



Stormont School

17a EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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The policy is published on the website for current and prospective parents, governors, staff and volunteers. Hard copies are available from the School Office.

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This policy applies to all children in the school, from the EYFS - Reception Form to Year 6.

INTRODUCTION

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Stormont School. We welcome applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feel valued and can flourish.

Stormont School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, sexual orientation, body image, linguistic background, cultural or social background, pregnancy or maternity, SEN or disability. We are a non-selective school and we believe that the educational experience can only be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.

We welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policies covering Special Education Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties, and Disability and Accessibility.

A. STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE

1. The primary objective of this school is to educate, develop and prepare all our pupils, whatever their race, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, learning difficulty, body image, cultural, linguistic or social background for life in today's world.
2. The ethos of the school is one of tolerance, understanding and striving for excellence in all areas. Encouragement and praise should be the foundation of relationships between Governors, Staff, Children and Parents.
3. Discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender or gender reassignment, sexual orientation, body image, linguistic background, cultural or social background, pregnancy or maternity, SEN or disability is unacceptable in this school.
4. An equal opportunities philosophy will be practised by all members of staff.
5. The school acknowledges the complexity of British society and recognises that it would be failing the pupils if it did not prepare them for their integral part in society.
6. The school is committed to emphasising the common elements and values of our multiple culture rather than highlighting conflicting areas.
7. Every pupil and every member of the school staff will endeavour to further this objective by personally contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for and appreciation of each other as individuals.

B. THE AIM

We see our first task as equipping pupils with awareness of an increasingly diverse society and of presenting the world as it is and as we would like it to be. On such foundations, pupils will develop their own attitudes to a pluralistic society. We aim to make girls aware of the persistent problems of inequality in the world outside school, and to develop in them sympathy, understanding and concern for people who in some way are very different from them. Abusive language is not tolerated.

The school's experience is that pupils of all backgrounds exhibit a strong desire to be part of society, as it exists in our community.

C. PRACTICE

1. Admission

The school follows the Board of Governors' Admissions Policy, which does not permit race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, learning difficulty, body image or social background to be used as a criterion for admission, unless the disability is such that a child could not cope with the environment and programme that Stormont offers and any reasonable adjustments that the School is able to make would still not enable this.

2. Registration

Pupil's names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Pupils should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

3. Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school are to be treated seriously. A careful note must be kept of such incidents (and given to the Head), whether they take place in the playground, field or elsewhere in the school. It should always be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Pupils

If there are subsequent incidents, then the Head or the Deputy Head should be informed and consideration should be given to involving the parents. Racist symbols, badges and insignias on clothing and bags are forbidden in school. Graffiti should be immediately removed.

Staff

The school values diversity amongst the staff.

In all staff appointments, the best candidate will be appointed, based upon strict professional criteria.

All staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.

In order to understand the background and experience of ethnic minority pupils and to raise expectations of their potential, staff need to be aware of the historical and contemporary processes which have caused, and may continue to sustain, racism. Close liaison with families in the school is beneficial to all concerned. Support and advice is available from outside support agencies if necessary. The school's pastoral care organisation should be used, particularly with regard to home/school liaison and for dealing with any situations of discrimination or harassment.

4. The Curriculum

Equal opportunities underpin the value system of the school. The curriculum must display a commitment to this, so that having become a pupil of the school all of the children have access to the same facilities and opportunities. Staff must be constantly aware that their own expectations affect the achievement, behaviour and status of each pupil. The curriculum must be balanced, objective and sensitive.

As a school we undertake to:

- a) Encourage everyone to value the contributions of others regardless of cultural and religious differences.
- b) Provide opportunities for all members of the school community to understand roles in society free from prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, learning difficulty, body image or social background.
- c) Provide the children with the opportunity to experience aspects of different cultures at first hand.
- d) Promote the needs and rights of others.
- e) Encourage the development of personal, social and professional relationships.
- f) Acknowledge individual's rights and roles in the world of work and the work environment.

The curriculum will achieve these aims by:

- i) Using positive images to combat negative stereotypes.
- ii) Being aware of different types of learning and developing and encouraging different teaching methods to take account of these.
- iii) Ensuring that children with special needs have access to the curriculum through the implementation of the Special Education Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties, and Disability and Accessibility policies.
- iv) Screening resources to ensure that positive images of both sexes, people of different races and cultural backgrounds and people with disabilities are promoted.

5. Language

The school views linguistic diversity positively and staff should be aware of the language and dialect spoken by pupils and their families. Staff must be conscious of any discriminatory connotations in the language they themselves use.

Pupils and staff must feel that their language or dialect is valued. They should therefore be allowed to use their home language in school, but should never use it to exclude others.

6. Resources

The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of ability or ethnic origins.

Whenever possible, staff must ensure that the resources used in all curriculum areas are multicultural and non-sexist, containing positive images of all groups. Some bi-lingual books should be provided if possible.

Variety should be evident in the morals, stories and information offered to children. Pupils should have access to accurate information about similarities and differences between cultural groups.

See also the Admissions Policy, the Special Educational Needs & Learning Difficulties/Disabilities Policy, the English as an Additional Language Policy and the Accessibility Policy and Plan for further details.