

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**(In this policy parent refers to anyone with legal responsibility for the young person).**

*Equal Opportunities is a basic entitlement for everyone and as such is taken very seriously at Lyndon School. Our aim is to provide equality of opportunity through all aspects of school life for students, staff, governors and the community it represents.*

- Lyndon School will treat all students, staff and visitors with respect and tolerance in an environment free from discrimination, directly or indirectly.
- Lyndon School will continue to develop policy, programmes and procedures to comply with current and future legislation, ensure that values and purpose are maintained. These will be enhanced by emphasising equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity.

These principles are central to ALL school policies. We will not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour, or alleged behaviour, will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and will be subject to disciplinary procedures if appropriate

### **Disability Discrimination.**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended 2005) defines a disabled person as one who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The term “physical and mental impairment” includes sensory and learning impairment.

Under the Education Act 1996 s.312, a child has Special Educational Needs if he or she, “has a learning difficulty which call for special education provision”. This definition covers both children with a “difficulty in learning” requiring special education provision and children with a “disability” requiring special education provision. Not all the children defined under the Disability Discrimination Act will have a SEN.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, employers must not discriminate against disabled people applying for jobs, or against existing disabled staff. In general the Act also makes it illegal for anyone providing goods, facilities or services unjustifiably to discriminate against a disabled person. In practice, this means that it is unlawful for governing bodies to discriminate against disabled people in the provision of non-educational services on school premises. In addition governing bodies are required to take reasonable steps to enable disabled people to use a non-educational service provided by the school.

### **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA).**

The SENDA amends the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and makes further provision against disability discrimination in schools and other places of education.

Part 1 of the SENDA amends part 4 of the Education Act 1996 for children with SEN.

- It strengthens the right of children with SEN to be educated in mainstream schools unless this is incompatible with the wishes of the parents or the provision of effective education for other children.

Part 2 of the SENDA concerns disability discrimination in education.

- One key duty is not to treat disabled students less favourably for a reason relating to the disability than someone to whom that reason does not apply. It is unlawful for a responsible body of a school to discriminate against a disabled student or prospective student:
  - in any admission arrangements it makes;
  - in relation to exclusions;
  - in the education or associated services provided for or offered to students at the school by the responsible body.
- three aspects taken together constitute unlawful discrimination. These are that the less favourable treatment:
  - is for a reason that is directly related to the child's disability;
  - is less favourable treatment than someone gets without a disability; and
  - cannot be justified.

In line with the act, Lyndon School must constantly review its accessibility plans to improve access to education over time. This will be addressed through the Health and Safety Group and the F&GP Committee. These plans have to address three elements of planned improvements in access for disabled students:

- improvements in access to the curriculum;
- physical improvements to increase access to education and associated services; and
- improvements in the provision of education in a range of formats for disabled people.

A parent or young person may request that the school keep confidential the fact that the child has a disability.

### **Students.**

No existing or prospective student shall experience discrimination, victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origins, creed, disability, sexual orientation, religion gender or any other criterion accepted as unjustifiable by Governors, SMBC, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Education Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.

Lyndon School's Curriculum, Appointments, Bullying, and Race Relationships and Gender Equality Policies will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they comply with relevant legislation.

### **All Staff will;**

- ensure that all adults and young people are treated with respect and tolerance,
- deal with incidents as they arise in a fair manner, ensuring all are perceived to have equal status,

- provide supportive, positive images of males and females, different abilities, ethnic and cultural groups;
- ensure that our students receive their educational entitlement, have access to the widest range of learning experiences, and are offered a broad and relevant curriculum.

No existing or prospective member of staff should experience discrimination, victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, age, marital status, disability, sexuality, gender, race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin or any other criterion accepted as unjustifiable by the Governors, SMBC, the Disability Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.

All staff have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is complied with.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures are as issued by Solihull MBC.

**The Governing Body** will;

- keep themselves well informed of equal opportunities issues, locally and nationally,
  - be familiar with school policies and procedures,
  - regularly review Lyndon School's Equal Opportunities, Curriculum, Appointments, Bullying, Race Relationships, Gender Equality Policies and other related policies,
  - seek advice and take appropriate action when necessary.
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- Governing bodies must include in their annual report the Accessibility Plan indicating how they are increasing access to education at the school for disabled students, whether or not they have such students at present, and improving access for disabled people generally.
  - The accessibility of learning resources and equipment for all students must be considered.
  - Action has to be taken to include non-ambulant students in physical education and sports.
  - School trips must be organised within reason with disabled students in mind.

This information will be provided by the Health and Safety Group and the F&GP Committee.

**The Head Teacher** will;

- actively show support and ensure that the practice and principles of equal opportunities are in evidence within the school and its policies;
- be well informed and advised on equal opportunities and associated issues;
- as far as is reasonably possible, enable personal development through a structured programme of Continuing Professional Development and Training;
- identify appropriate elements of equal opportunities in the School Improvement Plan;
- ensure that effective monitoring, recording, reporting and evaluation processes are in place;

- nominate a designated member of staff with responsibility for equal opportunities issues;
- be kept informed of all equal opportunities issues,
- inform and involve the governors as required.

**The Leadership Team** must,

- be conversant with Lyndon School's Equal Opportunities Policy and related policies, issues and legislation,
- practice and monitor the principles of equal opportunities and take appropriate action where necessary;
- ensure that Team Leaders are kept informed of equal opportunities issues through protocol and other such meetings;
- provide support where necessary;
- identify development and training needs and liaise with the PDC,
- know what to report and to whom, and where to obtain advice..

**Team Leaders** must;

- ensure there is an equal opportunities dimension to their role with their teams and the welfare of students and that they actively promote equal opportunities,
- build up a knowledge of resources and expertise which promote equal opportunities;
- ensure that no one feels disadvantaged in any group,
- ensure that a relevant curriculum is provided for students, that careful consideration is given to the arrangements of groups and that the deployment of staff is undertaken with regard to experience, expertise, skills, development and training needs,
- explore opportunities for community involvement in enhancing an equal opportunities dimension,
- ensure that problems relating to equal opportunities are dealt with swiftly, reported to the Head Teacher or her deputy immediately and advice sought where necessary.
- ensure that all adults and students are treated with respect and tolerance;
- deal with incidents as they arise in a fair manner, ensuring all students are perceived to have equal status;
- provide supportive, positive images of males and females, different abilities and ethnic groups;
- ensure that students receive their educational entitlement, have access to the widest range of learning experiences, and are offered a broad and relevant curriculum.

## **STAFFING AND APPOINTMENTS**

Through the composition of staff, their roles, relationships and working practices we aim to reflect Lyndon School's commitment to equal opportunities by providing;

- equality of opportunities for staff to achieve the level and types of work for which they have the qualities, skills and experience;,
- regular monitoring, review, evaluation, professional development and training,

- opportunities to be involved in working groups, improvement planning, forums etc,
- a variety of role models for both students and adults,
- an environment in which attitudes, expectations and behaviour towards each other, students, their families and the community promote equality of opportunity.

**The Governing Body and Head Teacher's responsibilities are to:**

- recognise the influence adults have on students in relation to attitudes towards equal opportunities and ensure that this is borne in mind during the process of appointment,
- be aware of the school's staffing profile with a view to identifying areas of imbalance and representation and, where appropriate, set targets for possible appointments,
- ensure that selection and appointment procedures, and those taking part in them, recognise both the legal requirements and the aims embraced in this policy,
- identify, with all staff, their professional development and training needs, and support them in accessing appropriate development programmes,
- monitor involvement and effectiveness of professional development and training programmes,
- review day to day working practices to ensure confidence building, raising self esteem, giving praise and promoting participation are the norm.

**CURRICULUM PLANNING, MONITORING, REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT**

All students are entitled to a curriculum which is characterised by breadth, balance, coherence, relevance, personalisation, differentiation and progression. Much experience beyond the classroom is incidental, unplanned and relatively invisible to the teacher. The curriculum, therefore, aims not only to support students in developing knowledge, concept and skills as outlined by the National Curriculum, but to support students in recognising the importance of equality and their responsibilities for achieving it for themselves and others.

The processes should take account of the school's equal opportunities policy, to;

- ensure the selection of content and example is relevant to the needs and interests of all students,
- provide students with skills they will need to cope with, and challenge, a variety of situations in which there is not equality,
- develop schemes of work which ensure that cross-curricular dimensions, like equal opportunities, are an integral part and monitor their effectiveness,
- ensure that the curriculum extends students' of community groups who are not necessarily represented in the school,
- develop a curriculum and experiences that support positive attitudes towards minority groups.

**CURRICULUM DELIVERY**

Effective teaching provides effective learning opportunities. Equality of opportunity in the classroom requires attention to the needs of each individual, a recognition of

their current level of skill, knowledge, understanding and the provision of opportunities for progression. It is necessary, therefore, for staff to develop a variety of styles that meet the different learning styles and needs of individuals and groups.

Teaching strategies that aim to address learning objectives, the needs of the group and equal opportunities should;

- ensure that teaching styles are appropriate to the objectives, and student groupings are arranged and monitored accordingly,
- take learning styles into account in the planning and provision of learning experiences,
- use language which is accessible to all students and which does not denigrate certain groups or individuals,
- structure activities to enable all students to extend their learning,
- include a range of relevant learning resources and enable appropriate and effective intervention,
- establish expectations and targets and demonstrate that different experiences are equally valued,
- ensure that praise and constructive criticism are administered fairly,
- recognise individual and group achievements, and encourage students to respect and respond to each others' needs,
- encourage the active participation of all.

### **DISPLAY**

The school's visual and aesthetic environment carries powerful messages. Attractive displays, notices, pictures, photographs, paintings, posters and artefacts should reflect our **5 Cs, Vision and Values and Community Dimension**.

Displays should;

- be non-offensive,
- be clear about the message they are communicating,
- be up-to-date and changed at frequent intervals,
- celebrate achievements and attainment across the total range of experiences and backgrounds,
- reflect the work of all students,
- demonstrate that students' work is valued.

### **RESOURCES**

All staff, have a responsibility to ensure that resources are balanced, up-to-date, appropriate and reflect a world in which males and females of all ages, differing races and faiths share their learning, leisure and working time. The content of resource, the way they are used and the degree of access that young people have to them can inhibit or support members of different groups, particularly gender, in their learning experiences and views of the outside world.

Resources used in school should aim to reflect our Equal Opportunities Policy, ie they;

- are as free as possible from stereotyping and bias,

- provide a wide variety of positive images of **all** groups of people within our wider community – locally, nationally and globally,
- ensure equal access and make learning accessible to all students.

### **LANGUAGE**

Language is a powerful way of conveying attitudes and values. The language used (orally, written, body language) by members of the school community can have a significant effect on other people. Everyone has a responsibility to use appropriate language and respect the feelings, beliefs and views of others.

The language used in the learning, work and leisure environment should reflect this and be understood by all through;

- ensuring that jargon, if used, is explained,
- using language that does not denigrate individuals or groups,
- ensuring that “sign” and all other languages are given status,
- ensuring that the home language of all age groups and their bi-lingualism are given status and individual’s linguistic skills are used to enhance teaching and learning experiences where appropriate,
- being aware of the home language of individuals and knowing how to pronounce their names correctly.

### **THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY (GED)**

The Gender Equality Duty came into force on 16 April 2007. It requires public authorities to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination. Instead of depending on individuals making complaints about sex discrimination, the duty places the legal responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat males and females fairly. The definition of a public authority is **'any person who has functions of a public nature'** which is the same approach taken with the Disability Discrimination 2005 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

From April 2007, schools have had a general duty to promote equality of opportunity between men and woman (including boys and girls) and a specific duty to publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how the school intends to fulfil the general and specific duties. Schools must review the plan every three years and report on progress annually.

The duty is divided into areas, the **'general'** duty and the **'specific'** duties. The general duty is an overall duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality. The specific duties are a means of meeting the general duty.

The aims are to:

- deal with discrimination in schools,
- offer equal opportunities to men and women, boys and girls,
- tackle problems of underachievement at all levels.

*"The Gender Equality Duty presents a fantastic opportunity for schools to make a co-ordinated effort to tackle inequality and ensure that all students are able to fully achieve their potential. The entire school population will benefit by taking well-planned action on gender equality"*

Equal Opportunities

Commission 2007.

In England, the gender Equality Duty does not make the same distinction between schools and other public bodies as the Race Equality Duty. Therefore to comply with the GED, all schools should have their own individual gender equality schemes by April 30. (We have had one for a long time, in theory, through our comprehensive Equal Opportunities, Racial Awareness, Appointments, Curriculum Policies etc)

In summary the specific duties of a school is to:

- prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme indicating how it is intended to fulfil the general and specific duties and set out the gender equality objectives,
- gather information on the effect of its policies and practices in relation to the extent to which it promotes equality between male and female students,

- assess the impact of policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on equality between male and female students,
- provide the local authority with an annual report in respect of the information the school has gathered and the impact assessment it has conducted,
- carry out such steps which the local authority proposes to take toward the fulfilment of its general duty,
- maintain a copy of a report which records the implementation by the school of these arrangements.

In undertaking the Gender Equality Scheme **Lyndon School** will:

- consult employees, association representatives, trade unions and appropriate others as necessary,
- consult students and their parents/carers,
- take into account any information it has gathered or considers relevant as to how its policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of its services,
- ensure that appointments, pay, cover and curriculum policies continue to be reviewed and revised on an annual basis,
- deal with issues of stereotyping, healthy lifestyles and bullying to the best of our ability,
- tackle any inequalities in provision for both female and male students to ensure that all are able to fully achieve their potential,
- assess the impact of current and future policies and practices on gender equality,
- ensure implementation of the scheme objectives,
- implement the scheme and actions for gathering and using information within three years of publication of the scheme, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so, ie by April 2010,
- review and revise the scheme at least every three years,
- report on progress annually, to the governors and the local authority.