

# **WOMBWELL HIGH SCHOOL**

## **A Humanities College**

### **Equal Opportunities Policy**

#### **General Statement**

Our aim is to make Wombwell High School a place where equality of opportunity exists. The school will strive to increase mutual respect and to promote positive images. We also recognise there is a need to combat areas of negative discrimination. Six areas of discrimination can be identified.

#### **1. Gender**

Our pupils arrive in school with a sense of what is considered appropriate to their gender which has been developed from their earliest years. We should aim not to reinforce stereotypical gender roles as the norm since this may deny our pupils the opportunity to develop to their full potential. We aim to provide pupils with positive role models, encourage initiatives which break down stereotypical behaviour and make every effort to use gender inclusive language.

#### **2. Racism**

While the majority of adolescents can be expected to outgrow bullying or verbal abuse, racist behaviour is common to the adult experience. We will take action against such behaviour whenever it occurs in school.

#### **3. Academic Ability**

The right to a broad and balanced education extends to every pupil. The entitlement of each pupil to this will be provided regardless of ability.

#### **4. Physical Ability**

Although the school has limited provision for those with a physical disability, it will make every effort to accommodate them into integrated provision.

#### **5. Cultural and Religious Background**

Pupils will enjoy the right to equal opportunities regardless of their cultural and religious background.

#### **6. Socio-Economic Background**

All pupils have the right to equality of opportunity regardless of background.

## **The General Statements and School Practice**

### **Gender**

- The school will not accept sexist remarks from its pupils and all cases will be dealt with.
- All pupils will be encouraged to develop their full potential and pupils will be working in an atmosphere which allows them to follow non-traditional careers if they wish.
- Equal access to computers and other equipment will be provided for both sexes.
- Display will promote positive images of men and women and seek to be unbiased and in appropriate cases challenge sex-stereotyping.
- Texts and worksheets used in school will avoid sex-stereotyping and use gender inclusive language.
- The Rewards and Sanctions Policy of the school will apply equally to girls and boys.

### **Racism**

- Wombwell High School does not have a diverse catchment area and consequently racist attitudes may develop through ignorance. Racist comments and attitudes will always be challenged and corrected.
- The school will seek to develop understanding and knowledge of other races and will show pupils the results and consequences of racist actions and attitudes which have been pursued both in historical and current situations.
- Display around school will reflect the diversity of society.
- Any of our pupils or staff who are bi-lingual or multi-lingual will be regarded as an asset to the school.

### **Academic Ability**

- The opportunity will be given for each pupil to reach their full potential.
- Staff will receive a continuing programme of INSET to sustain their ability to match teaching styles to learning styles.
- Departments will give full and continuous consideration to their arrangements for grouping and setting and courses to enable maximum individual achievement and to enable pupils to develop at a rate commensurate with their potential.
- Pupils with individual learning difficulties will be given systematic support based on the school's SEN Policy and coordinated by the teacher responsible for SEN.

## **Physical Ability**

- The design of the school does not lend itself to catering for people with certain disabilities.
- Strategies will be adopted which maximise access for those with physical disabilities including (but not limited to) selecting rooms for classes and allowing access and egress at less busy times.
- The school has a specially designed toilet for those with physical disabilities.
- Physical disability will be promoted positively in lessons and assemblies, and pupils discouraged from seeing it necessarily as a handicap.

## **Cultural and Religious Background**

- The cultural and religious background of all pupils will be respected.
- We will not allow individuals to be harassed because of their religion or beliefs.
- Assemblies are broadly Christian, but parents have the right to withdraw their children if they feel this to be appropriate.
- Courses in RE seek to promote the understanding of all the major religions and deal with issues raised.
- The cultural values implicit and explicit in the provision at Wombwell High School are selected to minimise the clash with local cultures.

## **Socio-Economic Background**

- Uniform and equipment requirements make only realistic demands on financial resources.
- Although we occasionally request a voluntary contribution, no pupil will be excluded from any activity during the school day through inability to pay.

## **Equal Opportunities in Areas of School Life**

### **The Curriculum**

- The content of the National Curriculum is largely pre-determined, but the method of its delivery and the resources used to support this delivery will take into account the six areas of potential discrimination identified in the previous section.
- Teaching styles must show an awareness of individual pupils' learning styles, and the danger of implicit negative messages.
- Displays should give balanced and positive messages.
- Beyond the National Curriculum, issues of Equal Opportunity will be addressed directly, and pupils given explicit opportunities to consider discrimination and prejudice in a variety of forms.
- Stereotyping will be identified and confronted, and pupils encouraged towards positive and tolerant attitudes.

### **The Pastoral System**

- The Rewards and Sanctions Policy and the evolving Behaviour Policy, which will incorporate it, are phased to convey the school's belief in equality. Where patterns of inequality emerge they will be investigated.
- The Pastoral System gathers personal information about pupils, and will therefore identify pupils whose life opportunities suffer restrictions from personal/social circumstances. The system will then contribute advice on how these restrictions can be overcome.
- Pastoral welfare will indicate that care of individual pupils and a concern of their personal needs lies at the heart of the school's approach to its children.

### **Parents**

- Parents will be encouraged to support and participate in the school's approach to Equal Opportunities.
- The policy will be made clear to parents, and they will be regularly reminded of the commitment that the school has to confronting and opposing discrimination.

### **Careers and Further Education**

- Gender, ethnicity, culture, religion and socio-economic background should provide no barrier to career or higher education aspirations. Pupils will be encouraged to consider non-traditional career tracks.
- Where physical and academic ability provide impediments, particular guidance will be given to pupils to match their capabilities with their hopes.

- Pupils will not be dissuaded or deterred from pursuing a particular career track, unless it is agreed and understood by pupils, parents and staff that to do so would incur inevitable failure. If this were the situation, then detailed counselling would take place.
- All pupils will be encouraged to have and attain high aspirations.
- The keywords will be individual success.

### **Staff Selection and Appointments**

- The principle of equality of opportunity will apply to all appointments.
- The recruitment, selection and promotion of staff will be based solely on merit and ability.
- No job applicant or serving member of staff will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, marital status, age, disability, religious or political beliefs.

### **Staff Development**

- A responsibility for and commitment to equal opportunities will form a part of the job expectation of all staff.
- Attendance on professional development courses will be monitored to ensure that all staff have equal access, and to encourage equality of take-up.
- Discrimination against particular groups of staff in particular areas will be activity discouraged.
- All staff can expect equal professional counselling time in discussions of career development.

### **Ethos and Culture**

- The school ethos will be an aggregation of all other matters mentioned in this policy.
- In general we believe that:-
  - the atmosphere of the school should be essentially cordial, polite and tolerant;
  - relationships within the school should be based on respect, goodwill and understanding;
  - pupils should grow in maturity, integrity, responsibility and independence.