



Apex Primary School

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Reviewed – November 2023

Next review – November 2025

AIMS

- Offer equal opportunities regardless of race, religion, culture, gender, disability or class.
- Provide an environment free from social, sexual or cultural prejudice for all members of our school community
- Achieve an environment in which members of the school community can be respected as individuals and in which the varied experiences of the community can enrich the life of the school.

POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES

Apex Primary School is fully committed to the establishment of an effective and meaningful equal opportunities policy which applies to the appointment, development, training and promotion of staff and to all dealings with pupils and parents at the school. The Apex Equal Opportunities Policy has been developed such that it is consistent with the Equality Act 2010, and Islamic principles and norms.

We work with the strong advantages of cultural and linguistic diversity and therefore have a particular responsibility to ensure a positive climate in the school and community we serve.

We value every member of our school community, nurture self-esteem and encourage caring and good relationships.

We aim to maximise the educational progression of each child. Our school should be a place where adults and children of all ages, cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, abilities, family circumstances, linguistic background, gender and support needs will find safety and respect for themselves and their families.

We recognise that equal opportunities for pupils are inextricably linked with equal opportunities for staff. The adults in the school act as role models for pupils and are more likely to promote equal opportunities for pupils if they experience these opportunities themselves.

The Trust and SLT will operate within the requirements of anti-discriminatory legislation. In addition, they will positively promote equality of opportunity in all their decisions.

It is our policy to ensure that every member of the school community:

- o Respects others and is respectful
- o Takes a full part in the life of the school

- o Is able to work and develop without direct or indirect discrimination
- o Achieves his or her potential
- o Is enabled to contribute in a fair and caring way

We recognise that educational outcomes will be influenced by factors outside school and that prejudices and stereotypical attitudes in society may need to be challenged.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This policy accords with legislation:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;**
- **Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2002;**
- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975.**

The policy covers the following ‘protected characteristics’:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

Apex Primary has a rich history of enabling all its pupils to achieve their potential regardless of their sex, race or/and background. Our pupils work together in all aspects of the curriculum and teachers are advised to actively facilitate equal opportunity. For example, if boys are given the chance (in Y6) to deliver the Friday *khutbah* (religious Friday sermon), then arrangements for girls to deliver a *nasīha* (religious reminder) should also be made on the same day. We hold that any discrimination based on sex, race or/and background is wrong and educate our pupils accordingly. Notwithstanding the above commitment, girls will pray in a distinct group during the daily *salāh* (formal worship) in line with the prophetic teachings which can be found in numerous narrations (see footnote). This is not to discriminate against anyone but out of respect to gender-specific factors as well as reverence of the *sunnah* (prophetic practice), which is also part of religious practise.

Footnote: Narrated from ibn Mālik (may Allāh be pleased with him) that his grandmother Mulaykah invited the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to a meal that she had made for him, and he ate some, then he said: “Get up and let me lead you in prayer.” Anas said: I went and got a reed mat of ours that had become blackened from long use, and sprinkled it with water. Then the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) stood, and the orphan and I stood behind him, and the old lady stood behind us, and the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) led us in praying two rak’ahs [units of prayer], then he left.” [Reported by al-Bukhāī and Muslim] - There has been a scholarly consensus that women used to pray behind men since the formation period of Islam, see: Bidāyat al-Mujtahid, 1/361

Other school policies and guidelines, particularly English as an Additional Language, Curriculum, Special Educational Needs, Assessment and Behaviour need to be read in conjunction with this policy. Equal opportunities will be provided for all staff in our selection processes and in all management processes within the school.

Staff and pupils should try to further promote equality by personally contributing towards a happy caring environment and by showing respect for and appreciation of each other as individuals. Staff should raise awareness of pupils to equal opportunities issues during assemblies, class discussions and PSHE/SMSC lessons. These lessons should include discussions about being the same or different from others and should challenge stereotypes.

Strenuous efforts should be made to ensure that the school and its curriculum are equally accessible to all parents and pupils. All pupils should be encouraged to work collaboratively and independently, irrespective of differences. We should help all pupils to understand the world in which they live and the interdependence of individuals, groups, nations and the environment.

Positive efforts should be made to present all activities as being appropriate to all pupils' e.g. residential visits and extra-curricular activities. Approaches to discipline should be the same for all pupils. When choosing books, resources and displays, efforts should be made to achieve a variety of positive role models and reflect the cultural diversity of the school.

When choosing art, examples should be taken from different cultures and languages. We should try to learn more about the lives, cultures and out of school activities of our pupils in order to be sensitive to their needs. The acceptance of diversity of culture is an accepted Islamic tradition ('urf) and tolerance of religious beliefs is well supported as Islamic values. These are principles that Apex fully supports and promotes.

The selection of class helpers, work displayed, etc. should favour all pupils equally.

Where linguistic background is concerned:

- All pupils should be given access to the whole curriculum
- The school should track distinct cohorts of pupils to ensure that they are progressing at the same rate as others e.g. boys, girls, EAL pupils, and take positive actions if they are not
- Class teachers should take responsibility for the planning and differentiation of work for EAL pupils
- Teachers should make effective use of outside agencies and resources to support EAL pupils and maximise their learning potential
- In grouping pupils for learning, teachers need to be clear about the attainment levels of EAL pupils

Where racism is concerned:

Islam strongly condemns racism and as such Apex makes strenuous efforts within the teaching/learning and organisational activities to eliminate racism.

Where ability is concerned:

The needs of all pupils will be met through differentiation of the curriculum. Refer to the Special Educational Needs, Curriculum and EAL policies for details.

Where physical disability is concerned:

We make every effort to accommodate children within the limitations of our building. The Trust seeks to improve access and facilities. We seek to ensure equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.

MONITORING THIS POLICY

This policy is linked to many other policies in the school and may be monitored as part of those policies. Equal opportunities will also be monitored across the school in its own right, as determined by the School Improvement Plan. The standards achieved by boys, girls, or different cultural and linguistic groups will be monitored through regular analysis of assessment data. Positive action will be taken if any groups appear to be under achieving.