



HMFA Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy is reviewed and updated annually

Co-ordinator - Mrs J McColl

Equal opportunities in our academy

This policy statement outlines the commitment of the staff and Governors to ensuring that equal opportunities are available to all members of the school community including pupils, teaching staff, support staff, parents, Governors, visitors to the school and students on placement.

It is intended to provide a framework for ensuring equality of opportunity within the Herefordshire Marches Federation of Academies (HMFA) community.

Statement of commitment

At HMFA we are opposed to discrimination in all its forms and committed to promoting the principles and practice of equality and justice throughout the academy.

Admission of pupils

The academy follows the Local Authority and Governing Body Admission policies which do not permit sex, race, colour, different faiths or disability to be used as criteria for admission or non-admission.

Learning environment

The overall aim of the learning environment is to ensure that all pupils are enabled to make the most of their abilities and qualities. We aim to do this by ensuring that:

- There is a consistently high expectation of all pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or social background.
- We meet all pupils' learning needs, including the more able, by assessing and administering programmes of work and targets.
- All pupils are actively involved in their own learning.
- The academy provides an environment in which all pupils have equal access to all facilities and resources.
- The academy places a high priority on the provision for special educational needs and disability.
- The adults in the academy try to provide good, positive role models in their approach to all issues relating to equal opportunities
- A range of teaching methods is used throughout the academy to ensure that effective learning takes place at all stages for all pupils

Resources and Materials

The provision of good quality resources and materials within the academy is a high priority. These resources should:

- Reflect a variety of viewpoints
- Show positive images of males and females in society including people with disabilities.
- Reflect non-stereotypical images of all groups in a global context
- Include materials to raise awareness of equal opportunity issues
- Be equally accessible to all members of the school community

Organisation of Learning

When organising groups for various activities, consideration is always given to the composition of the group to provide a balance appropriate to the activity.

Staff ensure that:

- The class teacher ensures that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. **We do not discriminate against any child.**
- When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.
- When designing schemes of work, we use this policy to guide us, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues.

Largely as a result of the rural nature of the area, our school community does not tend to be very culturally diverse, so we ensure that the learning environment reflects a range and diversity of cultures. This includes links with international communities such as India, instruction in a range of religions and their associated festivals and celebrations, and theme days introducing the children to languages, music and food from other countries.

We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

Language

We recognise at our academy that it is important that members of the school community use appropriate language which:

- does not offend, transmit or confirm stereotypes
- creates the conditions for all people to develop their self esteem
- uses correct terminology when referring to groups or individuals eg. Inuit rather than Eskimo, Native Americans rather than Red Indians.

We undertake to make appropriate provision for all bilingual groups to ensure access to the whole curriculum. These groups may include traveller children, people whose home language is not a standard form of English, pupils for whom English is not their first language.

All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any serious incidents in the academy log book, and draw them to the attention of the headteacher. Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

Extra-curricular provision

It is the policy of this academy to provide equal access to all activities from an early age eg. girls playing football, boys playing netball and mixed teams wherever possible.

We undertake responsibility for making contributors to extra-curricular activities (eg. sports helpers, coach drivers and any non staff members who have contact with the children) aware of the academy's commitment to equal opportunity.

Staffing and Staff Development

In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.

We undertake to encourage the career development and aspirations of all staff.

It is our policy to provide staff with training and development, which will increase awareness of the needs of different groups of pupils.

We recognise the need for positive role models and distribution of responsibility among staff. Wherever possible this should include access to a balance of male and female staff.

Harassment and bullying

It is the duty of this academy to challenge all types of discriminatory behaviour especially unwanted attentions (verbal or physical) and unwelcome or offensive remarks or suggestions about another persons' appearance, character, race, disability or ability, sexuality or gender.

The academy has agreed procedures for dealing with incidents such as these (see Behaviour (including Anti-bullying) policy and Complaints policy).

Awareness of the policy

Parents and pupils should know that the academy has an equal opportunities policy and that it is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The commitment to inclusion and opportunities for all children is included in the prospectus.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities policy. The governing body does this by:

- monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the academy;
- ensure that arrangements are made at the school for the admission of pupils with disabilities, including access to the academy and equal opportunities of learning.
- monitoring the participation of pupils of minority groups in extra-curricular activities.
- monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this academy is discriminated against;
- requiring the headteacher to report to governors on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy;
- taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils;
- monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policy, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

Legislation

We are bound by the legal requirements of the following legislation:

Human Rights Act 1998

This contains a clear statement of everyone's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001

This strengthened the right of children with special educational needs to a place in a mainstream school.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 has replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It also strengthens the law to help tackle discrimination and inequality. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010. A key measure in the Act – the public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5th April 2011. The Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all. A significant piece of terminology is 'protected characteristics'. The new Equality Duty replaces the three previous public sector equality duties – for race, disability and gender.

The new Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex (also frequently referred to as gender)
- sexual orientation

(It also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.)

For our own educational priorities, a tenth characteristic not specified in equalities legislation is socio-economic circumstances. This is a key consideration in terms of pupil premium and the closing of attainment gaps in schools and settings.

The Public Sector Equality Duty has two areas

1. There is a general duty to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. *
2. There are two specific duties for public bodies:
 - To publish information that shows consideration for the three areas of the general duty as detailed above (**completed for 06/04/12**). This should include information about the effect of policies and practices upon services and detail the information considered in conducting that analysis.
 - To prepare and publish specific, measurable equality objectives and to publish information about organisational performance against those objectives. This information must be published at least every four years and should be reasonably accessible to the public.

Links to other policies

Equality of opportunity is relevant to most of the academies policies but has particular cross reference to the following policies:

- Race equality
- Behaviour and Anti bullying
- PSHE
- SEN