

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The following document was prepared by a working party set up in March 1990 in order to work towards an Equal Opportunities Policy for Collis School. The members were representative of teachers, governors, non-teaching staff and parents. The document has the approval of all staff and the Governing Body.

The structure and chief elements of the policy relating to Equal Opportunities remain unchanged. Elements relating specifically to multi-cultural issues have been removed to be included in the school's Multi-Cultural Education Policy.

Racism is a severe form of bad behaviour and the issue of racial harassment is addressed in the school's Anti-Racial Harassment Statement.

AIMS

- 1 To foster an awareness of Equal Opportunities for all.
- 2 To ensure that all children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum.
- 3 To make a public declaration of the school's commitment to Equal Opportunities and to ensure that each child/person is valued for their own uniqueness and contribution.
- 4 That we aim to provide a source of guidance and support for all concerned with the school.

ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

The ethos and atmosphere of Collis School shall reflect the respect which is the entitlement of all persons entering the establishment.

As a staff we are firmly committed to ensuring that we create in this school the appropriate conditions for a positive approach to multi-faith, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society, seeking at all times to promote a positive image regardless of race, class, faith, ability/disability, age and gender.

Tolerance and positive attitudes towards equality of opportunity do not just happen; a sensitive and thoughtful approach is required in all areas of school life and the curriculum.

STAFF ORGANISATION

There is a member of staff with specific responsibility for coordinating special needs provision throughout the school, e.g. children for whom English is a second language, those with learning difficulties. We have access to the Borough's Language Support Service (LSS).

STAFFING

Richmond Upon Thames is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

When appointing staff, there will be no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, religion or cost.

All prospective staff should be made aware of and be in agreement with our commitment to Equal Opportunities as expressed in this policy.

There shall be equal opportunities for personal development and advancement for all.

Care should be taken to ensure that staff do not consistently undertake stereotypical roles, e.g. men always taking football, women always taking needlework.

All members of staff are expected to support the school's policy, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure its implementation.

MONITORING THE POLICY

- Review school based INSET.
- The senior management team should consistently review displays in the school to ensure they give a true picture of all children's work at varying levels of ability.
- Planning documents are monitored to ensure that they provide equal opportunities as far as possible.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND INSERVICE TRAINING

Relevant Inservice Training, when available, may be attended by staff/governors. On occasion there will be school-based Inservice Training provided to question ideals, methods, prejudices.

There should also be opportunities for staff to develop professionally – to further their teaching/pastoral skills and for their own personal development.

Subject Panels are held termly at the Curriculum and Teachers' Centres and are available to any interested staff.

ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM

Organisation of the curriculum is governed by the requirements of the National Curriculum.

The objectives of the National Curriculum are to ensure that each pupil should obtain maximum benefit by enabling the pupil to reach his or her potential, but without making impossible demands.

Programmes of study will apply to all pupils. This includes pupils with statements unless their statements have disapplied or modified the requirements in accordance with Section 18 of the Education Reform Act 1988.

In light of such statements all Collis policy documents should reflect this and contain an explicit statement of our commitment to equal opportunities.

Some pupils will need extra support in order to gain – and retain – access to the National Curriculum. Physical, sensory, intellectual or emotional/behavioural difficulties may make access less easy. Planning for individual pupils should, therefore, be responsive to any additional needs.

All Collis curriculum guidelines including this policy should be monitored and reviewed regularly to cater for the changing needs within the school.

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Classroom practice should reflect the overall ethos of the school as stated in this document. Through our practice as teachers, we must demonstrate an approach that recognises children as individuals and centre our teaching around the experiences, both physically and in personality. They should not be treated the same, rather they should be treated equally.

Classroom practice should promote positive images of:

- all cultures
- all religions
- all customs
- gender issues
- all abilities/disabilities
- physical characteristics (e.g. height, weight, shape, hair colour, birthmarks)

To reinforce this aim we should draw upon people within the community as a resource. Classroom practice should positively encourage all children to participate in all areas of the curriculum (e.g. girls using construction apparatus, boys using the home corner). Staff should demonstrate that their behavioural and academic expectations are high for all pupils. Staff should not judge or make assumptions about pupils, based on ethnicity, gender, class, prior experience of siblings, etc. Similarly, in the case of twins all effort should be made to recognise and value their individuality, e.g. avoiding the term 'the twins' ensuring each child takes home letters and class photographs, etc.

RESOURCES

Care should be taken when ordering school equipment to ensure that the diversity of children's backgrounds and physical characteristics are adequately reflected. Toys, musical instruments, songs, stories, cooking and other activities should draw upon the cultural influences throughout the community (e.g. dual language books, jigsaws showing men bathing babies, women decorating, etc).

Equipment in use should be constantly reviewed in light of this Policy. Staff should recognise that books and other resources deemed to be inappropriate should be withdrawn from use.

Information relating to equal opportunities issues is held centrally in the staff room and resource area.

Additional resources can be loaned from the Curriculum and Teachers' Centre.

LANGUAGE

Bilingualism is seen as an asset at Collis and is welcomed as a resource within the school. All children should be aware of other languages in a positive way. Books, resources, displays and other communications should, where possible, reflect all languages spoken by the pupils of the school as a support for learning.

While the school teaches standard English it will respond positively to the dialects and regional accents brought to the school by its staff, pupils and visitors.

We recognise that standardised tests for ESL children are not always a true reflection of their ability and that care and sensitivity should be exercised when administering these tests.

Careful use of language must at all times be uppermost in our minds. Staff must be aware of the racist connotations in the language we use and the stereotyping, whether of class, sex, race or religion and be prepared to challenge it.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNITY LINKS

The involvement of parents in the daily life of the school (in an academic and non-academic capacity), as well as contact with the local community should be encouraged. Parents and other community members should be encouraged to share their skills and expertise with the school. These links between the home, the school and the community are essential in developing the child's self image.

All parents should be encouraged to participate and actively support their children's learning.

Letters and circulars, wherever possible, will be sent to parents in their first language, if understanding English presents any problems.

Parents' meetings will, wherever possible, be held at suitable times for working parents to attend. An interpreter can, when necessary, be invited to attend meetings with parents.

Collis School Association (CSA) activities should acknowledge and cater for the interests of our diverse community. All parents are automatic members of the CSA and membership of the CSA committee, the governing body, working parties and all parental groups should be a true representation of the parents in our school.

Parents will be regularly informed of current topics being studied by each class in order to encourage participation at home and in school.

Nikki Connor, PSHCE Coordinator