

ANNEX 35

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (PUPILS)

References:

- A: Education and Inspections Act 2006
- B. The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as subsequently amended (SI2003/1910)
- C. "Reference Guide to the Key Standards in each type of Social Care Service Inspected by Ofsted" (Reference 080117) www.ofsted.gov.uk
- D. EYFS Statutory Framework, DCSF, 2008
- E. EYFS Guidance for Registered Settings, ISI, September 2010.
- F. The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools dated September 2010.

Our Vision

Children are surrounded by images that convey stereotypes, at home, on television, amongst peers and adults. These images can affect a child's self esteem, often in a negative way. At Vinehall we promote an ethos that values each person and the contributions that each makes. Through this approach we aim to build within each child a positive self-image and the confidence to tackle new experiences to the best of their ability. The school fosters a policy which makes all pupils feel included and secure and our equal opportunities policy aims to develop the intellectual, physical and social potential of all Vinehall pupils (including boarders) to the full.

Our Aims

At Vinehall, we aim to provide an environment and ethos which promotes equality of opportunity for all children, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural or linguistic background, sexual orientation, disability, body image, or social background. To achieve this, we work to make sure that there is no inappropriate discrimination; and that our expectations are fair and do not exclude any pupils from experiences or the chance to reach their full potential. The same is true of our treatment of staff.

We aim to remove all barriers to opportunity and to eliminate stereotyping. We recognise, value and develop the worth and potential of each individual. We aim to encourage positive attitudes and relationships and therefore help all our children feel confident. We also want all our pupils to develop a sense of responsibility – both for themselves and others.

There is a strong link between this policy, the PSHE and citizenship policy and also the school's anti-racism policy. Many of the aims of the policies overlap and reinforce each other.

We also welcome applications from pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policies covering Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties and Disability Policy.

Bursaries and Awards are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school. (Details of our provision for bursaries are available on our website or on request from the Registrar).

Code of Conduct

The Head, Senior Management Team, pastoral staff, Houseparents, form teachers, Chaplain and the Medical staff all play an active role in monitoring the implementation of the school's policy on equal opportunities. In addition, use is made of Assemblies, PSHE, RS, Drama, English and other lessons to:

- Promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the school community.

- Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be recognised.
- Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

Achieving our Aims

- All children have equal opportunity to access to the curriculum provided by the school. Children with specific difficulties (such as those with English as a foreign language) receive a curriculum that is modified to suit their needs but remains broad and balanced. Our SEN department advises and supports all children who need help.
- All pupils are treated the same with regard to school rules, behaviour and sanctions.
- Resources are selected to both avoid bias and to promote positive images/ role models for pupils.
- Pupils have equal access to after school activities and clubs.
- Role play, especially in the early years, presents varied opportunities to support the development of positive attitudes
- School teams are selected on the basis of ability not gender (except as befits the game in question) and friendly matches are arranged to allow a range of children the chance to represent the school.
- Form leaders are chosen on a rotational basis so that all pupils have opportunity to play their part.
- Prefects are chosen solely on grounds of their own ability to contribute and support others and according to an extensive process of application, reference and research.
- Groupings, both in and out of the classroom, are not usually made on the basis of gender but staff should look carefully at the gender balance when groups are organised and address peer group pressures positively if they encounter them.
- Bias or attitudes in resources / literature are discussed with the pupils, taking into account their age / maturity.
- Children will be given opportunities to address and gain an understanding of equal opportunities issues including 'discrimination'.
- All staff should challenge stereotyped attitudes and be fair in the way they allocate time and resources.
- Teachers and classroom assistants should be alert to bias in reading material and be familiar with the aims and objectives of this policy.
- Teachers should be aware of course content that might encourage or discourage particular children.
- Staff should be aware of their own potential as a role model and focus of attention for pupils.
- Teachers should be alert to differing learning styles and use a variety of teaching techniques in their practice.

- The school will ensure that school publications do not display bias and where possible, that displays around the school are non-stereotyped.
- A separate policy is available outlining our approach to disabled children.

Harassment in all its forms unlawful and unacceptable; our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination.

A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from parent and guardians, and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

English as an Additional Language

In the Prep School, in order to cope with the academic and social demands of the school, pupils must be relatively fluent English speakers. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense.

Sensitive and appropriate support is also provided for boarders for whom English is not their first language in boarding as well as through the curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years (EY) children at Vinehall refer to children from 2 to 5 years of age in our Pre-Nursery, Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception classes. Vinehall EY is included in the Equal Opportunities Policy (Pupils) with the whole school.

Vinehall promotes and values diversity and differences through circle time, PSED, assemblies, displays and events such as Arts Week. Inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged and children are encouraged to value and respect others. Staff consider how the individual needs of all children will be met and how all children, including those with disabilities or SEN will be included, valued and supported and how reasonable adjustments will be made for them. Individual support is considered in consultation with parents and other agencies as appropriate. For example children with EAL are included in all activities and staff will consider how to best support these children on an individual basis.

Vinehall has and implements an effective policy ensuring equality of opportunities for supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities. As a registered provider, in receipt of Government funding we have regard to the SEN Code of Practice. Vinehall EYFS ensures specific learning, developmental or physical needs are identified. Provision is then related to the specific need and recorded suitably; guidance is offered to adults on adapting daily provision. Parents and relevant agencies may need to be included in discussion or informed of provision. Progress is monitored and reviewed regularly and results shared and discussed with parents.

Mrs J Mills is the SENCO responsible for the EYFS at Vinehall and the Head of Pre-Prep has undergone the County SEN training, which included inclusion. Further details of how individual needs are met and how the SEN Code of Practice is put into practice are described in the Special Needs Policy for the whole school, which includes the EYFS.

In addition to whole school Inset training and Pre-Prep meetings, the EY staff have separate meetings to review, monitor and evaluate inclusive practices and the findings inform IEPs, class planning, the department SEF and action planning.

Complaints

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about the operation of our equal opportunities policy; but a copy of the school's Parental Complaints Procedure is available on our website or on request from the school office.

Related Documents:

1. Special Educational Needs Policy.
2. Disability Policy.
3. Anti-Racism Policy.