may suggest inequality of access, so that action can be taken to redress it.

Whereas boys and girls have equal access to appropriate sex and relationships education, this does not necessarily imply they should always have the same lessons together. Where appropriate girls and boys may be taught aspects of this separately and appropriate to their age and understanding.

3. Religious Equality.

Although our schools are Christian designated schools, our admissions policy means that children of all faiths or no faith may apply for a place at our school. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE or Collective Worship in accordance with our RE and Collective Worship Policies.

Behaviour whereby children of faith or no faith have reason to feel threatened by actions or remarks that devalue their beliefs is not tolerated and is dealt with in line with our behaviour policy.

4. Disability Equality

From 1st October 2004, it became unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities by hindering them from having access to premises. Along with all other public buildings, our school is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable reasonable access.

What is disability?

The Disability and Discrimination Act states that 'a person suffers from a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties, as well as those relating to mobility and physical dexterity. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on everyday life.

Disability is not the same as special educational needs; not all children who are defined as having a disability have special educational needs, nor vice versa.

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of non-disabled pupils to benefit from the education our school provides.

We will not treat a pupil with a disability less favourably than others because of his/her disability.

We will make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that a pupil with one or more disabilities is not placed at a disadvantage, and to encourage parents and/or carers to liaise with us to ensure this happens.

We will do our best to anticipate the needs of a pupil with disabilities before he/she joins the school.

5. Adults

Our anti-discrimination policy is applicable to all adults that work or have contact with the school. Incidents of discrimination with or between adults in any of the categories listed above is not tolerated and the same rigorous standards apply, including the reporting of such incidents.

When the Principal and Trust Board are appointing staff, the same anti-discriminatory standards and protocols will apply to all areas where discrimination could occur. An exception to this may be that a candidate's suitability and ability to preserve and develop the religious character of the school may be taken into account.

In addition, adults in our school will not be discriminated against in terms of age, unless it can be objectively justified in the circumstances – i.e. that the act of discrimination is both appropriate and no more than necessary in the particular circumstances to secure a legitimate aim of the school.

Equal opportunities for staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

- All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. (See Appendix 1 for our policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders).
- We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.
- As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.
- We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.
- We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

6. Duty to Promote Equality

All schools are under a duty to promote equality and good relations between people of different race, gender, and those with disability. At our schools we are committed to upholding this principle.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups:

- We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and number skills. We also ensure children from all groups are challenged to reach higher levels.
- We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions meetings and home visits.
- We collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.
- We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils.
- We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.
- We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.
- Our schools have accessibility plans that are renewed every 3 years when a significant change has taken place.
- We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support.

What we are doing to foster good relations:

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through PSHE and citizenship and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity, disability and avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.
- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and sympathise with different experiences.
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors and whole school events.

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we;

- Review relevant feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, parent-

school forum and/or focus meetings or governors' parent-consultation meeting

- Secure and analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events
- Review feedback and responses from the children and groups of children from the pupil voice groups.
- Ensure that we secure responses and feedback at School Council meetings.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

Trustees/Local Governing Body

The Trustees have delegated the responsibility for reviewing and agreeing the EDI Policy to the Local Governing Body (LGB), who are also responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented. The LGB keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions and exclusions.

Principal and Leadership team

The Principal is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

Teaching and Support Staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy. We will provide guidance and information to enable them to do this. Information will be placed on the school website and on parent information boards.

8. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Principal and the Trust Board to monitor the EDI policy and practice. This monitoring will help to ensure that measures to combat discrimination and promote equality are embedded appropriately in the ethos and practice of the school. All staff are made aware of the agreed policy and practice of our school. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Local Governing Body.

Appendix 1: Ex-offenders Policy

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), The New Generation Schools Trust and Hope Community School comply fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

New Generation Schools Trust undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

New Generation Schools Trust can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended), we can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

The New Generation Schools Trust is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers and stakeholders, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The trust's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.

New Generation Schools Trust actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records, as long as these records have not led to the individual being barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

The New Generation Schools Trust selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience. As an educational establishment that works with children, appointments to the trust that involve engaging in regulated activity relevant to children are excluded from the non-disclosure provisions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If an applicant is shortlisted for interview they will be required to declare any cautions, convictions, reprimands or final warnings which are not protected (i.e., that are not filtered out*), as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended). Applicants will also be required to disclose any other information that would suggest that they may be unsuitable to work with children. Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from taking up appointment; it will depend on the nature of the offence(s) and their relevance to the post applied for. However, should an applicant fail to declare any of the above and this is subsequently revealed, for example through the DBS check, then this may place the employment in jeopardy. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence and with due regard to the ROA and data protection legislation.

* Amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' meaning that they are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account.

All guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found in the DBS filtering collection on the Gov.uk website and further information on disclosing a criminal record can also be obtained from Nacro: www.nacro.org.uk

The trust and its schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Offers of employment for relevant roles are therefore subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure and other employment checks.

Where DBS checks are required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS application or current certificate will need to be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

New Generation Schools Trust ensures that all personnel who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.

The trust also ensures that these personnel have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

During the interview, or in a separate discussion, New Generation Schools Trust will ensure that an open and measured discussion will take place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The trust makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the code of practice and will make a copy available on request.

The New Generation Schools Trust undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.