

Downs Way School Equality Policy

Rationale

At Downs Way School we have a positive approach to ensuring equality, as defined in the Equality Act 2010. Our Equality Policy covers sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, staff who are pregnant, undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment.

Downs Way is a fully inclusive infant school set in Tandridge, Surrey. We have approximately 140 pupils on role and 28 employees.

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental right for all members of the Downs Way community. We are committed to developing the potential of all people associated with the school.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that individual diversity is valued and that rights and beliefs are protected, respected and tolerated. In order to guarantee that this occurs, we must make it an integral part of our thoughts, words and deeds. This policy is intended to have a direct and positive impact on the ethos of the school.

The core values of the school are within the schools aims and set out in our Vision Statement:

'At Downs Way School all staff and Governors are committed to providing a high quality, stimulating, safe and caring learning environment where every child is encouraged to achieve their true potential.'

'Everyone at our school, whether a child or an adult, is a star; we enable them to shine.'

We all work hard to build and maintain honest and strong relationships. We are committed to learning and improving as much as we can.

Through on going education and training the school promotes a culture of respect for all, we promote equality by recognising and celebrating diversity and we create a school community that prepares our children for a life in a diverse society.

At Downs Way School there are a relatively small numbers within the school community who have English as a foreign language - 1.4%.

Aims

The students and staff come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Our Inclusion Register is updated regularly according to the needs of the pupils. Whilst the school is a cohesive community, we recognise the need to actively promote relationships between the various sections of society represented within the school. The school is adapted to accommodate pupils with additional physical needs; all areas of the school are accessible in a wheelchair.

The community in which the school is situated is predominantly white British.

We aim to embrace the diversity of the community we serve and as such celebrate all groups represented within it. We will eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations and positive attitudes between all people in the school community and beyond.

Downs Way School aims to create a school community which has equality for all at the heart of all we do. We seek to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors or any other person who has contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified.

- Each pupil should be held in equal esteem, but individual abilities and experiences should be taken into account. The school aims to provide all students with a well-balanced education. Students with special educational needs should have equal access to the whole curriculum, though there may need to be greater emphasis on literacy, numeracy or social skills for some students.
- We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. This policy applies to all students, staff, parent helpers, visitors or contractors to Downs Way School. This policy covers all aspects of school life including student admissions, teaching and learning, behaviour management, staff recruitment and career development, parental involvement and the role of the governing body. All members of the school community must be free from any form of discrimination or harassment.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs. Care is taken to ensure that no discriminatory material is used in the School.
- We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups. Materials that celebrate and show different cultures and national origins will be used in all subjects, wherever possible.
- We are aware that low self-image and ignorance can cause prejudice and stereotyping. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all. This is a major aspect of the Citizenship and Personal, Health and Social Education schemes of work, but is seen to be the responsibility of all curriculum areas.
- We regularly provide professional development in the areas of equality and diversity to staff and ensure they are empowered with the skills and information to address and support equality within the classroom setting.

Specific reference to groups covered within the equality Act 2012:

Race:

- Recognising the small level of ethnic diversity within the local community it is an aim of the school to reflect the cultural diversity of the wider community to promote awareness and understanding.
- It is the right of all students to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the School. We do not tolerate any form of behaviour that discriminates on the basis of race, colour and culture. All incidents of a racially motivated nature will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate sanctions applied. All incidents will be recorded through the conduct log. A central log of racially motivated incidents will be maintained by the Headteacher. Support, respect, sympathy and understanding are shown to the victim. Following investigation and in appropriate circumstances, parents are informed by the senior member of staff if their child is either a perpetrator or victim.
- Where there are reported incidents of this nature appropriate sanctions and support are applied.

Religion or belief:

- It is the right of students, staff, parents, governors and visiting community members to not be treated differently on grounds of their religion or belief.
- Students are encouraged through a comprehensive Religious Education programme to explore a range of religions and to encourage tolerance and acceptance of others who have differing religions or beliefs.

Pregnancy & Maternity:

- Protection for staff from discrimination or less favourable treatment because of pregnancy is new under the Equality Act 2010. Downs Way School will ensure if the situation arises within the school that staff are given support and the school ensures quality provision is made in this instance.

Sexual Orientation:

- Downs Way School operates a Citizenship and PSHE curriculum which supports pupils to address relationships in all forms.
- Staff are trained in addressing issues around homophobic bullying and given the skills to deal with it if it occurs within the classroom or around the school grounds.
- The incident reporting system now incorporates a specific tick box for homophobic bullying and all incidents of this nature are taken seriously and dealt with by the senior staff. The leadership team is able to identify through this system if homophobic bullying is on the rise and react accordingly.
- The school ensures that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual students or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other students.

Sex/Gender:

- As a fully inclusive mixed gender school, we ensure that students of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment given to other students.

- The school operates a curriculum that allows all students to access lessons and every effort is made to combat gender stereotypes with regard to curriculum choices and career opportunities.
- Our PSHE programme addresses gender stereotypes appropriate to the children's level of understanding.

Disability:

- The Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities regardless of their effect.
- The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.
- The school will not and does not treat a disabled student less favourably simply because that student is disabled.
- The school will provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student when it is reasonable to do so and if the aid would alleviate substantial disadvantage that the student faces compared to non-disabled students.
- At Downs Way School we will ensure that disabled students can play as full a part as possible in school life and will make the reasonable adjustments to support this.
- The school is committed to the equality of opportunity between disabled and able bodied people.
- We will eliminate discrimination that is unlawful as well as any harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- For additional information relating to DDA under the Equality Act 2010, please see:

School Accessibility Plan

Special Educational Needs Policy

Procedures:

School Governors are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with current equality legislation
- Making sure this policy and its procedures are followed

Every member of staff takes responsibility to

- Treat all members of the school community with respect
- Constantly recognise the contributions made by every child within the school
- Ensure all incidents of a discriminatory nature are immediately challenged and recorded through the appropriate channels
- Log all racist incidents in accordance with the statutory guidance

The class teacher

- Ensures they are aware of the background of all children they teach and that students are treated equally and with respect. We do not under any circumstance negatively discriminate against any child.
- When planning activities teaching staff pay due regard to the racial and cultural sensitivities of the class. Teachers strive to incorporate diversity in a positive way which challenges stereotypes and assumptions.

The role of the Headteacher

- To implement the School's Equality Policy
- Ensure staff are aware of the Policy contents
- Ensure all appointment panels give due regard to this Policy, so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities and that all staff work in an environment that is free from harassment
- The Headteacher treats all acts of discrimination and unfair treatment seriously
- The Headteacher monitors all incidents of discriminatory nature

The role of parents/carers

- Parents/carers are expected to support the School's Equality Policy
- Where a child has intentionally behaved in an unfair, unjust or discriminatory manner it is the expectation that the parents/carers will support the sanction applied
- The school works collaboratively with parents/carers so a strong and consistent message is delivered about appropriate behaviour

The role of the pupils/students

- Pupils/students are to abide by this policy, in school and when travelling to and from school
- When witnessing an incident of discrimination, a pupil must report it
- A child who is a victim must report it so that the School can deal with the matter swiftly and efficiently.

Responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school lies with a named member of staff & governor

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- Dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents)

- Monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of students
- Monitoring exclusions

Monitoring, Reviewing & Assessing Impact:

The schools Equality Policy is supported by a Single Equality Scheme. The scheme is linked to whole school development planning and identifies targets for promoting equality.

The policy will be reviewed yearly in ensuring it is effective in eliminating discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality and good relations between different groups, and that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community. Any pattern of inequality found as a result of impact assessment should be considered for future planning and decision making.

The governing body will receive annual reports for review, this will include reference to the school population, key initiatives and progress against targets and future plans.

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Author: Tandridge Education Partnership. Adapted to showcase practice at Downs Way School by the Head teacher, Sue Palmer

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