



## HACKNEY NEW SCHOOL

### Equal Opportunities Policy

It is the core vision of Hackney New School to provide our students with access to the widest range of opportunities in life by fostering academic excellence and instilling self-belief, intellectual curiosity and responsibility towards others in society. It is our central focus to provide children with the tools to lead independent and rewarding lives regardless of gender, ability or background.

In order to fulfil our aims it is vital that **all** members of the school community feel safe and secure in the school environment. Where discrimination exists it represents a significant barrier to learning and the enjoyment of school. We recognise that discrimination can happen in many ways, both intentionally and inadvertently, and through this policy seek to combat its presence at HNS.

This Equal Opportunities Policy is intended to respond to the spirit as well as the letter of the Equality Act 2010, Race relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Gender Equality Act 2006 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion. It also aims to promote all other forms of equality that are relevant to life in schools.

The Equal Opportunities Policy will inform the School Development Plan as this will enable us to:

- demonstrate how promoting equality and eliminating discrimination can help raise standards;
- ensure the equality and diversity are part of the school's business both as a school and as an employer;
- ensure that our priorities for raising standards support our equality objectives;
- inform the overall evaluation of our effectiveness in our self-evaluation.

### Definitions

**Equality** refers to outcomes, making sure that all social groups benefit equally from our activities. Diversity recognises that we can only achieve equality by taking into account the different needs of communities. Equality is impossible to achieve without recognising diversity.

**Discrimination** is a type of negative treatment that affects a whole group of people, or an individual because they belong to a group. Direct discrimination is when a person is treated less favourable than others because of their (real or perceived)

ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality, religion/belief, gender and gender reassignment, special educational needs, pregnancy and maternity and linguistic background. Indirect discrimination is when there are rules or procedures that have the effect of discriminating against certain groups of people.

### **Consultation**

It is our intention to consult widely on the impact of this policy including as appropriate students, staff and parents through consultation routes which are already in place e.g. school council, staff meetings, parents' forums and governors' meetings.

This policy will appear on the school website. Hard copies may be requested from the school office. Versions accessible in languages other than English and accessible to the visually impaired will also be made available on request, but are not held as a matter of course, and may take some time to prepare.

The day to day application of the policy is the responsibility of all members of the school community. The overview of the policy will be maintained by the Headteacher who will provide an annual report to the governors on its progress and impact.

### **Profile of Hackney New School**

Hackney New School has approximately equal numbers of boys and girls on roll with a wide range of ethnicity. There is a number whose first language is other than English.

HNS serves Hackney and surrounding boroughs. This is an inner city environment where young people may experience economic deprivation. The percentage of children with pupil premium status is 48.3%. There is also a growing population of middle class professional families.

The school is inclusive with a higher than average number of students with special educational needs.

### **Race Equality Policy**

HNS will endeavour to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equal opportunities;
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

We will support this by:

- monitoring, assessing and reviewing the progress and attainment levels of students in ethnic groups as part of the wider tracking of pupils;

- training and supporting all school staff and governors to understand race equality and the practical implications for the school and its community;
- taking reasonable steps to make available the results of this monitoring on an annual basis;
- recording any racial incidents and report them to the Learning Trust on a termly basis;
- responding appropriately to any racial incidents that happen in school;
- maintaining a high profile for the theme of cultural diversity through the academic curriculum, music programme, the PSHE programme and The Core;
- preparing students for life in a global and multi-cultural society by studying issues relating to intolerance, prejudice, discrimination and racism within the curriculum, PSHE programme and The Core;
- seeking opportunities across the curriculum to present positive role models and images of an ethnically rich community. These will include role models from a range of fields to include academia, music, sport, art and business;
- ensuring teaching resources reflect the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of local society as well as regionally and nationally. Ensuring the teaching resources portray members of all ethnic and cultural groups in ways which are positive and do not reinforce stereotypes;
- welcoming performances in drama and music which feature and explore race issues;
- developing opportunities to invite visitors and speakers from all backgrounds and cultures, including developing links with schools worldwide;
- challenging prejudice. However, the very act of challenging unacceptable attitudes may bring negative views to the surface and give them a platform and appear to promote conflict. It is essential that these challenges are handled with the greatest sensitivity, though leaving racist or homophobic comments or actions unchallenged is not an option;
- making our curriculum and extra-curricular activities available to all our students irrespective of cultural or religious background;
- seeking to support each individual learner to achieve his/her best ensuring the same high expectations are made of each student. In some instances this may require additional support (such as EAL) whilst in others no specific support may be needed. Our regular school tracking systems will identify support needs;
- valuing and promoting languages other than English;
- meeting the special dietary needs of all students as far as practical;
- collecting data to enable us to identify trends and patterns and using it to inform planning and decision-making.

## **Disability Equality Policy**

The school's duty is outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

HNS will endeavour to:

- promote equality of opportunity for disabled students, staff, parents/carers and other school users;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- promote positive attitudes to disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take into account a disabled person's disability even if it means treating the disabled person more favourably.

We will aim to implement the above by:

- producing a three year access plan;
- involving disabled students and other disabled people in all stages of the plan;
- carrying out Equality Impact Assessments of policies and procedures to make sure that disabled people are not being treated unfairly;
- make known the results of these assessments;
- report annually on the progress of the action plan.

### **Definition**

**A disability** is any condition that affects a person in their day to day life. This can happen suddenly, for example as the result of an accident, or gradually as the result of a condition such as arthritis. In the Disability Discrimination act (DDA) this is called an impairment. The DDA now recognises around 400 impairments including:

- mobility impairments (requiring aids such as sticks or wheelchairs to move about);
- sensory impairments (hearing or sight loss);
- mental ill health (including depression, stress, Alzheimer's disease and schizophrenia);
- cognitive developmental impairments (including learning disabilities, dyslexia and autism);
- muscular impairments (including spinal injuries);
- asthma;
- cancer;
- HIV/AIDS;
- phobias;
- arthritis;
- acquired brain injuries.

HNS will endeavour to improve access to the curriculum, our buildings and our other services to disabled people. We must also take a proactive stance and anticipate what we may need in the future.

The school has an Access Plan. The plan identifies key issues with respect to the school and its key purpose of “...providing students with access to the widest range of opportunities in life by fostering academic excellence and instilling self-belief, intellectual curiosity and responsibility towards others in society.” It falls within the framework of the Inclusion and SEN policies which have as their purpose the provision of effective education for all students who attend the school. The Access Plan endeavours to ensure that the school conforms to the requirements of specific disability legislation.

The plan refers to the following operating principles:

- budgetary constraints determine a limit to what can be achieved at any given time;
- need is variable and erratic, so response should be targeted to achieve the best value;
- the early identification of forthcoming need is at the heart of an effective plan;
- all projects must conform to best practice in this regard both in themselves and with regard to ensuring they make the best possible contribution to addressing related deficiencies in the premises as a whole.

The Access Plan is a working document, supplemented by detailed plans for specific improvements to address particular needs as they are identified.

The key person for identifying forthcoming need is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) who will seek to identify, through the SEN review and liaison process, whether students with particular disabilities will be entering the school. The SENCo will inform the Headteacher of any such students where modifications are required. This needs identification must be done at the earliest opportunity, preferably several years in advance of admission. This will enable the necessary steps to be taken to prepare accessibility where it may prove problematic.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Disabled Staff**

Hackney New School welcomes a diverse workforce and we wish for an ethos where potential and existing staff feel able to disclose any impairment that they have. This information is needed to allow the school to make any reasonable adjustments for the staff member. All disclosures will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

## **Disability and Special Educational Needs**

Not all students who are defined as disabled will have special educational needs. For example, those with severe asthma or diabetes may not have SEN but may have rights under the DDA. Similarly, not all children with SEN will be defined as having a disability.

Learners with disabilities/special needs/learning difficulties...

- will have access to all the facilities and resources available in the school
- are fully integrated with non-disabled students
- are educated alongside non-disabled students
- will receive additional support to ensure that their needs and aspirations are met
- will be given extra help and support to ensure that they fulfil their potential
- will be provided with an education appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability
- will have access to the same broad, balanced and relevant curriculum as other students
- will be provided with the opportunity to meet, interact and learn alongside other young people of their own age
- will be involved in decisions being made about their care and education

Detailed records will be kept of the academic progress being made by disabled students.

Every effort will be made to ensure that disabled students are not bullied.

Throughout the curriculum, staff will use every opportunity to explore how people can challenge stereotypes about disabilities.

Staff will take part in regular training about disabilities/special needs/learning difficulties.

Staff will work in partnership with parents and primary carers to ensure that disabled students benefit fully from their time spent in school.

Resources will be targeted and utilised effectively and efficiently to ensure that disabled students fulfil their potential.

The school is committed to early identification of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties enabling referral to the Wellbeing Centre.

Relationships with role models with disabilities will be built alongside work with and in the local community.

## **Gender Equality Policy**

This policy incorporates our duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to gender equality.

HNS will endeavour to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

by :

- taking steps to address the causes of any gender gap;
- collecting and using information on gender equality in the school;
- consulting with stakeholders on priorities for gender equality;
- carrying out gender impact assessments;
- identifying priority areas for gender equality.

The gender equality duty promotes equality for men, women and transgendered people.

### **Definition**

Gender refers to the social construction of male and female identity, rather than biological difference between man and women. Gender identity is not always fixed and the gender equality duty urges us to have due regard to the needs of transgender people.

Hackney New School contains a fairly even mix of boys and girls.

### **Issues for Hackney New School**

Nationally girls tend to outperform boys academically. The gap (if present) between boys' and girls' progress and attainment is monitored closely. As a result of this monitoring strategies are in place to target individuals and groups whose progress may be causing concern through. These strategies include specific Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs), mentoring etc.

Individual subjects are aware of the possible curriculum bias of certain schemes of work, and where appropriate ensure there is compensatory emphasis. This may be achieved on occasion through specific materials and topics, for example, boy friendly books in English Literature.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in enhancing teaching and learning focuses on classroom strategies which will promote effective learning by **all**

students. We believe that good practice in engaging boys also has a beneficial impact on girls' learning.

Whenever the curriculum allows, opportunities are taken to challenge gender stereotypes and explore how and why these have evolved over time.

Cultural isolation can maintain discriminatory values and attitudes towards gender. For example, males may have a more chauvinistic attitude towards females than may be the case in some more cosmopolitan communities and similarly instances of homophobia maybe present. These attitudes influence subject choice and career intentions. HNS at all stages seeks to combat stereotyping in subject choice and future ambition. The school is proactive in promoting an enterprising approach to life and learning, which values all contributions equally. Curriculum meetings and careers sessions address these possible issues, engaging parents/carers at every opportunity. The Core is an essential tool in discussing, debating and addressing these issues.

In terms of health issues recent surveys have shown that more girls smoke at an earlier age whilst boys drink more alcohol. There is a tendency for girls to be more worried than boys about: exams and tests; health problems; problems with friends; family problems and body image. Girls are also more affected by recent developments in communications technology, particularly through social networking. Cyber-bullying is a more girl orientated phenomenon. HNS promotes a healthy life-style alongside emotional and mental well-being. Regular and varied physical activity is provided through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The Core, PSHE programme and Wellbeing Centre alongside support through Form Tutors, Pastoral Managers and mentors support individual students allowing early intervention.

Expectations of behaviour, including uniform standards, are not differentiated by gender.

Students who use sexist language or exhibit gender prejudice are challenged about their attitude. (refer to Behaviour Policy)

All staff members, both teaching and support, are employed on an equal basis, and, within employment legislation and established terms and conditions of work, are entitled to maternity or paternity leave and will be considered for career breaks, job sharing or part-time work on an equal footing.

Appointments to posts will be on the basis of merit. Gender will only be a relevant factor when it is supported by law or accepted practice.

### **Sexuality Equality Policy**

Schools have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. We have a legal duty to ensure that



people of all sexualities (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual) are not discriminated when they work for us or use our services.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone should have equal access to all the services provided by HNS and that no-one within our community experiences discrimination due to their sexual orientation.

### **Age Equality Policy**

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations gave people of all age groups rights against discrimination at work, including vocational training. The regulations cover:

- mandatory retirement;
- discrimination in recruitment, retention and training;
- dismissal and redundancy;
- statutory sick pay and maternity;
- harassment in the workplace.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone should have equal access to all the services provided by the School and that no-one within our school community experiences age discrimination.

HNS is a secondary school educating young people between the ages 11-18 years. The school will ensure that it provides a wide range of opportunities for all students through the taught curriculum and other activities, where appropriate, are differentiated according to age. For example the sixth form provision will reflect the needs and qualification requirements of older teenagers; the KS4 curriculum will similarly be age and stage appropriate and the content of the curriculum will also reflect appropriately the maturity levels of students, for example, regarding key messages about e-safety or age-relevant approaches to sex and relationships education.

Materials and resources used in lessons and around school will show people of all ages and will avoid stereotypical images of any particular generation.

All young people will be expected to work together irrespective of age in a positive and constructive manner. The House system and mixed age extra-curricular activities will provide opportunities for this.

In appointing staff there will be no discrimination on the basis of age. Application forms for externally advertised posts will be anonymised, so that appointing panels are not influenced by an applicant's age.

Opportunities, such as additional responsibility or access to CPD, will be available to all on a consistent basis. No-one will be denied access to appropriate training for example because of their age or career phase.

## **Religion/Belief Equality Policy**

The Employment Equality (Religious Belief) Regulations (2003) gives people of all religious faiths rights against discrimination in the workplace. This does not include people's political beliefs, but does include agnostics or atheists.

Hackney New School is non-denominational in nature and welcomes students and staff members of all faiths, beliefs and none. Its admissions policy reflects this approach. We are committed to ensuring that everyone should have equal access to all opportunities provided by the school and that no-one in our school community experiences discrimination due to their religion or belief.

The following are particularly applicable to this policy:

- assemblies will be of a generally spiritual and moral nature and not reflective of one particular faith or belief, other than the general prescription that acts of collective worship should be 'broadly Christian in character';
- all students will be given opportunities to meet their religious needs, especially at the time of important festivals;
- the special dietary needs of all students will be met whenever practical, including those prompted by religious belief;
- we will ensure that classroom resources reflect the variety of people subscribing to different faith and beliefs;
- bullying or harassment based on religion or belief will be challenged consistently as with other forms of bullying.

This policy will subject to an annual review by the Governing Body.

Lesley Falconer

Executive Headteacher

September 2016