

Spaxton Church of England School

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Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Reviewed	Next Review Due
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Statement of Intent: **Inspired by: I Corinthians Ch 13 Vs 4-7**

Those who belong to our school: **protect**, **trust**, have **hope**, **persevere**, show **courage** and **rejoice**.



(Spaxton Primary School vision statement)

We believe that we can only hope to truly realise this if we properly allow for equal opportunities.

Our aims for the children at Spaxton Primary School

At Spaxton Primary School we are concerned with the education of the whole child. We encourage each child to develop fully to his or her potential by providing equality of opportunity throughout the curriculum. Our aim is to provide skills and knowledge for the children to understand the world around them and for use in adult life. We aim to develop young people who have experienced success in school, have positive attitudes about themselves, and who are becoming socially aware and developing into caring members of the society.

The school supports the aims of the National Curriculum, promoting and fostering development of skills, interests and attitudes which are appropriate to the intellectual, physical, emotional and social stages of each child's development.

Aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy It is the aim of the school to:

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

Statements of Principle

- a) Discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, sex or ability is unacceptable in this school
- b) Every pupil and teacher 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
- c) 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.
- d) All staff practise an equal opportunities philosophy
- e) 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.
- f) The school is committed to emphasising the common elements and values of different cultures rather than highlighting conflicting areas.
- g) 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.

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.

Staff

An effective opportunities policy enables employers to ensure, as far as possible, that they do not practise unlawful direct or indirect discrimination and that they make the best use of their existing and potential work force. An equal opportunities policy and programme enables employers to develop good employment practices in respect of all employees regardless of their sex.

An effectively monitored equal opportunities policy enables employers to identify groups, which are under-represented in certain jobs or sections, to assess the reasons for this and, where appropriate, to make use of the relevant Acts for positive action.

Pupils

The policy should ensure that:

- All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum

- All information provided for parents clearly states that all subjects and facilities are equally available to all;
- The issue of stereotyping will be brought to pupils' attention and that teaching materials do not reinforce stereotypes;
- Equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and is regularly reviewed.

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 education service 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:

- a) 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.
- b) The organisation will be non-discriminating in terms of pupil selection for activities and groupings of pupils
- c) Programmes of work shall reflect the individual assessment of needs and preferences. Inherent in this is the recognition and acceptance of individual differences
- d) Teaching methods and resources shall reflect the flexibility of approach necessary to meet individual needs.

Equal Opportunities – Gender

We aim, within The Coppice 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. Certain strategies are employed to ensure that the cross-curricular dimension of equal opportunity permeates all of the life and work of the school. Children of both sexes have equal opportunity within and equal access to all areas of the whole school curriculum.

This includes both the Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets for the National Curriculum subjects; other subject areas currently outside the National Curriculum and areas such as extra-curricular activities.

Boys and girls are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.

- 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
- Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to boys and girls
- All children are encouraged to work and play freely with others of both sexes
- Opportunities are given for children to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of both sexes

Teaching and other groupings such as assembly seating, lines for dismissal, classroom seating and playground areas are organised on the basis of criteria other than gender, for example, age, ability, friendship. Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and children.

- Discipline procedures – notably rewards and sanctions are the same for both sexes
- Our school uniform policy reflects equality of opportunity for all children

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 and are discussed with the children. All teaching and non-teaching posts are not sex specific. Both men and women are encouraged to teach all age groups and each Key Stage. 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 the Coppice 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.

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:

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

Equal Opportunities – Disability

We aim within The Coppice 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 children at Spaxton School are a very welcoming group of children. We often receive children into the school at different times of the school year. With the expertise of staff and the welcome extended from the children, new pupils acclimatise quickly. Pupils are fully integrated into classes and we have a number of children with special needs. The children are encouraged to accept the many differences children have and support those children in need. We have worked hard over the last few years to ensure that disabled visitors and pupils have equal access to the site.

Equal Opportunities in Action

Admission

The school's admission policy does not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as a criteria 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, whether they take place in the playground, hall, corridors or teaching areas. It should always be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Pupils

All incidents are referred to the Headteacher 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.

The Curriculum

All pupils must have access to the school's curriculum. Staff must be constantly aware that their own expectations affect the achievement, behaviour and status of each pupil. The curriculum must be balanced, objective and sensitive, and must reflect sexual and cultural diversity. Every effort will be made to ensure that the curriculum provided reflects the School's policy on respect, empathy and understanding. Such a curriculum will then provide opportunities for all learners to achieve and for all others to value such achievements.

The school will aim to:

- Provide equal access to, and positive encouragement in, curriculum opportunities for all pupils
- Encourage pupils and staff to question conscious or unconscious attitudes and assumptions in themselves and others, which might lead to prejudice
- Ensure that staff are aware of the extent to which their own perceptions and unspoken expectations relating to the curriculum may influence pupil achievement

Pupils and the Curriculum

Included in the school aims is the idea that it seeks to develop the particular abilities of each pupil as an individual. Our Special Needs Policy endorses this. Equal Opportunities is about developing individuals and not allowing their sex, race or any other general characteristic to get in the way. Each pupil must have equal access to all the benefits, facilities or services offered by the school. This means that girls and boys must have precisely the same access to the curriculum and also to any other benefit offered by the school e.g. visits, instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities.

Resources

The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of sex, ability or ethnic origins. Whenever possible, staff must ensure that the resources used in all curriculum areas are multicultural, multi-faith (in line with the agreed syllabus for RE) and non-sexist, containing positive images of all groups. Variety should be evident in the morals, stories and information offered to children. Pupils should have access to accurate information about similarities and differences between cultural groups.

Classroom Management and Teaching Strategies

The school recognises that it is not enough to provide a curriculum and leave learners to benefit from it, but that the teachers role is to promote access to that curriculum. To this end, staff will aim to:

- Deal immediately and firmly with any incidents of blatant discrimination such as name-calling, taunting or sarcasm based on race, gender or disability. Covert discrimination will not be tolerated – to ignore is to condone
- Offer opportunities for success equally to all pupils in all subjects, practical tasks and group work
- Attempt to give equal attention to all pupils
- Provide positive support for pupils making non-traditional choices in curricular and extracurricular activities
- Arrange classes or working groups using need and ability as the only criteria for selection
- Ensure that displays, books and visual aids present positive images of minority groups
- Address equality issues within the hidden curriculum of
 - a) staff attitudes to pupils e.g. seating plans, physical tasks, carrying messages
 - b) staff expectations – expectations of pupils achievements should be based on ability, not gender, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background
- select and if necessary, update all materials/resources to be used in the classroom, and remove any which only serve to foster negative images.

The Hidden Curriculum

The last few years have seen a wealth of new research studies which demonstrate convincingly the variety of ways in which some girls and boys, men and women, still wrongly believe that:

- education serves a different purpose for them depending on which sex they are
- certain subjects or activities are not suitable for them (e.g. boys are good at science, girls re good at reading)
- girls and women are inferior to boys and men It needs to be stressed that these forms of discrimination and stereotyping are for the most part quite unintentional but are, nevertheless, undesirable and harmful to the intellectual and social development of pupils. As children grow older, their ideas of sex roles begin to be more influenced by factors beyond the home, the most significant of these influences being the school, the peer group and the media.

Since the only factor controlled by teachers is the school, every effort should be made to present a non-discriminatory environment. Many small but significant procedures can affect the development of a non-discriminatory environment. These include:

- school organisation
- dress
- television, books and other learning materials
- discipline
- teacher attention
- adult role models
- Visits

Community Projects, Out of School Activities

All visits are open to pupils of both sexes. All recreational, sport and social facilities and out of school activities are likewise equally available to both sexes. Pupils of both sexes are afforded equal access to all benefits, facilities and services provided by our school. Decisions on discipline and dress for girls and boys have been made on non-discriminatory criteria.

Discipline

Rules for the classroom and playground are based on the Behaviour Management Policy. Sanctions and rewards are applied without favour to all pupils. 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 LEA in all areas of employment.

Recruitment

It is lawful, 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 (see below)
 - 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 affect 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 Governing Body

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

- employment
- admissions
- exclusions
- resource allocation
- implementation of the National Curriculum Our governing body takes this responsibility most seriously and endeavours to ensure that they discharge their responsibilities without sexual discrimination.

Working Within the Law

Anti-discrimination laws in the United Kingdom are designed to eliminate discrimination in employment and education on the grounds of race and sex.

The race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person on racial grounds in recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, terms and conditions of employment or dismissal. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person on the grounds of sex or marital status.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 brought in laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination, which many disabled people faced. The Act gave disabled people new rights in the area of employment.

In addition, the Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1984) requires employers to give equal treatment in respect of pay, terms of contract and employment to men and women doing the same or broadly similar work. Under the terms of 1984 amendment, equal pay must also be given for work of equal value in terms of skill, effort, decision-making or other issues.

Classification by sexuality (bisexual, homosexual, gay, lesbian, heterosexual) for purposes of employment, professional responsibility or opportunity demonstrates discrimination. Similarly, sexuality should not be used to discriminate amongst pupils and students.

Work experience

The curriculum in secondary schools, further education colleges and institutions of higher education involves an element of work experience. At Spaxton we are pleased to welcome these students and in an average year we will have two/three students on Work Experience Placements. It is unlawful for an employer or work experience provider to put pressure on a school or college not to send students of a particular sex for work experience. It would also be unlawful for a school or college to yield to such pressure. Similarly, it would be unlawful for schools or colleges themselves to allocate work experience placements on a sex basis. It is the intention of the school that these aims will lead to a working climate in which each participant, whether child or adult, will be encouraged to hold a positive regard and respect for themselves and each other, through which the learning process can take place.

Monitoring and Review

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be reviewed after three years.