

Education Bradford Diversity and Cohesion Service

Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy Guidelines for Schools

Responsibilities and Duties

Schools have a number of responsibilities and duties under legislation relating to equality, diversity and community cohesion. These include promoting:

- **Race Equality**
- **Disability Equality**
- **Gender Equality**
- **Community Cohesion**

Any equality, diversity and community cohesion policy in schools should cover all these areas and will make sure that pupils are prepared for life in a diverse and multi – cultural society.

Race

All schools have a duty to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations *between* persons of different race, ethnicity and nationality. This will be through the implementation of a written race equality policy, which should identify action to be taken to tackle discrimination and to promote equality and good race relations across the whole area of school activity. (See Education Bradford's Model Race Equality Policy for Schools)

The Race Equality Policy should be distinct but should also be a component of a school's Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy.

Schools have a duty to assess and monitor the impact of such a policy on pupils, staff and parents (in particular reporting on how this impacts on the attainment levels of pupils from different ethnic groups); they should also publish annually the results of monitoring and assessment. All schools and educational establishments are required to record racist incidents and to report them to the local education authority on a regular basis.

Ofsted will inspect and report on whether schools are meeting the general and specific duties.

Community Cohesion

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 inserted a new section 21(5) to the Education Act 2002 which introduces a duty on schools' governing bodies to promote community cohesion. From September 2007, Ofsted included the implementation of the duty in their inspections. The legislative requirements on schools to meet this duty are in the Equality Act 2006 and outlined in the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)

A cohesive community includes all types of communities, i.e. the school and its extended community, the community in which the school is located, the community of Britain, the

global community, and communities of interest (e.g. environmental groups or faith groups) communities of friends.

The Community Cohesion Education Standards for schools are framed by four strategic aims which are to:

- Close the attainment and achievement gap.
- Develop common values of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity.
- Contribute to building good community relations and challenge all types of discrimination and inequality.
- Remove the barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement.

The DCSF suggest schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach pupils to understand others; to promote common values and to value diversity; to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them; and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.

Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.

Engagement and ethos – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations; including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally. In order to promote community cohesion a school should endeavour to:

- Promote understanding and engagement between communities
- Encourage all children and families to feel part of the wider community
- Understand and respond to the needs and hopes of all communities
- Tackle discrimination
- Increase life opportunities for all
- Ensure the environment of the school, resources, teaching and the curriculum addresses and reflects issues of diversity

'We must make sure community cohesion becomes part of every school's ethos to celebrate diversity and recognise common values. There'll be different challenges for different schools but it's now on the agenda for them all.'

Adrian Gray, Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks, Ofsted

Embedding Equality in Schools

Schools need to ensure that equality is embedded in all of the school's policies and practices, so must:

- **Produce a written race equality policy** identifying action to be taken to tackle discrimination and promote equality and good race relations across school activity.
- **Assess and monitor the impact of race equality policies** on pupils, staff, and parents, in particular the attainment levels of pupils from different racial groups, and take such steps as are reasonably practical to publish the results of this monitoring annually.
- **Record racist incidents** and report them to the local authority on a regular basis.
- **Ensure admissions and operation procedures are fair**
Schools must not discriminate against pupils in admissions or in their day to day operations, such as in the allocation of pupils to particular classes.

Writing an Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy

Every policy should include the following elements

- Context
- Aims and values
- Approach to promoting equality, diversity and community cohesion and tackling discrimination
- Specific reference to race
- Roles and responsibilities
- Procedures for monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact

Context – 'What sort of school are we?'

This section could include information about:

- Geographical location
- Communities served
- Socio-economic background of pupils
- Attainment levels of different groups of pupils
- Ethnic composition of pupils and staff
- Linguistic diversity of pupils
- Religious diversity of pupils
- Travellers, Roma, Refugees, Asylum seekers, etc

This information would refer to the wider community e.g. Bradford as well as the local community around the school

This section should help schools implement their policy in a way which is meaningful for their setting. For example, if there is little linguistic diversity in a school, this should be made explicit and a statement relating to the school's approach to linguistic diversity

might emphasise the school's commitment to enriching the linguistic experiences of all pupils and to recognising and celebrating the linguistic diversity of British society.

Aims and values

This should set out the school's aims, to provide equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards, stating the core values as expressed in the school's aims or mission statement. It should make clear the school's commitment to ensure a culture of respect for others, to recognise and celebrate differences and commonality between people and to build a community where pupils are well prepared for life in a diverse, multicultural, pluralist society

The school's approach to promoting equality diversity and community cohesion

This section should make clear how a school pursue its equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and promote equality of opportunity, good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

It should make clear that no pupils, staff, parents, guardians or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief or any other aspect of diversity. The principles of the policy should apply to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members.

Roles and responsibilities

A school should make it obvious in its policy that all who work in the school have a responsibility for promoting equality and inclusion and avoiding unfair discrimination. It should state the specific responsibilities of the members of the school community.

School governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school complies with all current equality legislation and that the any equality, diversity and community cohesion policy and its procedures are followed

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- A policy that is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it and that its procedures are followed
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy, how it is working,
- Providing CPD for staff and governors
- Ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Appropriate interventions and action in cases of harassment and discrimination

Staff are responsible for:

- Modelling good practice, dealing with racist incidents and being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Promoting equality and good race relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion, belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or social class.
- Ensuring that they are familiar with the law on discrimination.

- Seeking CPD opportunities to keep abreast of developments in equality legislation and good practice in promoting equality, diversity and community cohesion throughout the school and across the curriculum

Pupils are responsible for:

- Demonstrating a zero tolerance towards all forms of discrimination and racism.
- Using their 'student voice' through working with staff to develop policies relating to this area, for example an anti-bullying policy/anti-racist bullying policy and procedures or school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- Keeping equality and diversity issues on the School Council agenda.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that equality and diversity issues are on the Parent/Teachers Association Agenda

Visitors, supply staff, temporary staff and contractors are responsible for:

- Being aware of and following the school's equality, diversity and community cohesion policy

The responsibility for overseeing equality practices in the school should lay with a named member of staff. Their responsibilities may include:

- Coordinating and monitoring work on equality issues
- Recording and dealing with and monitoring reports of harassment (including racist incidents)
- Monitoring the progress and attainment of potentially vulnerable groups of pupils (e.g. children and young people in care, children from minority ethnic, migrant, refugee or asylum seeker or Traveller communities)
- Monitoring attendance and exclusions

They will report to named governor who will have responsibility for equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Auditing, monitoring, reviewing and assessing impact

The school policy on equality, diversity and community cohesion should be linked to the school self audit of its effectiveness in promoting these areas in school, the development plan and include targets determined by the governing body for promoting equality, inclusion and a cohesive community in the school. The policy should state how it will be monitored and reviewed by staff and governors to ensure it's effectiveness in eliminating discrimination, promoting access and participation, equality, good relations between different groups and community cohesion.

Any inequality found as a result of impact assessment should be used to inform future planning and decision-making. The Head teacher should provide monitoring reports for review by the Governing Body. These should refer to the school population, key initiatives and progress against targets and future plans.

References

'Community Cohesion Education Standards for Schools' (DCSF Home Office and Commission for Racial Equality 2004)

'Guidance on the Duty to Promote Community Cohesion (DCSF 2007)

'Our Shared Future' (Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007 DCSF)

'Schools Race Equality Policies – From Issues to Outcomes' (DFES 2004)

'Developing a Policy for Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion in Surrey' Draft Guidance for Schools (Surrey LEA 2008)