

Ormiston Academies Trust Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

The Ormiston Academies Trust is committed to promoting access and equality for all. As academies in multi-cultural communities we aim to ensure that our curriculum and general ethos reflect the rich and varied experiences of the population. Our general principles oppose racism and encourage positive attitudes to all regardless of race, gender, social background, faith, abilities, age, marital status or sexual orientation.

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the Academies in ensuring that equality of opportunity is given to all members of our community, which include:

- Students
- Teaching staff
- Support Staff
- Parents
- Governors
- Students on placements/supply staff
- Visitors

This policy is supported by:

- The Race Equality Policy
- The Anti-bullying Policy
- The SEN Policy
- The Student Welfare Policy
- The Child Protection Policy
- The Behaviour For Learning Policy

General Principles

- The Academy will offer a curriculum which prepares young people to take their place in a multi-cultural world.
- The Academy will strive to ensure that all students have an equal chance to make good use of the education on offer, to enable them to choose their future patterns of life and to take full advantage of their opportunities in society.
- The Academy recognises and values the contributions offered by the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students.
- The Academy will foster the attitudes and demonstrate in school and in the wider community their opposition to all forms of inequality, racism, prejudice and discrimination.

These general principles will inform and guide all groups and activities within the Academy.

Aims

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- To provide equality of opportunity for all.
- To develop quality programmes of study, taking account of equality of opportunity issues in their planning, design and delivery.
- To recognise the special needs of all, having due regard for their ability, gender, race, culture, faith and social background.
- To promote the physical, social, emotional and academic development of all individual students and staff.
- To promote awareness of, respect and tolerance for others in a culturally diverse society.
- To improve the quality of the environment and reinforce positive interaction between the academy and its community.

Ethos

- The academy's Code of Conduct emphasises respect for others regardless of race, gender, ability, faith, social background, or age.
- This Code of Conduct is supported throughout the life of the academies in assemblies, displays, behaviour management and staff/student interaction.
- The academy will work towards making the buildings as accessible for staff, students and visitors with disabilities as possible.
- Displays in the academy reflects their cultural diversity and celebrates achievement.
- The buildings are free of graffiti, particularly of an abusive nature.
- The academy's customs and procedures emphasis showing respect to others through polite manners, appropriate behaviour and a warm welcome to all visitors.
- Adults in the academy provide positive role models in their approach to all issues related to equality of opportunity.

Learning Environment

- There are high expectations of all students regardless of race, gender, ability, social background or attitude.
- A range of teaching methods is used to ensure that effective learning takes place and all individual needs are met.

- Classes are organised according to criteria that is based upon the needs of individual students and not on race, gender, behaviour or attitudes to learning.
- All students have equal access to facilities, resources and learning activities.
- All programmes of study are carefully assessed and delivered to ensure that all individual needs are met.
- Appropriate provision is made for the least able, those who are gifted or talented and those for whom English is an additional language.

Resources

- Resources should reflect the reality of an ethnically and culturally diverse society.
- Resources should reflect a variety of viewpoints.
- Resources should show positive images of males and females, and people from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds.
- Resources should not reflect stereotypical images.

Language

- All staff should ensure that students' names are spelt correctly and pronounced properly. Staff should be sensitive to different naming traditions and encourage students to respect and accept names from different cultures.
- Bilingualism should be regarded as advantageous and non standard dialects should be valued.
- Students should feel their languages or dialect are valued and they should be encouraged to speak hear and read their own languages.
- Translation and interpretation services should be available.
- It should be recognised that some students lack competence in English. Appropriate materials and strategies should be developed to include them in all departments, particularly by providing them opportunities to work with fluent English speakers.
- All members of the academy should use language that does not transmit or confirm stereotypes, does not offend, and uses the correct terminology when referring to particular groups of people or cultural traditions.

Staff

- Staff play a vital role in promoting equality of opportunity and need to examine critically their own cultural assumptions and biases. (see appendix two)
- Staff need to be aware of the complex variety of beliefs and cultural influences that exist with the academies, their communities and society in general.

- Staff need to be aware of racist issues and be given opportunities to be involved in multi cultural, anti racist education and training.

Staff Development and Employment

The Academy is bound by the legal requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, as well as working towards the recommendations or guidance of national enquiries and reports i.e. McPhearson Enquiry. The academy will therefore:

- Positively encourage applications for posts from all sections of the community.
- Appoint staff using procedures designed to protect equality of opportunity.
- Aim to provide positive models and a distribution of responsibilities amongst staff which include students' access to a balance of male and female staff.
- Encourage the career development and aspirations of all individuals.
- Challenge any forms of harassment or bullying amongst the workforce.
- Encourage a staff who represent a range of cultural backgrounds at all levels and in all departments.

Dealing with Incidents that are against Equality of Opportunity

- In the event of an incident that contravenes the academy's equality policies, the matter will be dealt with according to the guidelines given in the appendix and in the Racial Equality Policy.
- In the case of staff, the academy will act within legal guidelines enshrined in employment law, the conditions of service of staff and the academy's policies on Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.

Appendix One: Guidance on dealing with incidents

The full definitions and forms of abuse may be found in the Racial Equality Policy, and include:

- Physical threats and intimidation.
- Actual physical violence.
- Verbal abuse, including name calling, racist or sexist jokes and mimicry.
- Incitement of others to collaborate in abuse.

- Incitement of abusive attitudes or actions by bringing racist/sexist literature or materials into the academies, including slogans /logos on clothing, graffiti, personal writing or printed literature.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people on the basis of their ethnic group, gender or ability and exclusion from participation in activities on racial, gender or cultural reasons.

General Response

Sensitivity is required in investigating the reasons behind an incident and determination of abuse should include an analysis of intent, methods, consequences and perception.

- Immediate response by identifier and/or referral to colleague.
- Support for victim/s and identifier.
- Clear exposition of Academy Policy to perpetrator and also possible associated peer group.
- Head of Year to organise appropriate action that may include:
 1. Involvement of Form Tutor
 2. Victim counselling.
 3. Perpetrator specific behaviour moderation strategies.
 4. Joint victim/perpetrator counselling.
 5. Parental contact(letter/telephone)
 6. Parental interviews
 7. Referral to Head of Department/Senior Leadership Team
 8. Referral to Principal.
 9. Completion of Incident log where necessary.

Specific Responses:

(see also Racial Equality Policy)

- Referral to Head of Year/Faculty or Senior Leadership Team.
- No member of staff should ignore any form of abuse based on prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, ability, social background, age or sexual orientation. It should be shown as unacceptable, why it is unacceptable and it should be clear that such behaviour has consequences and will not be tolerated.
- Persistent offenders will be referred to the Senior Team. In extreme cases the Governors and Police may be involved if necessary.
- All forms of racist or sexist literature are to be confiscated, and the student/s responsible referred to Head of Year/SLT and parents informed.
- Graffiti to be removed immediately, preferably by the perpetrator.
- Further opportunity for collaborative student working in a variety of groups.

Appendix Two: Guidance for staff on promoting the policy

Classroom teachers.

- Check how tasks are allocated in mixed gender groups i.e. who takes notes, who is dominant, and employ strategies to ensure all students have the opportunity to participate fully.
- Be scrupulous in using non sexist/non racist language in talking to or about students and staff generally, or any other language that infers a stereotype about a specific group.
- Reflect on what particular qualities or achievements girls and boys are given praise for/reprimanded for.
- Examine seating arrangements i.e. are boys and girls sat separately and is this their choice? Are racial groups separate or mixed? Reflect on ways of making different groups work together.

- Ensure that boys and girls are not given stereotypical tasks to do i.e. 'heavy' versus 'caring'.
- Look critically on the criteria used for assessing students' work and comments made by the teacher i.e. are comments about neat presentation only made about girls' work.
- Ensure that texts do not convey stereotypical images of a racist or sexist nature, particularly in relation to roles and occupations in society.
- Ensure that the content of lessons gives due recognition to the cultural or gender leaders in the field and their achievements.
- Ensure that teaching methods are varied and cater for a range of different learning style and need.

Heads of Department

- Ensure that the equal opportunities dimensions of items on the agenda of departmental meetings are always taken into account.
- Scrutinise departmental schemes of work to ensure they encourage non sexist/racist approaches.
- Scrutinise new texts before purchase to check sexist/racist bias in content, language and images.
- Regularly check assessment data to see if there are significant differences between the grades for girls and boys, SEN students, and different ethnic and cultural groups.
- In the case of GCSE options, check the numbers of boys and girls and different ethnic groups who opt for it and the grades that are achieved and take remedial action where there is significant difference.
- Ensure that the language and practices of tour guides/speakers and other non academy staff who host off site visits are non racist/sexist.

Heads of Year

- Reflect on how assemblies are prepared and presented i.e. who leads them, what do they focus on, are they of equal interest to boys and girls and different ethnic and cultural groups, do they present positive images.
- In any formal settings check the seating arrangements for staff and students to see if these arrangements reflect assumptions about gender/ethnicity.
- Look at the way space is used on site i.e. do boys/girls dominate certain areas?
- Look critically at policy and practice in relation to uniform i.e. is it restrictive to any particular group? Do the rules apply equally to boys/girls/different ethnic groups?
- Look at extra curricular activities. Are the interests and needs of boys/girls/different ethnic groups/different abilities equally well met?

- Monitor exclusions and behaviour sanctions. Does any one group predominate and how can this be redressed?
- Analyse the achievement/attainment of your year group. Do the results show that equal opportunities are being promoted?
- Ensure that parents and members of the local community are encouraged to be involved in the academy activities.
- Encourage parental/home communications in mother tongue languages where appropriate and interpreters for parental meetings are provided.