

Equal Opportunities Policy (incorporating Anti-Racist Policy)

Updated: January 2016

Next Review: January 2018

Committee: Inclusion

1. Introduction

The JCoSS community comprises a wide variety of people, with varied backgrounds, lifestyles and cultures, both within and beyond the Jewish community. It is a diversity which enriches our lives and the educational process.

Central to our ethos is the phrase 'elu v'elu divrei elokim chaim' – *these, and these, are the words of the living God*. In practice, this means that every member of our community is equally valued, their beliefs and choices are equally valid, and their happiness, safety and security are equally important.

Unfortunately, not all members of our community always live up to these expectations and as a result, some members of our community may experience discrimination or harassment, both inside and outside school. It is the duty of everyone in school to challenge such prejudiced behaviour and to take a stand against it. We take seriously our statutory duties to prevent children and young people being radicalised. Please refer to our 'Tackling Extremism' policy for further details.

The agreed aims of the school cannot be carried out without a commitment to equal opportunities. The purpose of this document is to make that commitment explicit, in relation to all aspects of school life.

2. Statement of Principle

We recognise, value and welcome the diversity of our school community. This is reflected in our intake, our stakeholders, our curriculum and our values. We are committed to the pursuit of equal opportunities for all members of the school community, and are opposed to all forms of unfair discrimination which may hurt or disadvantage individuals or groups in school.

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. In line with (and in addition to) this Act, we are opposed to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

- disability
- physical appearance
- religion and belief
- ethnicity
- marriage and civil partnership
- maternity and pregnancy
- sexual identity
- HIV-positive/AIDS status
- age
- socio-economic status
- Jewish status as a result of descent or conversion
- gender
- gender reassignment
- trade union activity
- supremacism

As a school we aim to achieve an environment in which:

every student:

- is respected and respects others (and this respect is based on both an inherent respect for difference as well as informed understanding of difference);
- has access to a full curriculum;
- is helped to achieve his/her full potential;
- is not subject to unfair discrimination on any of the grounds mentioned above;

every member of staff and governor:

- is respected and respects others;
- is enabled to work and develop without discrimination on any of the grounds mentioned above;

every parent and visitor to the school

- is respected and respects others;
- is treated with courtesy and is not subjected to unfair discrimination on any of the grounds mentioned above.

3. Implementation

All procedures for the recruitment, appointment and retention of staff will be in accordance with the principles set out in this policy. The CPD (continuing professional development) programme for all staff will continue to address equal opportunities issues. All subject teachers will be aware of and follow the principles of the Equal Opportunities Policy, the checklist for use by Heads of Faculty (Appendix B) and the school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

All incidents of unfair discrimination in school will be taken seriously and will be dealt with through the school's established disciplinary procedures (for students) or the Governing Body's approved Grievance and Disciplinary procedures (for staff).

Under the Equality Act, schools have a duty to make "reasonable adjustments" (cf Inclusive Schooling) for people with a disability. The DfE summarises the duty as:

- Where something a school does places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students then the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.
- Schools will be expected to provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it would be reasonable to do so and if such an aid would alleviate any substantial disadvantage that the student faces in comparison to non-disabled students.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governors will review this policy regularly and ask the Headteacher for a report on its implementation. Faculties and departments will review their practice annually as part of the SEF process.

Established procedures are in place for monitoring the home languages, ethnicity and special educational needs of students.

Additional Guidance: Department for Education - Equality Act 2010: advice for schools

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Appendix A – Sample practices to embed our Equal Opportunities and Anti-Racist ethos

Racist, sexist, homophobic, supremacist, and other offensive comments and incidents, however small, including graffiti, must never go unchallenged or ignored. They will be dealt with quickly.

1. Complaints by students of racist, sexist, homophobic or supremacist behaviour will be taken seriously and acted on.
2. All incidents of racist, sexist, homophobic or supremacist behaviour must be reported through the usual channels.
3. We encourage the parents of all students to meet staff and to visit school. In the absence of interpreters, we are glad to accept the help of students or family members.
4. Our school uniform is designed to allow alternatives acceptable to different cultural and religious groups. Kippot are optional for boys and girls; girls may choose to wear a skirt or trousers; Muslim girls may wear a plain black, white or purple headscarf.
5. Bilingualism is a positive asset and is seen and used as such.
6. Displays in the school will reflect the diversity of the world community, as well as that of our local community.
7. The curriculum as delivered through faculties will acknowledge, value and, where appropriate, use the diversity of the students' cultural backgrounds.
8. In selecting materials for use in lessons, we use positive racial, gender and cultural images. Wherever possible we avoid negative images, unless the purpose is to educate to the contrary.
9. PSHCE programmes will include opportunities to explore the cultural backgrounds and practices of students.
10. Jewish Education reflects the religious and cultural diversity of the world community.
11. In assemblies we use positive role models and acknowledge festivals from a variety of cultures.
12. We encourage the inviting of visitors from a wide range of backgrounds, to help foster the school's multicultural policy.
13. The Incident Sheet and school MIS (see Behaviour Policy) includes a section to enable the monitoring of racist and bullying incidents.

Appendix B – Sample guidance on anti-racist and anti-sexist material selection

Visual Material (including charts, posters, illustrations in books, DVDs, YouTube etc):

1. Does the material realistically reflect the distinctive features of different groups within and beyond the Jewish community?
2. Is the material free from stereotyping and tokenism?
3. Are women and black people portrayed positively and seen in a full variety of roles?
4. When students are shown, do girls play key roles?
5. Does the material, taken as a whole, provide a balanced picture and not focus on the extremes in other societies? It should not, for example, show only the picturesque and the exotic, or only a way of life which is rural and technologically unsophisticated.
6. Does the material avoid setting up a past way of life as if it were the norm? (For example, very few Inuit (Eskimos) now live in igloos).

Texts

1. Does this book avoid encouraging racist and sexist stereotypes and feelings of superiority based on race and sex? Is the language free from patronising and insulting terminology? (Some books are littered with references to backward nations).
2. Does the book select its examples of excellence, innovation, etc., from various parts of the world, including non-western societies?
3. Is the Euro-centric approach avoided?
4. Are the histories of countries and the role of the people, including national leaders, in developing their own societies accurately presented from their own viewpoint?
5. Are the customs, life-styles and traditions of different cultures presented in a manner which explains their value, meaning and role in the life of the people rather than as quaint, peculiar, or exotic?
6. Is the complexity and variety of life shown without simplistic generalisations about regional and national characteristics?
7. Does the book avoid setting up a past way of life as if it were still the norm for that society or culture?
8. Is the role of women in the life and development of all societies and their place in history and present-day life adequately presented?
9. Does the book avoid using 'he' and 'man' as all-purpose expressions?

Appendix C: “Proportionate action to help disadvantaged pupils”

Schools may take proportionate action to help disadvantaged pupils

The Equality & Human Rights Commission guidance explains that, under the Act, schools may (but are not required to) take proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils.

The guidance explains that this not the same as positive discrimination, where preferential treatment for a particularly disadvantaged pupil group is given.

Page 14 of the DfE guidance refers to an example of boys having lower reading skills than girls. It says:

A positive action initiative specifically to help boys ... would not necessarily be unlawful.

A positive action initiative specifically to help boys in such a position would not necessarily be unlawful but the school would need to be able to show that this was a proportionate way of dealing with a specific disadvantage experienced by boys and connected to their gender. It would not be proportionate simply to refuse help to girls with reading difficulties in order to help boys as a group catch up with the higher average attainment of girls.