

Equal Opportunities Policy

**POLICY STATEMENT: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
(Incorporating Race Equality Policy)**

The Ridings High School

Date of Policy: February 2003

Member of staff responsible for equal opportunities: Mr E W Lyne

Date of Review:

	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Gender:	Males	
	Females	

Ethnic Groupings:

Rationale

Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2002, places a general duty of most public authorities to promote race equality. This came into effect in May 2002.

The duty means that, in everything they do, these authorities must try to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The general duty is supported by Specific Duties to be set out in secondary legislation and enforceable by the Commission for Racial Equality.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (SENDA) and created a new Part 4 covering disability discrimination in education. This came into effect in September 2002. The school's SENDA policy should be read in conjunction with this policy.

The school's vision statements and aims are designed to ensure that the school meets the needs of all pupils, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances.

The school is committed to providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community: pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

The school's culture, curriculum procedures and practices are designed to show that we value cultural diversity, meet the diverse needs of pupils to ensure Inclusion and ensure that all pupils are prepared for full participation in a multi-ethnic society.

The school recognises the importance of combating racism and of working towards racial equality in a predominately white environment.

Purposes of the Policy

Our policy aims to:

- Meet all our pupils' needs, thus encouraging them to reach their full potential, and raise educational standards;
- Provide equality of access to the curriculum for pupils so that they can experience success and apply a broad range of skills, knowledge and understanding;
- Take specific action to tackle any apparent differences between racial groups in their attainment levels and progress, in the use of disciplinary measures against them (such as exclusion), in admissions, or in assessment;
- Create a positive, inclusive atmosphere based on respect for peoples differences, and show commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination;
- Prepare pupils to be full citizens in today's multi-ethnic society;
- Make our staff, both teaching and support staff, representative of the communities we serve;
- Make full use of the skills and knowledge of people from different racial groups.

Guidelines

1. Leadership and Management

- The school policies reflect a commitment to equal opportunities, including race equality.
- The Governing Body and school management set a clear ethos, which reflects the school's commitment to equality for all members of the school community.
- The school promotes positive and proactive approaches to valuing and respecting diversity.
- The school management is committed to work in partnership with others to promote equality of opportunity and to oppose all forms of oppressive behaviour, prejudice and discrimination.
- All staff have the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of policy documents. The school ensures the involvement of governors and takes appropriate steps to enable the contribution of parents.
- The evaluation of policies is used to identify specific actions to address equality issues.
- Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure both high expectations of all pupils and appropriate breadth of content in relation to the school and the wider community.
- Additional grants and resources (such as those provided to minority ethnic and Traveller pupils) are appropriately targeted and monitored.

2. Staffing: Recruitment and Professional Development

- The school adheres to recruitment and selection procedures which are fair, equal, and in line with statutory duties and LEA guidelines.
- Steps are taken to encourage people from under represented groups to apply for positions at all levels in the school.
- Steps are taken to ensure that everyone associated with the school is informed of the contents of this policy. New staff are familiar with it as part of their induction programme.
- The skills of all staff, including support and part-time staff are recognised and valued. All staff are given status and support and are encouraged to share their knowledge.
- Staff handbooks and regular professional development activities are available for all staff members to support their practice in relation to this policy.
- Staff and visitors provide a wide range of role models and reflect the diversity of the local and wider community.

3. Curriculum

- Curriculum planning takes account of the ethnicity, backgrounds and needs of all pupils.
- The curriculum builds on pupils' starting points and is differentiated appropriately to ensure the inclusion of:
 - boys and girls;
 - pupils learning English as an additional language;
 - pupils from minority ethnic groups;
 - pupils who are gifted and talented;
 - pupils with special education needs;
 - pupils who are looked after by the local authority;
 - pupils who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion.
- The school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all backgrounds.
- Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.
- The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages pupils to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.
- Extra curricular activities and special events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.

4. Teaching and Learning

- Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which pupils feel all their contributions are valued.
- All pupils have access to the mainstream curriculum.
- Teaching is responsive to pupils' different learning styles and takes account of pupils' cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs.
- Teachers take positive steps to include all groups or individuals.
- Pupil grouping in the classroom is planned and varied. Allocations to teaching groups are kept under continual review and are analysed by ethnicity, gender and background.

5. Assessment, Pupil Achievement and Progress

- All pupils have the opportunity to achieve their highest standards. Baseline assessment is used appropriately for all pupils. The school ensures that assessment is free of gender, cultural and social bias, and that assessment methods are valid.
- The monitoring and analysing of pupil performance by gender, ethnicity and background enables the identification of groups of pupils where there are patterns of underachievement. The school ensures that action is taken to counter this.
- Staff have very high expectations of all pupils and they continually challenge them to extend their learning and achieve higher standards. The school recognises and values all forms of achievement.
- Self-assessment provides all pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through regular reflection and feedback on their progress.
- All pupils have full opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and therefore, to benefit from assessment that summarises what they have learnt. Information from assessment is used to inform future learning.
- Staff use a range of methods and strategies to assess pupils' progress.

6. School Ethos

- The school opposes all forms of racism, harassment, prejudice and discrimination.
- The school publicly supports diversity and actively promotes good personal and community relations. Diversity is recognised as having a positive role to play within the school.
- Staff foster a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among pupils from all ethnic groups.
- The school caters for the dietary and dress requirements of different religious groups.
- The school enables pupils and staff to celebrate festivals and other events relevant to their particular faith and actively encourages all pupils to understand these.
- Clear procedures are in place to ensure that staff deal with all forms of bullying and harassment promptly, firmly and consistently. Actions taken are in line with relevant school policies.
- Pupils, staff and parents are aware of the procedures for dealing with intolerant behaviour and that such behaviour is always unacceptable.
- Staff are trained to deal effectively with bullying, racist incidents, racial harassment and prejudice.

7. Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions

- The school expects high standards of behaviour from all pupils.
- There are strategies to reintegrate long-term truants and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.
- Exclusions are monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of pupils.
- The school's procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and applied equally to all.
- It is recognised that cultural background may affect behaviour. The school takes this into account when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and discipline.

- Pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures for dealing with harassment. They know that any language or behaviour that is racist, sexist, homophobic or potentially damaging to any minority group is always unacceptable.

8. Personal Development and Pastoral Care

- Pastoral support takes account of religious and ethnic differences, and the experiences and needs of refugee and asylum seeker children.
- The school provides appropriate support for pupils learning English as an additional language and encourages them to use their home and community languages.
- The school takes account of and meets the needs of Traveller pupils.
- All pupils are provided with appropriate career and Post 16 advice and guidance that encourages them to consider the full range of options.
- Work experience providers are required to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities.
- Appropriate support is given to victims of harassment and intolerant behaviour, using the support of external agencies where appropriate. The perpetrators are dealt with in accordance with school policies and provided with relevant support to consider and modify their behaviour.

9. Admissions and Attendance

- The admissions process is monitored to ensure that it is administered fairly and consistently to all pupils, so that pupils from particular groups are not disadvantaged.
- Comprehensive information about pupils' ethnicity, first language, religion, physical needs, diet etc. is included in all admissions forms.
- The school and families are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and absence is always followed up by appropriate personnel who are aware of community issues.
- Provision is made for leave of absence for religious observance, which includes staff as well as pupils.
- Provision is made for pupils on extended leave so that they are able to continue with their learning.
- Attendance is monitored by gender, ethnicity, special educational need and background and action is taken in order to reduce any disparities between different groups of pupils.

10. Partnership with Parents and Communities

- Progress reports to parents are accessible and appropriate, in order to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to participate in the dialogue.
- All parents are encouraged to participate at all levels in the full life of the school.
- The school works in partnership with parents and the community to develop positive attitudes to diversity and to address specific incidents.
- Information material for parents will be made available in languages and formats other than English as appropriate.
- Meetings for parents are made accessible for all. Parental involvement is monitored to ensure the participation of all groups.
- Informal events are designed to include the whole community and at times may target minority or marginalised groups.

- The school's premises and facilities are equally available and accessible for use by all groups within the community.

11. Responsibilities

- The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant equalities legislation.
- The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that the policy and related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- The Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities under the policy.
- The member of staff responsible for Equal Opportunities will be responsible for co-ordinating work in equal opportunities.

12. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community.
- The member of staff responsible for Equal Opportunities will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy.

Links with other School Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Assessment
- Bullying
- Curriculum and Special Educational Needs.

February 2003

Appendix 1

Monitoring

1. From September 2002, ethnic data from all pupils will be collected using the new classifications.
2. Pupils' examinations and test results are analysed by gender, ethnicity and disability.
3. In order to analyse trends exclusions are analysed by gender, ethnicity and disability.
4. The school monitors all staffing applications and appointments by gender, ethnicity and disability.
5. The school monitors all alleged incidents of harassment on the basis of gender, ethnicity and disability.
6. The school will, as far as is practicable, publish annually the results of its monitoring as identified in 1 – 5 above.
7. The policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed using information provided via:
 - parental questionnaires;
 - job interviews feedback forms;
 - staff questionnaires;
 - pupil feedback via Year Councils;
 - feedback provided via the pastoral curriculum evaluation process.

Appendix 2

Procedures for Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment

Definition of Racial Harassment

The Commission for Racial Equality defines racial harassment as "verbal or physical violence, which includes attacks on property as well as the person, which is suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality and ethnic or national origins, and where the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence of racism."

At the school this definition of harassment is applied to harassment on the grounds of gender, ability, disability and sexuality.

Guidelines

- All forms of discrimination by any person within the school are to be treated seriously.
- There is an agreed code of practice throughout the school for dealing with incidents of harassment (see Disciplinary Procedure and Prospectus). All incidents are reported to the designated Deputy Head (DHA) and recorded.
- Sexist and racist symbols, badges and insignia or clothing and bags are forbidden in school and at any extra-curricular activities.

Appendix 3

Questions for assessing the impact of the school's policies, including its Equal Opportunities and/or Race Equality policy.

These questions give special attention to pupils' attainment levels and could include the following:

1. Are all pupils in the school achieving as well as they can?
2. Do we help all pupils to achieve as much as they can, and get the most from what is on offer, based on their individual needs?
3. Which groups of pupils are not achieving as much as they can? Why not?
4. Are we making sure that policies, including the Equal Opportunities and or the Race Equality policy, are not having an adverse impact on pupils, parents, staff or some racial groups?
5. How do we explain any differences? Are the explanations justified? Can they be justified on non-racial grounds, such as English language difficulties? What actions have we taken to achieve improvements?
6. What are we doing to:
 - prepare pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society;
 - promote race equality and harmony; and
 - prevent or deal with racism?
7. What changes do we need to make to relevant policies, aims, and any related targets and strategies?

Appendix 4

This policy has been produced in the light of current national guidance and legislation.

This includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000
- Evaluating Educational Inclusion OFSTED 2000
- SEN and Disability Act 2001

Codes of Practice from Equality Commissions:

- Commission for Race Equality
- Disability Rights Commission
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Guidance for Schools and LEA Services/Staff on Writing an Equal Opportunities Policy April 2002.