



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Signature:..... Name:..... Date:.....  
Chair of Governors

Signature:..... Name:..... Date:.....  
Executive Headteacher

Reviewed and Amended October 2015  
Reviewed September 2016

**Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator:**

Cherry Trees School: Mrs Sharon Dickinson

Wightwick Hall School: Mrs Mandy Morris

**Equal Opportunities Governor:**

Mrs Alison Sargent

**The Schools' Aims:**

- to provide the best possible standards of teaching and learning
- to work with parents and pupils to help our children at a level which meets their individual needs and capabilities, in a safe and caring environment
- to foster pride in individual and group achievement
- to foster self-respect, and to care for others

The Schools' ultimate aim is to prepare our children for a fulfilling happy life when they leave school as young adults.

**Introduction**

The Schools are committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. We aim to equip students with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference. We value each individual and promote opportunities for students to achieve the highest standards, having regard for individual circumstances and abilities. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enabling students to strive for and meet the highest expectations that we have for them. Every member of the Schools is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality and/or ability/ disability.

Every aspect of school activity has an equal opportunities dimension. This may be expressed explicitly in teaching materials and display, implicitly in classroom practice, or as part of the 'hidden curriculum' of social interaction amongst and between staff and students.

The Schools' environments influence the developing attitudes of the children and can be a powerful vehicle for the promotion of understanding and practice of equal opportunities.

We live in a society where disability discrimination segregates and isolates people from their communities. The Schools' aim through their proactive approach to inclusion is to enable our students to enjoy an equality of access to their communities. The Schools believe that all students should have access to high quality and appropriate education. Students are entitled to receive, with a suitable peer group, a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, in the least restricted environment. The development of inclusive practice should not create situations within which the individual needs of students are left unmet. A range of flexible responses is available to meet such needs and to accommodate their diversity. The Schools understand the broader meaning of inclusion; that it is a quality issue that concerns the entire process of education and not simply where students are placed.

### **The Law and Discrimination**

#### **Equality Act 2010**

This Equal Opportunities Policy is reviewed annually and latest changes to the document take into account the provisions and requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 has set out a new single public sector equality duty which has replaced previous equality provisions made under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the Sex

Discrimination Act 1975. Pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 the Schools are required to meet equality objectives in relation to:

- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and Maternity (Paternity);
- Race;
- Religion and Belief;
- Gender/Sex;
- Sexual Orientation; and

- Marriage and Civil Partnerships

The above objectives relate to all persons involved in the Schools applying equally to students, teaching and other staff.

In order to provide a single cohesive policy applicable to both Schools the following documents are appended to this policy:

1. Gender Equality Scheme;
2. Wightwick Hall School's key equality objectives; and
3. Cherry Trees School's key equality objectives

The Schools are committed to providing equality to all students and staff by adhering to the following principles of equality:

**1. All learners are of equal value.**

Principle 1 applies to all learners and potential learners, their parents, carers and guardians regardless of disability; race, ethnicity, culture, or origin; religion or belief; gender/sex; sexual orientation or identity.

**2. Recognise and respect difference.**

Whilst the Schools will not discriminate, they will continue to recognise that each student is an individual and that treating people equally does not require all people to be treated the same. The Schools will take account of differences in students and strive to provide teaching and support appropriate for individuals and their skill bases.

**3. Foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.**

The Schools will continue to promote:

- positive attitudes towards those with disabilities and an absence of harassment or bullying;
- positive interaction and dialogue between groups of differing ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation and national origin and an absence of prejudice-related bullying or incidents; and
- foster mutual respect between boys and girls, men and women and an absence of sexual or homophobic harassment.

**4. Observe good equality in practice.**

The Schools will ensure that policies and procedures benefit all staff and potential staff, in recruitment, professional development and promotion regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, gender or sexual preference and regardless of all rights relating to pregnancy, maternity and paternity.

**5. Reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers to equality.**

The Schools are committed to identifying and addressing any instances of inequality as they arise and to promote positive attitudes towards equality.

**6. Benefit to society.**

This Equal Opportunities Policy is intended to benefit society as a whole by fostering positive equal opportunities amongst staff and students and in so doing to prepare students for participation in society and the inclusion of all individuals regardless of disability, ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, gender or sexual preference.

**7. Monitoring and evidence gathering.**

As part of the Schools' obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and as part of the School Improvement Plan for each of the Schools, equal opportunities are monitored and data is collected. The purpose of the monitoring is to ensure that the Schools meet their obligations and that any issues of inequality are identified and addressed appropriately.

**8. Key equality objectives.**

Both of the Schools have identified specific and measurable key equality objectives which are detailed in Appendices 2 and 3. Objectives may be updated from time to time and will be recorded in revised Appendices.

In relation to staffing, both Schools will also ensure that:

- Staff are aware of the Schools' Equal Opportunities Policy and the specific key objectives set out at Appendices 2 and 3 respectively;

- Staff are trained and updated regularly of equal opportunities issues and requirements both applicable to staff and students;
- Recruitment and selection procedures for new staff are fair and equal;
- Induction training and information for new staff include issues relating to equality;
- All members of staff have access to CPD which will enable professional development;
- The skills of all staff are recognised regardless of their role within the Schools and that staff are valued and encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences.

### Aims

- To ensure that students and staff recognise that discrimination on the basis of race, colour, culture, origin, religion or belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation and marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, disability or ability is not acceptable.
- To provide an environment in which all students and staff feel safe enough to express and question views.
- To ensure that all staff feel valued and supported and have appropriate advice and encouragement for professional development.
- Ensure the principles and practice of equal opportunities applies to all members of the school community: students; teaching and non-teaching staff; parents; governors and visitors.
- Equal Opportunities practices should be evident in:
  - a) the formal curriculum (the programme of lessons)
  - b) the informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities); and
  - c) the 'hidden' curriculum (the ethos of the school, the quality of personal relationships etc).
- To educate, develop and prepare all our students for life whatever their race, colour, culture, origin, religion, belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability or ability.

- Students and teachers contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.
- Students are seen as individuals and each child's education and care is to be developed in direct relation to their needs and abilities. This eclectic approach is to be based upon sound knowledge and awareness of an appropriate range of teaching and learning styles, teaching interventions, behavioural methods, medical and diagnostic issues.

### **Policy into Practice**

#### **a) Admission**

The Schools follow the LEA and Governing Body Admission Policies that do not permit sex, race or colour to be used as criteria for admission. The Schools admit students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (or students in the process of acquiring an EHCP) referred by the District Office, subject to the Schools' abilities to meet identified needs.

#### **b) Registration**

Students and staff names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Students will be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

#### **c) Discrimination**

All forms of discrimination by any person within the Schools' responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. Parents should be aware of the Schools' commitment to equal opportunities.

All cases of discrimination or prejudice should be taken seriously and dealt with, as appropriate, according to existing sanction procedures. A record of incidents should be kept.

**d) Language**

The Schools view linguistic diversity positively. Students and staff must feel that their national language is valued.

**e) Culture, Class, Religion and Race**

The Schools acknowledge that members of the schools come from diverse cultural, racial, religious and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a school and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony.

The Schools recognise the inequalities of opportunity which exist within society for individuals and groups and are determined to take positive action to enable every individual to raise his/her self-esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life.

We understand the need to be different without being excluded.

We are happy for students to wear special forms of dress where these are an essential part of their religious or cultural background - Sikhs' turbans, Muslim girls' headscarves etc.

We value the history, experience and contribution of our multi-cultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and life of our school.

We try to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views: a prime cause of prejudice is ignorance and misunderstanding.

We will not tolerate racist behaviour in any form.

**f) Gender**

Both Schools accept that there are gender inequalities in our society which impose limits, particularly on girls' expectations and behaviour, so we constantly examine our curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias and inequality.

We encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid gender stereotypes presented by, for example, the media.

We are committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. All students experience subjects previously considered to be suitable for a single gender.

We try to ensure

1. that teachers allocate their time fairly between the genders,
2. that all students have opportunities for working with pupils of both genders,
3. that we break down traditional gender stereotypes,
4. that students are encouraged to pursue less conventional subjects and interests.
5. We do not differentiate between the genders in respect of our school uniform.

**g) Religion**

We acknowledge that members of the school come from diverse backgrounds: some have no religious faith; others are committed to a greater or lesser extent to a variety of religions. We seek to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of and respect for the beliefs and practices of others.

With regard to the teaching of RE we consider that the role of the teacher is that of educator and not that of evangelist. We do not seek to make students religious, but to teach them about religion.

**h) Resources**

The Schools' aim is to provide for all students according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability, religion or ethnic origin. Resources are to reflect cultural and racial backgrounds of children to support positive self imagery. We try to ensure that our resources include non-sexist books which value the achievements of both women and men. Displays will similarly reflect a range of cultures and races. All materials in use in the Schools are monitored.

**i) Relationships**

Relationships between staff, students and management should be such that any member of the school acting in a manner contrary to the spirit of this policy is made aware of the unacceptable nature of

his/her behaviour. This should be done in a supportive manner to encourage change and reinforce the principles of this policy. When it is uncomfortable or inappropriate to address the issue between the individuals' concerned then management must be made aware of the incident and address the incident with the staff or student involved through supervision. In extreme circumstances formal procedures may be taken by the Head Teacher in line with the Schools' Anti-Bullying policy.

**j) Appointments**

The Head ensures that in recruitment procedures any advertisements, shortlisting and interview procedures are without any hint of direct or indirect discrimination. During employment it would be unlawful to discriminate in the way opportunities for promotion, transfer or training were offered. It is also unlawful to discriminate in dismissals, particularly in redundancy dismissals.

**Awareness of policy**

Parents and students know that the Schools have an equal opportunities policy and are committed to equality of opportunity for all students.

The Governing body has set the equal opportunities policy and it and the head teacher actively promote and implement it. Only if there is transparency in the dealing with staff issues will people feel comfortable with the outcomes.

Governing bodies are required in their annual report to publish information on the following arrangements regarding disabled pupils:

- arrangements at the school for the admission of students with disabilities
- the steps to prevent those students being treated less favourably than other pupils
- the facilities to assist access to the school by students with disabilities

### **Monitoring and review**

The Schools monitor the impact of their policies and procedures on different groups (by race, gender and disability) and the effectiveness of such policies are assessed through school self evaluation procedures.

### **Appendix 1 - Wightwick Hall School's key equality objectives.**

Wightwick Hall School is committed to enabling our students to achieve their very best and we set high expectations of all students whether in Bannantyne, Gates or Roddick departments. All of our courses are designed to respect the students' skill bases and to provide suitable, appropriate and achievable targets, encouraging students to work hard and to recognise and celebrate their individual abilities.

Wightwick Hall School has set two key equality objectives:

1. To work together with parents, carers and guardians in encouraging each child's learning at home to enable , encourage and promote academic and practical progress at home and at school and to identify through assessment and to address under achievement.
2. To narrow the gap between the achievements and performances of boys and girls in English, and particularly in reading abilities

### **Appendix 2 - Cherry Trees School's key equality objectives.**

Cherry Trees School provides a planned and caring setting where the individual needs of each child is taken into account to provide fair and accessible educational opportunities. With the individual needs of each child at the fore and close liaison with parents, carers and guardians, children are able to progress academically, to learn life skills and to prepare for secondary education and beyond.

Cherry Trees School has set two key equality objectives:

1. To work together with parents, carers and guardians in encouraging each child's learning at home to enable , encourage and promote academic and practical progress at home and at school and to identify through assessment and to address under achievement.
2. To monitor closely the progress of pupils in vulnerable groups such as Children Looked After and children who have Free School Meals, to ensure their achievements are in line with other pupils.

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