



MOORFIELD
SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES For PUPILS POLICY



PUPIL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

(BASED ON THE STATUTORY REGULATIONS AS DEFINED BY THE EQUAL PAY ACT (1970), THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT (1975 & 1986), THE RACE RELATIONS ACT (1976), THE EDUCATION ACT (1986), THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT (1988) AND THE CHILDREN ACT (1989).)

INTRODUCTION

Moorfield School is committed to securing equality of opportunity through the creation of an environment in which individuals are treated on the basis solely of their relevant merits and abilities. Our intention is for all who study and work at the School, regardless of their age, gender (in the case of staff), ethnic or social background to have equality of opportunity.

At Moorfield School, all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, disability, religious views, marital status, sexual orientation, political views or trade union membership are unacceptable and are opposed. Our aim is to secure fair and equal treatment for all pupils.

Every pupil is expected to further this aim by contributing personally towards a happy, caring environment, by showing respect for, and appreciation of each other as individuals, and by helping to oppose and prevent all forms of prejudice, discrimination, harassment and bullying.

ADMISSIONS

It is the School's policy to ensure equitable treatment of all applicants. There is a common standard of entry and the same admissions procedure applies to all pupils applying regardless of religious, ethnic or social background.

FACILITIES

It is the School's policy to ensure equitable provision of facilities for all pupils. However, children with severe physical handicaps may find the School's site and buildings difficult to negotiate.

CURRICULUM

All pupils have equal access to the School curriculum which has breadth, balance, relevance and progression. Our aim is to provide for all pupils in the School according to their needs. It is the responsibility of each department to develop, practice and review its own policy for ensuring equality of opportunity in its own subject.

Delivery of the curriculum must be balanced, objective, sensitive and have regard to pupils' different learning styles. Resources should be free from racial bias or discrimination and from portraying stereotypes.

PSHE and School assemblies have an essential role in promoting the School's Equal Opportunities policy and in countering racial, sexual or any other form of prejudice, discrimination or harassment.

RELIGION

The School promotes a Christian ethos although children are free to follow their own religious beliefs. We promote an understanding of and respect for all world religions through our PSHE and RE programmes of study.

PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral system also has an essential role in promoting the School's Equal Opportunities policy and in countering racial, sexual or any other form of prejudice, discrimination or harassment.

REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

Rewards and sanctions must be administered fairly and on an equal and uniform basis. All pupils are expected to observe the School's core aims and values which inspire kindness to one another.

STAFF CONTACT TIME WITH PUPILS

- In contact time with pupils, all staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias in their own attitudes and take care to avoid any racist or sexist connotations in the language they themselves use.
- All staff should be sensitive to pupils' differing experiences and skills, especially on their arrival in the School.
- The variety of teaching styles used should take account of pupils' different learning styles and should give all pupils equal access, provision and treatment.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT.
THE LIST IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE, AND THUS IS INTENDED AS A GUIDELINE.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE DISABLED

Any attitudes held by a person or group towards an individual with a disability which are offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual are unacceptable. Also unacceptable are acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes, or any incitement to make others adopt such attitudes or behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour would be, for example:

- physical assault against a person because of his/her disability
- verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats and graffiti
- making negative reference to an individual's disability in the course of discussion, lessons or activities
- refusing to co-operate with an individual or excluding an individual because of his/her disability
- inciting or encouraging others to behave in any of the above ways.

RACISM

Any attitude held by a person or group of one ethnic origin towards another individual or group of different ethnic origin which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual or group is regarded as racism and is unacceptable. Racism is also considered to exist in acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes or in any incitement to behaviour of that kind.

Unacceptable behaviour would be, for example:

- physical contact or assault against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity
- verbal abuse, derogatory name-calling, insults, threats and racist jokes
- racist graffiti or caricatures
- the issuing or wearing of racist materials such as leaflets, magazines, insignia
- making racist remarks in the course of discussions, lessons or activities
- refusing to co-operate with other pupils or excluding other pupils because of colour or ethnic origin
- inciting or encouraging others to behave in any of the above ways.

SEXISM

Sexism is considered to be any attitude held by a person or group of one sex towards an individual or group of the other sex which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual or group, and is unacceptable. Also unacceptable are acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes, or any incitement to behaviour of that kind. Such behaviour need not be repeated or continuous to constitute harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment is defined by the NUT (1986) as 'any uninvited, unreciprocated and unwelcome physical contact, comment, suggestion, joke or attention which is offensive to the person involved and causes the person to feel threatened, humiliated, patronised or embarrassed. It may create a threatening or intimidating working

environment, adversely affect job performance and, in extreme cases, may cause a person to seek to leave the School'.

Unacceptable behaviour would be, for example:

- uninvited physical contact, physical assault or abuse against a person or group because of their gender
- verbal abuse, intimidation, leering, insults, jokes or gestures of a sexist nature
- using lewd or suggestive vocabulary to patronise or to cause offence or humiliation
- making unwelcome comments of a sexist nature about dress and appearance
- sexist graffiti or other pornographic writing, offensive use of pornographic pictures
- making sexist remarks in the course of discussions, lessons or activities
- offensive reference to an individual's or group's sexuality
- inciting or encouraging others to behave in any of the above ways.

INCIDENTS OF DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT

The effect of discrimination or harassment on its victims is to cause distress and tension. It can lead to fear, anxiety, stress-related illnesses and a general inability to cope as the victim's self-esteem is undermined. Furthermore, both discrimination and harassment undermine the ethos of the School. All staff and pupils are held to be of equal value.

In all cases complaints must be treated in a serious but sympathetic manner. Victims may find it difficult to make a complaint for fear that their response to discrimination or harassment is interpreted as a lack of sense of humour or an overreaction to what others perceive as normal working or social relationships. Others may fear reprisal. In cases where a member of staff is subjected to harassment, either by a pupil or a colleague, the victim may feel his or her authority or professionalism undermined if he or she raises the issue.

It is therefore important for there to be established complaints which are known and understood.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OR HARASSMENT OF A PUPIL BY A MEMBER OF STAFF

Evidence of discrimination or harassment may take a number of forms, such as:

- the witnessing of the discrimination or harassment by another member of staff
- evidence provided by a pupil or pupils confiding in another member of staff
- a formal letter of complaint by a parent or guardian.

Any such incident must be reported to the Head, or, in her absence, to a member of the SMT, in minor cases, such as a careless racist or sexist remark, an oral caution or warning to the member of staff and an apology to the pupil concerned may be sufficient. However, persistent or more serious allegations may be deemed to constitute abuse, and the specific procedures laid down by the Childrens' Act must be followed.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OR HARASSMENT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF BY A PUPIL

The following courses of action are recommended:

- Except in cases of actual physical assault or gross indecency (when the Head must be informed immediately), the incident should be dealt with in the first instance by the member of staff concerned issuing a reprimand and an oral warning. A senior member of staff (who could be the Head or a member of the SMT and the pupil's form teacher should be informed.
- If harassment continues, then the member of staff should officially refer the matter to the senior member of staff. The Head should be informed. Written records should be kept of incidents and any steps taken.
- Should a pupil make an allegation of sexual harassment against a member of staff as a means of harassing the member of staff, it is vital that procedures are followed to the letter so that the integrity and

professionalism of the member of staff are respected throughout any investigation which might ensue.

- In order that pupils are not presented with any opportunity to make unfounded allegations, members of staff are urged never to put themselves in any position which might be misconstrued as compromising their professionalism. Pastoral staff dealing with confidential matters, staff assisting with Games, and staff involved in residential trips are urged to exercise particular caution.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OR HARASSMENT OF A PUPIL BY ANOTHER PUPIL

Racist discrimination or harassment may differ from other forms of bullying in that it is not simply a personal attack but is indiscriminately and offensively aimed at a whole group to which the victim happens to belong. It is the School's responsibility to ensure that there is a sufficiently supportive and positive climate to enable any pupil who is the victim or racist or sexist discrimination or harassment to inform a member of staff and be confident that effective action will be taken. It is important that the victim and, where appropriate, her parents are given reassurance that the School does not tolerate such behaviour:

- Should racist comments occur in a lesson or during the course of a School activity, the member of staff should immediately make it clear to the whole class or group that such remarks are unacceptable. Where relevant, any offensive material should be confiscated, a careful record made, and the pupil concerned given an oral warning. The pupil's Class Teacher must be informed.
- In the case of a pupil persistently giving offence, written records of incidents must be kept and the Class Teacher again informed. The Head should be notified and consideration given to contacting the parents, stating the nature of the problem and inviting them to come to School to discuss it. Counselling for the victim or the offender may need to be considered.
- It is recommended that topics to do with race or racism, sex or sexism should only be discussed in class when they are part of the curriculum and have been carefully planned. Recognition should be given to the richness of a diverse and pluralistic society.

This policy is linked to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Drafted by:	The Head
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