



EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Belfast High School

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Ratified by: Board of Governors

Responsibility: Board of Governors

Author: Vice Principal

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INTRODUCTION

Belfast High School is committed to promoting equality and inclusion within our school community.

We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics.

We are committed to an ethos and culture of inclusion in our School for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Belfast High School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our pupils and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength that enriches our lives. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers to learning and development.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and bullying and harassment. As a community, we recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our School; where appropriate, making necessary adjustments to enable everyone's participation.

Belfast High School believes that education (both formal and informal learning) is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to and advancement in employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment.

All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities; this is evidenced in our practices and procedures.

ETHOS AND AIMS

Ethos

At Belfast High School we believe that through high aspirations, perseverance and commitment, every pupil can fulfil their potential in the caring, warm and inclusive atmosphere offered here.

Aims

We aim to:

- provide a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum which suits the needs of all pupils in a changing society and which encourages each pupil in his or her intellectual, cultural, aesthetic and physical development;
- instil in each pupil the determination to strive in all activities, academic and otherwise, to achieve his or her own level of excellence;
- encourage in pupils a respect for religious and moral values;
- create a caring environment in which the needs of each pupil are considered;
- foster social attitudes which will enable each pupil to take his or her place as a responsible member of the community;
- value and respect everyone, recognise their strengths and differences, encourage them to develop their skills and abilities and have a positive attitude to each and every member of our community;
- develop the three-way partnership (parent-pupil-school) to enable our pupils to attain their full potential;
- prepare our pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the fast-paced C21st world.

In upholding our ethos and achieving our aims, Belfast High School will provide a caring, respectful, creative and safe environment in which staff, family and community strive to prepare confident, well-rounded, lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

A Rights Respecting School

Belfast High School is a Rights Respecting School, recognised through the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award.

A Rights Respecting School teaches and actively promotes awareness of child rights and models rights and respect in all its relationships – between adults and pupils, between adults and between pupils. Pupils are aware of their rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the importance of ensuring that their behaviours uphold their rights and those of their peers.

https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/12/RSSA_Good_Practice_Review.pdf

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN SCHOOL POLICIES

Through this policy, and the wider practices within Belfast High School, we seek to empower our pupils to embrace diversity and challenge discrimination. We equip our Governors and staff to fulfil their legal responsibilities, ensure that our school's safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and inclusive and enable robust monitoring of our progress as a school.

Inclusion underpins all our school policies.

As part of our overall school policy development there are a number of policies that we must have in place and regularly review to ensure our school is addressing its statutory responsibilities. These include Anti-bullying Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Curriculum Policy, Promoting Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy, Uniform and Appearance Policy and Admissions Policy. Any arising incident will be dealt with through the appropriate policy.

This is supplemented by a range of other policies that as a school we feel are important to have for the benefit of our community. It is our belief that equality and inclusion are central to **all** our policies and that we maintain an ethos that welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities for all, ensuring all our pupils and their families feel valued and supported and making sure that equality and inclusion are evident in everyday school life.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has an overall responsibility to 'Promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school' *'Every school a good school – the governors role'* (Department of Education NI, August 2019). The Governors have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation;
- ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equality and inclusion;
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff;
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- putting the school's equality and inclusion policies and codes into practice;
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out;
- following the relevant procedures and acting where necessary.

The Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team, led by the Designated Teacher, will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal.

All School Staff

All Teaching and non-teaching staff have a responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

Pupils

All pupils are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions;
- following all the relevant school policies and codes of conduct in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.

HOW WE PROMOTE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Belfast High School promotes equality and inclusion in the following ways:

School Practices

- Develop a whole school approach to equality and inclusion
- Have an inclusive ethos and aims
- Use a range of resources and teaching approaches
- Use appropriate terminology and language
- Tackle stereotypes
- Challenge all forms of bullying
- Set clear expectations about acceptable behaviour
- Have regular training for staff
- Discussing uniform preferences with pupils

Facilities/Services

- Promoting and using interpreting services
- Using translated documents where available
- Have allocated accessible parking
- Having all accessible toilets/changing facilities
- Having an accessible main entrance and building
- Considering flexible payment schemes when planning trips and co/extra-curricular activities
- Helping young people to access advice from support organisations

Curriculum

- Examining where and when themes around equality and inclusion might be embedded into topics within each curriculum area

MONITORING THE SUCCESS OF THE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods including:

- the number of bullying incidents by equality characteristic to be monitored and appropriate action taken as necessary;
- the number of comments and complaints in relation to equality and inclusion is to be monitored;
- a record of relevant training and information presented to staff/ pupils is kept;
- feedback from pupils, staff, parents and the wider community to be sought regularly.

OTHER RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

The school maintains a range of policies designed to support equality and inclusion. They include:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Curriculum Policy
- Drugs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medication Needs

REVIEW

This policy will be kept under review by the Board of Governors in line with the School's Policy Review Schedule.

KEY TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Equality

Equality means ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities regardless of their abilities, their background, and their lifestyle or personal characteristics. Equality does not mean treating everyone the same.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about valuing and respecting our differences and so creating a welcoming and productive environment for diverse colleagues to flourish. It is the richness of colleagues' ideas, backgrounds and perspectives that creates businesses value by enabling us to innovate and anticipate the needs of our diverse service needs.

Diversity

Diversity means all the ways we differ. It includes visible differences such as age, gender, ethnicity and disability, as well as invisible differences such as thinking styles, sexual orientation and nationality. It recognises that all these characteristics interact and influence our sense of identity and how we behave and make us each the unique people we are.

Direct Discrimination

This is where someone is treated less favourably than others in the same or similar position based on a protected characteristic, for example their gender.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination is where an organisation unjustifiably operates a rule or policy that looks the same for everyone but in effect disadvantages people from a particular protected group. For example, you do not permit pupils to wear headgear as part of your uniform policy and this policy applies to every pupil equally. Due to the cultural values (often religious) of some minority groups in our community this could potentially be defined as indirect discrimination.

Disability-Related Discrimination

Disability-related discrimination is essentially a form of direct discrimination. It is very closely linked with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Disability-related discrimination is much less likely to occur when the reasonable adjustment duty has been complied with.

What is the reasonable adjustment duty for disabled people?

In certain circumstances the law places a duty on us to make reasonable adjustments for those pupils or prospective pupils who have a disability. This may include access, additional equipment or changes to routines / schedules.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying are terms used to explain certain types of unacceptable behaviour that pupils may sometimes be subjected to such as name-calling, unacceptable comments, intimidating text messages, deliberate exclusion, pushing / shoving or more aggressive physical contact.