

THE BANDA SCHOOL

Policy for Equal Opportunities and Ethnic Diversity

January 2009

We aim, within The Banda, to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices do not prevent any child from realising their promise.

Gender

We recognise that a child's self perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any gender bias and promoting equality of opportunity.

As a school we work to incorporate our guidelines for Equal Opportunity into our primary practice. Certain strategies are employed to ensure that the cross-curricular dimension of equal opportunity permeates all of the life and work of the school. At the same time we are aware that as children mature and their relationships with peers of both sexes develop; their perception of sex roles alters. We also recognise that such perceptions are influenced by other factors including home, peer group and the media.

Children of both sexes have equal opportunity within and equal access to all areas of the whole school curriculum. This includes the Programmes of Study and other subject areas currently outside the National Curriculum / Common Entrance Syllabus and areas such as extra-curricular activities. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.

- ✓ Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of gender bias in both our teaching and learning materials and our teaching styles.
- ✓ Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid sexual stereotypes and gender bias.
- ✓ Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to boys and girls.
- ✓ All children are encouraged to work and play freely with others of both sexes.
- ✓ Opportunities are given for children to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of both sexes.
- ✓ Teaching and other groupings, such as lunch tables, assembly seating, classroom seating and playground areas are organised on the basis of criteria other than gender, for example, age, ability, friendship.

Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving / delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and children.

- ✓ Discipline procedures - notably rewards and sanctions - are the same for both sexes.
- ✓ Children and all staff are encouraged to value each other and build up and maintain cooperative working relationships both within school and in the community, such relationships being based on mutual respect for each other.

Any differences involving gender which arise inside or outside the classroom are dealt with sensitively and are discussed with the children.

All teaching and non-teaching posts are not sex-specific. Both men and women are encouraged to teach all age groups. All staff have equal access to in-service training and posts of responsibility.

Practices and approaches involving equal opportunity in terms of gender issues are regularly reviewed by all members of staff.

POLICY FOR EDUCATION REGARDING ETHNIC DIVERSITY

'Education For All'

The school maintains the ideal of 'Education For All', appreciating that in our pluralistic society members of all ethnic groups, whether minority or majority, should be recognised and valued.

Children are prepared for life in a multicultural society. They are helped towards an awareness that people come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins and as such may have their own distinct language, religion, and culture; including such aspects as music, food, literature and customs.

We aim to help children to develop the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes with which to play a full and active part in our multicultural society.

As a cross-curricular dimension, the issue of 'Education For All' permeates all aspects of life in school and is encompassed within the teaching of many subjects in the curriculum, notably Music, PSE, History, English, Drama, Art, Geography, RE and PE and Sport. It is an integral part of the whole curriculum and is not seen as a separate subject.

Through a variety of learning experiences the children will be able to explore the contributions of different cultural, racial and religious groups in our society and at the same time broaden their knowledge and understanding of such groups. In this way it is hoped that the children's awareness and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity in the classroom, the school or the community, will be developed.

Work to develop this cross-curricular dimension may be included in both class and whole school based topics or themes. For example a topic such as, 'food' or 'light' may focus on various aspects of one (or more) of a community's culture and life. Both religious and secular festivals provide excellent opportunities in which to consider ethnic diversity and could be included in class and school assemblies. A topic in geography will also provide an opportunity to consider other cultures and ethnic backgrounds. The use of literature may provide a useful vehicle for encouraging children to recognise and understand people from other races, cultures and religions.

Through the partnership that exists between home, school and the community, we hope to enrich the curriculum by encouraging people from other cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds to visit school and share their experiences and ideas with the children.

Teachers are encouraged to consider the information they place before the children. Resources are carefully selected for use with the children to ensure that they do not display a cultural or racial bias or show stereotyping or prejudice. Such resources, where possible should reflect life in multicultural society. Cultural similarities as well as differences should be highlighted.

As a school we actively promote attitudes and values that enable the children to recognise the worth of every individual. The children are encouraged to respect themselves and others, be it in pupil-pupil relationships, pupil-staff relationships and relationships with others in the school and wider community. Tolerance and understanding of others is promoted amongst children and staff who are encouraged to appreciate individual differences.

Through our general routines in school and in the classroom we strive to ensure that our practices and procedures are not discriminatory in any way.

As a school we acknowledge and respond to the differing needs of all individuals whatever their cultural or ethnic background and experiences. Therefore all individuals receive equality of opportunity in our school.

Staff always try to eliminate any bias towards or against any particular group or individual. They are asked to respond positively in their approach to incidents relating to race, religion and disability be it in the classroom or the playground or with parents.

Identifying Racist Behaviour

At The Banda, all children and adults are encouraged to respect each other's:

- ✓ Cultural heritage
- ✓ Beliefs and practices and to understand that there are similarities and differences between all people.

There are occasions when a child or adult might exhibit racist behaviour towards another person. These need to be swiftly identified and dealt with.

Racist behaviour can take a variety of forms. Some of these are more obviously offensive than others. However, some apparently harmless incidents can be damaging in the long term. Below are examples of the kinds of incidents that we may encounter.

- ✓ Derogatory name calling, insults, racist jokes and language
- ✓ Racist comments during discussion in lessons
- ✓ Ridicule of an individual for cultural differences, for example food, music, dress
- ✓ Refusal to cooperate with others because of their ethnic origin
- ✓ Verbal abuse and threats
- ✓ Physical assault against a person or group because of colour and/or ethnicity
- ✓ Racist graffiti
- ✓ Incitement of others to behave in a racist way

Dealing with and reporting incidents for the following category:

- (a) Derogatory name-calling, insults, racist jokes and language.
- (b) Racist comments in the course of discussion in lessons.
- (c) Ridicule of an individual for cultural differences, for example food, music, dress etc.
- (d) Refusal to cooperate with other pupils because of their race, colour, ethnicity or language
- (e) Verbal abuse and threats
- (f) Physical assault
- (g) Racist graffiti
- (h) Incitement of others to behave in a racist way
- (j) Disability

Attitudes held by a person or group towards an individual with a physical disability which are offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual are regarded as unacceptable. Also regarded as unacceptable behaviour are acts or expressions which reflect such attitudes, or any incitement to make others adopt such attitudes.

Such examples may include:-

- physical assault against an individual because of his/her disability
- verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats
- reference to an individual's disability inside or outside lessons
- refusing to co-operate with an individual because of his/her disability

Procedures and examples of action that may be taken for the above:

- Report all incidents to Class teacher / Form taker, Deputy, or Headmaster
- Explain fully to the perpetrator that verbal or racist abuse will not be tolerated
- Explain that pupils should work corroboratively. Every pupil should have the right to be included in school activities and the school should not exclude any pupil on racial, cultural or linguistic grounds
- All racist graffiti in the school must be reported to the Class teacher / Form taker, Deputy or Headmaster and should be removed immediately
- Regular checks should be made and steps taken to discourage reappearance of graffiti
- Individuals who are persistently abusive, refuse to cooperate or making inappropriate comments must be referred to the Class teacher / Form taker, Deputy or Headmaster
- Parents / guardians should be informed
- Offer support to the victim and counselling for the perpetrator
- Record it in the Incident Book in Staff Room and in the pupils personal file in the Office

Incidents Involving Staff

An allegation of racist behaviour on the part of any member of the teaching or non-teaching staff is a serious disciplinary matter and will be the responsibility of the Headmaster and The Board. In addition there are specific procedures for dealing with racial harassment as part of staff grievance procedures.

Where the victim of alleged racist behaviour is a pupil, the Headmaster should, after careful investigation, seek to resolve the matter informally. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily at this stage then the parents should submit the complaint in writing to the Headmaster who will investigate the case further and take the appropriate action. This could involve the use of formal disciplinary procedures.

Where a member of staff is the victim of racist behaviour by pupils, it is important that full support is given to the member of staff concerned.

Incidents Outside School

There may well be occasions when racial incidents outside school, or involving outside perpetrators, are brought to the attention of the Headmaster. Opportunities should also be taken to condemn such incidents publicly.

Racial Tension

It is important that teachers are sensitive to all signs of possible victimisation of individual pupils or groups of pupils and that this should also be reported, even where there is no identifiable incident. Similarly, all behaviour which can be seen as possibly reflecting racial tension within the school as a whole should be reported, for example small groups of pupils form isolated groups within the playground or the classroom.

Supporting the Victims

It is important that the school creates a climate in which victims of racial incidents feel able to report them. All staff and pupils should be encouraged to report incidents that they witness and all such reports should be followed up. Special attention within The Banda should be paid to considering the particular vulnerability of pupils with special educational needs who may also be prey to racism within the school but find communication of their position and feelings difficult.

Staff dealing with such incidents should be sensitive to the issue of retaliation on the part of the victim, which may be a reaction to a long series of relatively minor incidents that have not been reported or dealt with appropriately.

Parents will be included when offering support to victims. Schools need to recognise that the victims of racial incidents may require pastoral support over a long period in order to regain personal confidence. In addition the school needs to demonstrate its willingness and ability to address the issue of racial harassment. Where the victim of a racial incident is a member of staff, support is available through from colleagues.

Wider Implications

In dealing with a racial incident, it is important to recognise the wider implications for the school and the local community. School procedures should set out clear lines of internal communication to ensure that all appropriate members of staff are aware of any incident. Formal procedures for involving senior management and The Board need to be considered.

The Headmaster may wish to take advice from IAPS before responding to approaches by the media over alleged racial incidents.

Monitoring and Reporting

It is essential that records are kept of racial incidents to enable the school to identify any patterns of behaviour whereby individuals or groups can be shown to be regular victims or perpetrators of racial harassment.

School Records

All incidents that are perceived to be racially motivated should be recorded and placed in the child's personal file in the School Office. The examination of these records on a regular basis will also provide the school with a picture of the frequency and nature of racial incidents and give some indication as to how effectively the school is combating such behaviour.

Reporting Racial Incidents

It may be appropriate for a report to be made to the The Board on an annual basis.