

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Equal Opportunities Policy - Pupils

Hereford Cathedral Junior School is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity for all including those in protected characteristics (age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnerships), in the belief that all pupils and staff, regardless of their age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, aptitude, disability, social or ethnic background, are of equal value and are entitled to receive equal provision, access and treatment.

All members of the School have a duty to:

- recognise, appreciate and acknowledge the contributions made by each gender and by different ethnic and religious groups to the richness of the School's academic, social, cultural and sporting life.
- treat each other fairly and with sensitivity, recognising that a person's age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, abilities, ethnicity or social circumstances are not subjects for negative comment or behaviour of any kind.

All staff, pupils and parents are expected to actively support the ethos of the School and promote a civilised, friendly, compassionate and secure environment for everyone to value and enjoy. Equal opportunities underpins the School's approach to admitting pupils and recruiting staff (see Admissions Policy and Recruitment Policy).

School Ethos and Aims

The School sets out to establish its aims, which are published on the School website by seeking to:

- provide a broad and balanced curriculum, that ensures equality of opportunity and access to all pupils, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, aptitude, disability, social or ethnic background, in order to foster the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of every individual.
- equip all pupils equally thoroughly for a constantly changing world and for the rights, duties, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in a democratic, pluralistic and multicultural society.

- raise the expectations of every pupil and enable each to realise their full potential in order to develop their confidence, self-esteem and sense of personal identity.
- counter myths, stereotypes, prejudices and misconceptions surrounding age, gender, ethnicity and other protected characteristics which hinder the individual's ability to achieve their personal goals.
- increase knowledge, appreciation and a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures, both European and non-European, which make up society today, and to encourage pupils to respect all fellow human beings regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, aptitude, disability, social or ethnic background, in a spirit of mutual toleration.

Curriculum

It is the School's duty to ensure the delivery of a curriculum which has breadth, balance, relevance and progression, to which all pupils, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, religion, aptitude, disability, social or ethnic background, have an equal entitlement. It is the responsibility of each subject lead to develop its own approach towards guaranteeing equality of opportunity in its own subject; such an approach should be regularly reviewed.

Equality of provision, however, does not in itself guarantee equality of take up. Within key stages, staff must take into consideration the following factors when developing schemes of work and deciding on teaching strategies.

- a) pupils' conditioning in the home and elsewhere
- b) pupils' differing experiences and skills on their arrival in the School
- c) pupils' differing learning styles
- d) pupils' linguistic background
- e) the subject matter itself should be free from gender, ethnic, political or other forms of deliberate or accidental bias
- f) staff must monitor and evaluate resources in regular use to ensure they do not reinforce stereotypical images of gender roles or different ethnic or cultural groups or portray age, sexuality, disability or any ethnic minority in a negative way
- g) staff must be constantly vigilant in their use of language in the classroom

Pastoral Care, Discipline and Teacher Expectations

The pastoral system has an essential role to play in promoting the School's policy of equal opportunities and in countering all forms of prejudice. Teachers are reminded that they hold prime responsibility for explaining, clarifying and exemplifying school policy and for transmitting and reinforcing the values and attitudes enshrined within it. The form group should provide opportunities, either informally or more formally through PSHE materials, to raise awareness of equal opportunities and discrimination.

Careers and Higher Education Advice

All careers and higher education advice should be non-discriminatory and should not discourage pupils from considering non-traditional careers and Higher Education courses, either by ridicule or by over-emphasising the difficulties which the student might have to face, but that they also draw pupils' attention to such employment in non-traditional areas and provide positive encouragement for pupils considering such options.

All careers literature should be vetted to ensure that it is free from racial, sexual or other forms of discrimination.

It is the responsibility of the Futures Department to make the School's policy on equal opportunities known to personnel in local commerce and industry with whom liaison (e.g. for work-shadowing) is already established, so that pupils' experiences with such bodies are always positive.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be defined as uninvited sexual attention, verbal, written (including through social media and sexting) or physical, which is offensive, intimidating, distressing, embarrassing or patronising to the person subjected to it. Such actions or behaviour need not necessarily be repeated or continuous to constitute harassment. It may take a variety of forms:

- a) sexist insults, jokes or gestures made in person, in writing or electronically
- b) graffiti or other pornographic writing or pictures of a sexist nature
- c) sexist comments of a derogatory nature
- d) the creation of a general climate or environment which is stressful to one sex or the other, e.g. actions or behaviour which might hinder another person's work performance
- e) threats or intimidation of a sexist or sexual nature
- f) uninvited physical contact or assault

In all cases complaints must be treated in a serious but sympathetic manner. Thus, the procedures outlined below are established to complement the whole school policy on equal opportunities.

Racist Behaviour

Insulting behaviour on the part of a pupil or a member of staff towards an individual or group on grounds of their colour, culture or ethnicity can be defined as racist, and it is the School's responsibility to state that as such it is indefensible and will not be tolerated in any circumstances. It may take a variety of forms:

- racist jokes, gestures or derogatory comments, graffiti or caricatures

- social isolation or segregation
- provocative behaviour, e.g. the wearing of badges, the introduction of racist literature into school
- threats of intimidation, physical contact or assault

a) Overt racist behaviour

It is Hereford Cathedral Junior School's responsibility to ensure that there is a sufficiently supportive and positive climate to enable any pupil who feels that they are the victim of racist behaviour to feel confident to inform both their teacher or Phase Leader in the knowledge that they will pursue the matter vigorously and appropriately.

It is vital that the victim (and where appropriate their parents) is given immediate assurance that the School will not tolerate such behaviour. Should racist comments occur in the course of classroom interaction in discussions or group work, the teacher concerned should immediately make it clear to the class that such remarks are unacceptable. Where relevant, any offensive material should be removed or confiscated forthwith, a record kept of any incident, and the pupil or pupils concerned dealt with according to the Behaviour Policy.

Individual counselling for either the victim or the pupil giving offence may well need to be considered.

b) Covert racism

The absence of overt racism in a school is no guarantee that pupils at the establishment are free from racial prejudice. It is not recommended as wise, however, to tackle "race/ethnicity" directly as a topic or issue in class, as this may well invite pupils to share racial prejudices and may, indeed, be an uncomfortable experience for many members of ethnic minorities who are thereby immediately labelled as "different" and the subject of specific debate.

Reviewed by MEPG and HH
October 2024