

WEAVERTHORPE C of E (V C) PRIMARY SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

(review date February 2011)

ENTITLEMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

As a matter of Christian principle and in accordance with our Christian aims and values, the school will promote equality of opportunity in its employment policy and practice.

- All children, staff and parents are regarded equally in that they are not discriminated against through sex, race, religion, beliefs or ability.
- All children, staff and parents are encouraged to show care, respect and concern for others regardless of age, sex, colour, creed or ability.
- All children have an equal right to the school's facilities, appropriate for the age, and to receive access to the National Curriculum offered.
- All parents have an equal right of access to school and to receive regular information as to the education pertaining to their child.
- Admission to this school is open to all provided that the school has the space to accept.
- The Authority's Equal Opportunities Guidelines are adhered to wherever and whenever appropriate.
- The school positively promotes the aims of inclusion and racial equality through its policies and curriculum offered.
- It is recognised that aspects of inclusion and racial equality may be difficult to cover due to lack of direct contact so the school will make a positive effort to counter-balance this deficit.
- This policy covers pupils, staff, parents, governors and visitors to school (including contractors).

SEXUAL EQUALITY

Both sexes are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. All children engage in all classroom activities both academic and social. Exclusion from any school activity is only on medical grounds following advice from parents and medical personnel. Opportunities are provided for children to work in mixed ability and mixed sex groupings and all take equal responsibility for the organisation and clearing away of equipment used in tasks. Staff are aware that no task is the particular domain of either sex and in some cases it may well be necessary to adopt a degree of positive discrimination. When discipline problems arise, a consistent approach is taken by staff regardless of the sex of the pupil.

Within the classroom pupils are placed on the register according to alphabetical order and not by gender. Pupils are encouraged to mix freely with the other sex and in fact there is positive discrimination to ensure a mixture is obtained.

Both boys and girls are encouraged to adopt a caring role towards younger pupils, those new to the school and any other pupil needing help or comfort at any time. Boys and girls are positively encouraged to relate to each other as people. They are encouraged to build friendships and enjoy the company of both sexes in work and play situations.

There are no specific changing areas in school for P E. Pupils change in their classrooms until Year 6 when it is recognised that the onset of puberty causes some pupils to be more aware of their sexuality. Y6 girls and some Y5 girls may use their cloakroom area for changing. The local Norton swimming pool is used in the Summer term and school conforms to the pool's rulings whereby pupils change in changing rooms separated by gender. They use the communal spaces within these changing rooms unless specific requests and arrangements are made and catered for.

Cloakrooms are mixed sex and only divided by the age of the pupils in relation to the geography of the building and the proximity of the classrooms. School entrances are organised by age of the

pupils and geography of the classrooms to facilitate the smooth movement of pupils in and out of the school particularly at times of emergencies.

Toilets are provided in one area of the school (two adult toilets for staff). These are organised according to sex, for the children.

Sex education is given in the context of Education for Personal Relationships and parents are advised that guidance will be given to individual pupils where it is considered necessary and/or appropriate. At such times parents are advised of the staff's actions. Pupils study aspects of the human body (through Science lessons) when access to books, videos and resources is easily available and positively encouraged. Pupils' questions are answered honestly and openly by staff bearing in mind the age and maturity of the children. (See School's SRE policy).

Year 5 and 6 pupils are given more formal instruction in the maturing of their bodies. Initially this is done with both sexes together. There is then an opportunity for boys and girls in separate groups. Part of this involves watching a video programme entitled "Growing-Up". Parents are advised beforehand that this will be shown and they can opt to preview the programme or be present when the pupils see it.

Staffing appointments are not made based on the sex of the candidate. However, the Governing Body recognises that a mixture of staff gender is desirable if possible. All advertised vacancies are open to candidates of either gender.

The school is aware of issues around the under-performance of boys at various ages and in various circumstances. The school's monitoring of pupil performance takes this into account and staff are provided with pupil performance data.

RACIAL EQUALITY

School adheres to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and to any statements made by North Yorkshire County Council in respect of race. The named person is the Headteacher but the school's policy is endorsed by all Governors and staff. Staff and Governors are encouraged to attend appropriate courses.

An understanding of other races and religions is explored through the curriculum in each class. Staff understand that we live in a multi-cultural society despite the lack of first hand experience within our community and immediate environment. Staff make positive efforts to compensate for this. Our pupils have access to televisions and films and are aware of the wider world with all the implications pertaining to race, religion and inequality. Some of these aspects are explored within the classroom context as well as in assemblies and whole-school projects, fundraising for charities or for emergency relief following disasters.

In choosing literature to read to pupils and for pupils to read themselves, staff often select material which reflects the multi-cultural nature of the world. This policy is reinforced by displays around the school and included in the content of assemblies. Similarly when adding to the school's resources, multi-cultural aspects are borne in mind (such as the purchase of multi-cultural dolls in Reception).

In Weavertorpe School a difficulty arises in first hand experience as the range of families from which the school draws is largely white English. If racial abuse arises, it is likely to be because of home and peer group attitudes. It can take the form of a type of humour, name-calling, derogatory remarks, deliberate picking out of a child or family, swearing, or even physical abuse. It is largely based on ignorance and lack of contact. The school curriculum is designed to cover aspects of race and racial equality wherever possible but it is recognised that this is sometimes quite remote from the experience of our pupils. Often the television is the main source of the children's knowledge and this can give a distorted picture.

All ethnic and national groups are considered for admission to school. All families are now requested on entry to indicate their mother tongue and ethnic origin and such information is treated with confidence and kept in the school office to be used for national statistical purposes only. School recognises that parents have the right to withhold such information.

School promotes the concept that we live in a multi-racial society and that many children and families, although differentiated by colour and beliefs, have always lived in this country and have been born here. Additionally our pupils are also taught the geography of our world and that different nations and different beliefs occur throughout. Each person has the right to their beliefs and their nationhood. The concept of internationalism is also promoted in this school. Modern transport, and modern technology enable people to have immediate and direct contact throughout the world and most families now have members who consider their homes to be elsewhere than England. Many pupils are well-travelled. They are encouraged to talk about their experiences in an unbiased way so that others can share their experiences.

School takes positive steps to inform pupils about other nations and cultures. Visitors to school are encouraged. The internet can be used appropriately to promote international understanding. All pupils are encouraged to show care, respect and concern for others regardless of age, sex, colour, creed or ability. This school actively discourages racism and racial harassment. Staff report any incidents to the headteacher. Depending on the severity of the incident, the pupil's parents are notified of the occurrence. NYCC is informed through the termly report form completed by the school office. At times the theme of racism and racial harassment will form the basis of Circle Time discussions, assembly discussions and curriculum work. Pupils must first be made aware that abuse is occurring and then they are encouraged to take steps to cease such action. Subsequent monitoring as appropriate takes place. As well as putting in place remedial strategies for the perpetrators of racial abuse or harassment, school will offer support to the victim and if necessary to the victim's family. This will be done by direct contact with the home and through the school's support agencies.

This policy covers any racial incidents involving pupils, staff, parents, governors and visitors to our school (including contractors).

RELIGIOUS EQUALITY

School fosters links with the local Church of England and Methodist churches through a programme of regular visits from the respective clergy and acts of worship held in the churches throughout the year. School encourages visits from other religious leaders. Pupils visit the Parish Church regularly as part of their curriculum. The school community participates in significant religious festivals at local churches by leading the congregation in celebration of Easter, Christmas, etc.

Weaverthorpe School is designated as a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School and has a Christian foundation. As such the school is a member of the Diocesan Education Area and regularly has communication and contact with their office. There is access to a Diocesan Schools' Adviser. School attends the annual Diocesan Conference for Heads, local Clergy, Chairs of Governors and Foundation Governors. The Parochial Church Council appoints two Governors to join the Governing Board for four-year terms of office. In practice one tends to be the Rector.

School follows the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Pupils study the five major world religions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Good use is made of ICT to promote learning and understanding in these areas.

All pupils take part in these aspects of school life bearing in mind that parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and/or Collective Worship on application to the headteacher and Governing Body.

ABILITY AND MOBILITY

Weaverthorpe School has facilities to accommodate children with special educational needs, including access for wheelchairs. The main school is on one level.

Children with learning difficulties are identified early by the staff and the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises with all involved. Individual programmes of work are in place as appropriate to help pupils with SEN access the curriculum at their level in line with the Code of Practice. Where possible this occurs within the normal classroom framework but may include withdrawal on occasions to provide more intensive individual support. School accesses guidance from the NYCC's Educational Psychology Service and also the Enhanced Mainstream Schools provision as appropriate, and may, with professional advice, put forward pupils to be "Statemented" by the LA in order to facilitate the educational provision. This is done with full consultation and permission of the parents concerned. Whilst recognising difficulties in funding for pupils with SEN, school is committed to providing for such pupils. Similarly school adheres to the LA's Inclusion Policy. Staff understand the importance of differentiation of work to ensure that more able pupils are extended and less able pupils are provided suitable support. Each pupil works at his/her own level and pace within a group situation so that each has equal opportunity to make the most of their own particular skills in various learning situations.

ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOL

Children are normally admitted into school in Reception Class in September during the year they reach their fifth birthday. Until their fifth birthday parents may select whether their child is full-time or part-time but it is usual that the full-time option is chosen. Most children attend our own part-time nursery prior to school.

For administrative purposes there is a traditional catchment area that Weaverthorpe Primary School serves, giving an entitlement to the Authority's transport provision but pupils may also be admitted from outside the school's catchment area. The Governing Body and LEA have agreed to set the maximum admission number in Reception at 9. In practice this means that once 9 Reception aged pupils have been admitted, no more can be considered from outside the school's catchment area except by Appeal. The school would rarely turn down children through the appeals process. This school conforms to the Authority's admissions procedures.

Admission at other points in the school is again by age bearing in mind, the circumstances and the size of the appropriate class to be considered. Wherever possible, pupils are placed in classes within the school according to age. Other factors relating to individual children, e.g. maturity and special needs, are taken into account and the class placement for such children is flexible but with full consultation with the parents concerned and the LA.

Parents wishing to enrol their children should contact school as soon as possible and make arrangements to admit their children. School visits are positively encouraged both for the parents and for their children and a sequence of visits for the new Reception intake is arranged with the Reception Class teacher. All Parents wishing to place their children in Weaverthorpe School, whether from within the school's traditional catchment area or beyond, are advised that they will be provided with a Preference Form, or access to the online admissions system, and will need to contact the Area Education Office in Harrogate to complete admission arrangements. Contact with the school prior to this will indicate if admission is likely to be possible. School has an open policy regarding admissions and does not require entrance tests.

At the end of the primary phase a programme of visits and work is organised for Y6 pupils in preparation for their transfer to secondary school. Usually pupils from Weaverthorpe School transfer to Norton College for which transport is usually provided by bus, by the LA. However, as with primary education, parents can choose an alternative secondary school.

STAFFING EQUALITY

Staffing is in line with North Yorkshire County Council's guidelines and both sexes are eligible for all staff appointments. The Governing Body intends there to be staff of both sexes but recognises that other factors must be and are considered, e.g. suitability of experience, qualifications. Promotion, when available, is open to all staff with the relevant experience and qualifications and staffing appointments are in line with the NYCC's Equal Opportunity Policy.

PARENTS

On admittance of children to school, their parents are advised about:

- school's policies - indicated within the School Prospectus and advising rights of access
- their legal rights - indicated within the School Prospectus
- their partnership - told the fact that they are embarking upon a partnership with the school staff to provide their children, possibly for seven years, with the best education that we are able. A Home/School Agreement is used in each Key Stage.
- their responsibilities - told that parents play a substantial part in their child's education in ensuring that their children's well-being is promoted and that their children attend school regularly.

All parents have equal access to school activities, to the Friends of Weavertorpe School Association and its activities, to the Governing Body and to the Education Authority. The Friends' Association was set up March 2008. The Governing Body changes on a four year cycle but reports to parents at least annually. Governors are appointed by various bodies involved with school. Parent governors are elected by parental ballot in accordance with government guidelines. All appointments to these two bodies are published in school newsletters.

Parents are invited to numerous school activities during the year as part of the partnership with school. Additionally their assistance and support is welcomed. Such events include acts of worship (both within school and in local churches), Sports Day, Christmas Productions, Parent Evenings of various types, Harvest, class assemblies, educational visits. There are also opportunities for parents to be involved on a regular basis within the classroom situation as parent helpers.

Where parents have separated, access is equally given and school endeavours to take all reasonable effort to locate both parents in order to provide written communication and access to children's progress reports and parent evenings. Access is only denied if a court has ruled accordingly.

SCHOOL CHARGING POLICY

Parents and staff recognise that charges for some school activities have to be made. Pupils have equal access to all school activities and if the school charge is such that families feel their children may not be able to take part in that activity, the situation is reviewed and assistance is appropriately given. Sometimes this assistance will be in the form of advice; at other times it may be monetary support, (e.g. the cost of a school visit).

As part of the school curriculum all visits by pupils are open to all but parents are asked to give permission before attendance is assumed by staff. Voluntary contributions are requested for day visits out of school and sometimes for activities within school. No pupil is barred from attending any such activities if the contribution does not appear. The pupil(s) in question will be supported from the School Fund if appropriate. Whenever any charge for a school activity is proposed parents receive written communication in advance and are asked to give permission where appropriate and to indicate whether any difficulties are likely to be experienced. Pupils are allowed to have non-attendance at any school event on medical grounds or the expressed written wish of the parent. Similarly when class activities require pupils to bring items from home, pupils will not be barred from the activity if home fails to provide the requested items.

Participation in the residential visit, for example to Humphrey Head, is voluntary depending upon parental wishes. School strongly encourages attendance as many aspects of curriculum work are

linked to these residential visits. School will offer support from a variety of available funds for those pupils who may not be able to attend on financial grounds, e.g. free school meal support, Friends' Association, School Fund.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years.