

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



General Statement

The central aim of the school is to provide the best educational opportunities and experience for all its pupils and staff. Equal opportunity can only be achieved through the delivery of a high quality education catering for the needs of all the students. As such the school is committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy which enables all pupils and staff to feel secure and confident and to succeed to the best of their abilities.

The Forest Hill School community is made up of a variety of individuals and groups with a wide variety of backgrounds, lifestyles, languages and cultures. It is a diversity of which we should be very proud, which enriches our lives and the educational process. It is therefore an essential part of the school's role to ensure that such diversity is seen as the advantage it is and not feared or derided. To this end the school must take an unequivocal stance against prejudice and discrimination.

We recognise that many members of the school may experience prejudice and harassment both within the school and outside. The school therefore commits itself fully to a policy of challenging all prejudice and discrimination, for example: -

Ability, age, class, gender, HIV positive and AIDS status, language, marital status, physical appearance, racial or ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation and employment status.

Such a policy requires commitment from each member of the community and acceptance of a code of conduct that:

- Encourages respect for the individual
- Encourages collective action to challenge prejudice and structures which perpetuate it
- Challenges stereotyped images and in their place promotes positive images
- Declares as unacceptable any language, action or expressed belief that is prejudiced or which encourages prejudice in others
- Challenges institutional structures which have prejudicial or discriminatory effects

It is the duty of all members of the school community to uphold this policy even where it may be in conflict with their own beliefs.