

## **Preliminary questions to support the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy for Wood Edge School**

- Is information collected on race, disability and gender with regards to both students and staff e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions, staff training? Is this information used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides?
- How has your Equal Opportunities Policy been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents and students?
- Is student achievement analysed by race, disability and gender? Are there trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action and has action been taken to address these?
- Does the curriculum include opportunities to understand the issues related to race, disability and gender?
- Are all students encouraged to participate in school life? Are students who make a positive contribution reflective of the school's diversity e.g. through school council?
- Is bullying and harassment of students and staff monitored by race, disability and gender and is this information used to make a difference to the experience of other students? Are racist incidents reported to the Responsible Individual and Local Authority on a termly basis?
- Are visual displays reflective of the diversity of our school community? How are minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models promoted positively in lessons, displays and discussions?
- Does the school take part in annual events such as Black History Month, Deaf Awareness Week and One World week to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender?
- Is the school environment as accessible as possible to students, staff and visitors to the school? Are open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend held in an accessible part of the school or is there an alternative accessible venue? Are issues such as language barriers considered?
- Are the accessibility needs of parents, students and staff considered when sending out information in terms of race, disability and gender?



# **Wood Edge School Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

## **Introduction**

This policy describes the way in which Wood Edge School will meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, as well as volunteers working in our school.

## **Mission Statement**

At Wood Edge School we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of students will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Wood Edge School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

## **Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice**

As well as the specific actions set out beneath this plan, the school operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice in the following ways:

## **Teaching and Learning**

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students;
- Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- Take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- Ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- Promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- Provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;



- Seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning; Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population which are inclusive and reflective of our students

### **Admissions and exclusions**

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability or socio-economic factors.

Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

### **Equal Opportunities for Staff**

This section deals with aspects of equal opportunities relating to staff at Wood Edge School.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community

### **Employer duties**

As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and faith or religion are considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- Monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- Continued professional development opportunities for all staff;

- Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

## **Equality and the Law**

The Equality Act 2010.

This Act replaced all previous equality legislation such as Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. The policy will be applied to all staff and learners, as well as volunteers working in our school.

Under our specific duty we will:

- Prepare an Equal Opportunities Policy which includes our written policy for race equality;
- Assess the impact of our policies, including this Plan, on students, staff and parents by ethnicity including, in particular, the achievement levels of these students;
- Monitor the impact our plans and policies have on such students, staff and parents towards raising the achievement of minority ethnic groups.

## **Community Cohesion**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002, introducing a duty on the governing bodies of state schools to promote community cohesion. Community cohesion encompasses promoting good relations between students from different races, faiths / beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. The duty came into force on 1 September 2007.

## **Consultation and Involvement**

It is a requirement that the development of this plan and the actions within it have been informed by the input of staff, students and parents and carers. We have achieved this by using the following to shape the plan:

- Feedback from the annual parent questionnaire, parents' evening, Input from staff surveys or through staff meetings / INSET; Feedback from the school council, PSHE lessons.
- Issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans, mentoring and support;
- Feedback at Managers meetings.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

## **The role of the Head of Education (or senior leader responsible for Equality)**

- It is the Head of Education's role to implement the school's Equal Opportunities Plan and s/he is supported by the Director's in doing so.
- It is the Head of Education's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equal Opportunities Policy, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Head of Education ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this plan, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Head of Education promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The Head of Education treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness

## **The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching**

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect and will maintain awareness of the school's Equal Opportunities Policy
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender and disability and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Head of Education
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents

## **Tackling discrimination**

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / Head of Education where necessary. All incidents are reported to the Head of Education and racist incidents are reported to the Responsible Individual and Local Authority on a termly basis.

### **What is a discriminatory incident?**

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident is defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as:  
'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'

### **Types of discriminatory incident**

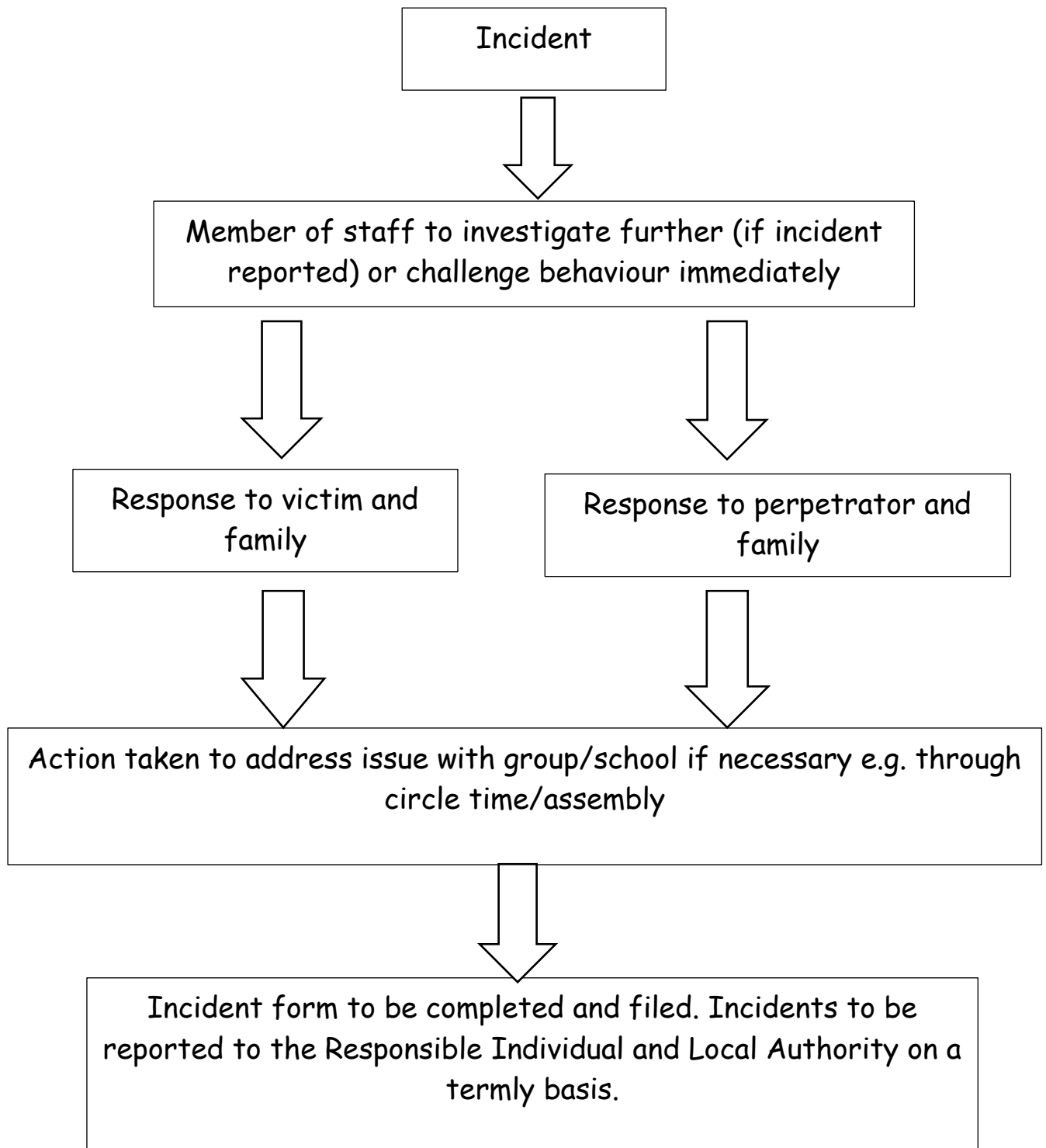
Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- Physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- Use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- Bringing discriminatory material into school;
- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- Ridicule of an individual for difference e.g. food, music, religion, dress etc;
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

### **Responding to and reporting incidents**

It should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and nonteaching, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

The Wood Edge School procedure for responding and reporting is outlined below:





## Review of progress and impact

The policy has been agreed by the Responsible Individual. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equal Opportunities Policy annually and review the entire plan and accompanying action plan on a three-year cycle.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

## Publishing the action plan

Once agreed we will:

- Publish our plan on the school website;
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications; Make sure hard copies are available.

## Points for consideration in the action plan

1. Publish and promote the Equal Opportunities Policy through the school website, newsletter and staff meetings
2. Monitor and analyse student achievement by race, gender and disability and act on any trends or patterns in data that require additional support for students.
3. Ensure that displays in classrooms and corridors promote diversity in terms of race, gender and ethnicity.
4. Ensure all students are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the school council by election or co-option, fund raising etc.
5. **Must be included:**  
Identify, respond and report racist incidents as outlined in the plan. Report the figures to the Responsible Individual / Local Authority on a termly basis.
6. Celebrate cultural events throughout the year to increase student awareness and understanding of different communities e.g. Diwali, Eid, Christmas.
7. Extended school activities such as breakfast club and after-school clubs take into account student needs and access issues and students attending reflect the diversity of the school population in terms of race, gender, disability and socio-economic status.

## The school will provide:

- Extra and additional support for students who are under-achieving, in order to make progress in their learning and personal well-being

- Additional support for parents of under-achieving children e.g. reporting progress, discussing needs.
- Additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them play a full part in the life of the school e.g. providing a sign interpreter for a deaf parent.

## **Promoting Positive Attitudes and meeting needs**

### **The school will:**

- Promote positive images which reflect the diversity of the school and community in terms of race, gender and disability, for example in assemblies, books, publications and learning materials and in classroom/corridor display.
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the school and support them in their work and career development, and try to reflect the diversity of the school community in its workforce;
- Actively seek to recruit disabled people to the Responsible Individual and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that they can fully participate and contribute;
- Provide reasonable means for students, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships, including links with different schools, schools and communities;
- Provide extended services, with opportunities for students, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups;
- Supporting disabled students in the period of transition between secondary school and school to ease the stress of moving and increase familiarity with new surroundings;
- Helping students and young people to understand others and value diversity;
- Promoting shared values, awareness of human rights and how to apply and defend them:
- Developing skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new
- ‘Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK’ strand of citizenship education.

## **Eliminating Discrimination and Harassment**

### **The school will:**

- Develop and adapt its procedures on anti-bullying to include equality perspectives;
- Support staff to challenge and address any bullying and harassment that is based on a person's race, gender or ethnicity
- Keep a record and report how these incidents are dealt with to the Director, CEO, Managing Director on a termly basis
- Review its approach to race, gender and disability, bullying and harassment whenever it reviews its policies and procedures;

### **Monitoring impact**

- The school will collect and analyse evidence and data on students' achievement, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability and use this to inform strategies to raise achievement
- The Director, CEO, Managing Director will report annually in the school annual report to parents on the effectiveness and success of its Equal Opportunities policy.

### **Access**

Employees, learners and volunteers are made aware of the existence of this policy and where it can be accessed in the Head of Education's office.

This policy is reviewed annually.

**Antony Maynard**  
**Head Teacher**  
**October 2023**



Wood Edge Independent School