

Meadows School

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Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy & Procedure

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1. Introduction:

Meadows School is committed to Barnardo's Basis and Values, which provides the framework within which we can engage in giving young people a better start in life.

- We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.
- We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued.
- We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.
- We understand that as a Special School we are working with some of the most vulnerable young people in the UK and therefore have a duty to ensure stringent procedures and training must be in place and available to all staff.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors and are consistent with those of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB).

2. Staff Responsibility:

It is important as childcare professionals that every member of staff is aware of their own beliefs, opinions, values and the personal assumptions they make in their work.

Members of staff have the right and a duty to appropriately challenge their colleagues and other children and young people if they make racist or discriminatory comments or if they act in a disrespectful manner towards anyone.

Staff at Meadows School ensure that they treat each student as an individual and therefore try to accommodate all of their needs.

Staff aim to provide the best possible education for all our students regardless of gender, colour, race, religion, nationality, language, home circumstances, ability, sexuality, transgender status, maternity needs or social background.

It is not expected or assumed within the school that the staff team would be aware or have an understanding of every need of every student. Understanding, information and awareness are gained through talking and actively listening to students and their families.

Staff should support all children who have experienced any prejudicial abuse, remember that prejudicial abuse itself needs to be understood from the students' perspective and, if necessary, involve the police.

Staff will remember that there is no such thing as a definitive list of correct behaviour or language that can be applied.

Staff will treat all people as individuals and with respect.

3. Staff Training:

All new staff are required to undertake mandatory induction E-learning that covers Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and attend a face-to face course.

All staff are required to have read [Barnardo's EDI Code of Conduct](#).

It is important to address individual understanding in a sensitive manner with the aim of improving the individual's level of awareness.

All staff should ensure that they are equally conversant with the names of all students.

If staff are not aware of a students' cultural needs, family culture or ethnic identity then they should ask that student to tell them about their lifestyle and beliefs. Then respect that student by listening and checking out their meanings in order to ensure they understand correctly what the student is telling them. It is also possible to use other professionals on campus, contact with family and a wide range of available community resources to consider how best to address needs.

Staff members should however, be aware that not all cultural needs, beliefs and values are visible or easily recognisable. Good childcare with any student means striving to get to know them as individuals.

All staff and students are encouraged to understand and embrace diversity; this includes cultural and religious expression.

All staff and students should be aware, or made aware, that any language used either consciously or unconsciously may be offensive to others.

4. Staff Discipline:

As legislated in [The Equality Act 2010](#) and following the [government guidance](#) of the legislation, staff have the right to not experience any discrimination in the workplace due to their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation or transgender status.

All Barnardo's staff have access to support that can be found in [Diversity, Performance and Employees Relations](#) and [Equality & Diversity in Employment](#)

5. Safeguarding:

Staff should guard against myths and stereotypes – both positive and negative. Anxiety about being accused of racist practice should not prevent the necessary action being taken to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare. Careful assessment – based on evidence – of a child’s needs, and a family’s strengths and difficulties, understood in the context of the wider social environment, will help to avoid any distorting effect of these influences on professional judgements. All children, whatever their race or cultural background, must receive the same care and safeguards with regard to abuse and neglect.

Equality and Diversity ensures that individuals are not unfairly discriminated against but it should not be used as an acceptable explanation for child abuse or neglect and is not acceptable grounds for inaction when there are concerns that a child is or may be suffering or likely to suffer harm.

Staff should be aware of, and work with, the strengths and support systems available within families, ethnic groups and communities, which can be built on to help safeguard children and promote their welfare.

6. Student Education:

Young people will be provided with education about sexuality, gender awareness, race, religion and cultural beliefs through various cross-curricular portals.

Students will be given opportunity to discuss their understanding or different beliefs and to share their own. These sessions will be closely supervised by trained staff to prevent possible prejudicial behaviours.

Students should be encouraged to access all opportunities offered in education and subjects should not be ‘stereotyped’. Students should also be able to access all extra-curricular activities and these should not be closed to young people on the basis of gender, race, religious or cultural beliefs.

Students should also be able to access information and education in appropriate settings, for example students may feel uncomfortable discussing certain parts of the sex education curriculum with students of the opposite sex so this should be accounted for in planning these lessons.

7. Student Sanctions:

Sanctions for prejudicial behaviours are outlined in the Meadows School [Behaviour Policy](#).

8. Stereotyping:

It is important that staff members do not presume that all students from ethnic or cultural groups are the same; there are differences within groupings.

There are various stereotypes and prejudices associated with different beliefs and staff should ensure that they are not influenced by these.

Staff should ensure they work with students to see past stereotype and gain an understanding of individual family culture.

9. English as an Additional Language:

Staff should be aware that where English is not the first language for a student and their families they may require additional support.

Students may also have regional accents and/or be used to certain regional dialects which can make it hard for them to understand other dialects/accents. In both cases staff should ensure that the students receive support and should not be discriminated against because of their linguistic background.

Staff should make appropriate allowances to support students in making themselves understood and understanding those around them.

Should it be necessary, material may be translated into the first language and/or a translator provided. Staff should liaise with the students' Local Education Authority in providing these services.

10. Religious Belief:

All students will be encouraged to follow the religion of their choice and their parents/carers will also be consulted about this at the students' admissions meeting or before.

It is important for staff to take into account both the student and parents' wishes in regards to religious observances as there may be differences in what the student would like to observe and what their parents/carers wish them to do.

Staff should try to ensure that both sides meet an agreement regarding this and ensure it is recorded as part of the child's placement plan.

Staff should ensure they make themselves aware of any important religious dates for students and make sure they are given the opportunity to observe the events and are not discriminated against because of this.

This may involve adapting the timetable for the student, parents/carers may wish to request leave for students to attend local religious ceremonies/events or private spaces may be required for prayer and/or contemplation.

Students must be made aware that some religious beliefs may discriminate against others and whilst it is the young person's right to observe these beliefs they may not use them to bully or discriminate against others.

Staff must ensure students are given the appropriate information and educate them regarding equality and diversity.

Staff may need to discuss this issue with parents and carers as well and should ensure they are prepared to do so in a calm and rational manner.

Recognition should be given to a young person's religious in relation to their dress and allowances will be made if necessary.

11. Dietary Needs:

Some people may not be used to the tastes of the food normally served at Meadows School and staff should take this into account, ensuring the students' needs are met. Staff should encourage students to introduce foods/meals from their cultures to enhance the knowledge and experience of their peers and the staff.

There may be certain foods that students are not allowed to eat or that they are not used to. If there are certain foods that they require, these should be identified and purchased for them throughout their time at the school.

Dietary needs should be raised as early as possible, preferably at the admission stage, with the students' parents/carers to identify individual differences and needs.

Students should not 'miss out' as a result of their dietary needs and alternative appropriate provision should be made for them to ensure this.

Separate food preparation equipment may need to be obtained in order to meet dietary requirements i.e. knives, chopping boards etc.

Students may have poor diets when they first come to Meadows due to various issues and it is our responsibility to try and educate them in healthy eating and nutrition. Staff may need to take medical advice regarding this and should work together with parents and carers to ensure that students receive a healthy, varied diet.

Students should not be discriminated against because of their poor eating habits however they should be educated and encouraged to develop appropriate and healthy eating habits. Students may also struggle with mealtimes because of various issues either in their past or because of their own needs, for example they may struggle to eat in noisy or crowded environments or struggle to eat foods of certain textures. Individual issues of this nature should be considered and appropriate measures put in place to support young people.

12. Cultural Needs:

Staff must ensure that they are sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles that vary across different ethnic and cultural groups to ensure that the particular care needs of students from these groups are met.

Staff should also be aware of the broader social factors that serve to discriminate against black and minority ethnic people. Working in a multi-racial and multicultural society, staff must be committed to equality in meeting the needs of all students and families and to understand the effects of racial harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism, as well as cultural misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Some cultures may have beliefs that discriminate against others and staff should be aware of this and be prepared to discuss this with students and possibly their parents and carers.

Students should be made aware that whilst they are entitled to their cultural beliefs and backgrounds it will not be acceptable to use these beliefs to bully or discriminate against others.

13. Gender Identity:

Gender identity describes what gender a person identifies as being, not necessarily the gender that they were born as. Students may experience confusion or doubt about their gender identity. They may have struggled with this since they were young, however, adolescence and puberty can increase the feelings of confusion due to the physical and emotional changes that occur during this time.

Whilst some students may resolve these issues on their own others will need support or guidance regarding this. Staff should ensure that young people can access resources to support them in this and that they are not discriminated against because of this.

Good resources include the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) website www.gires.org.uk and www.mermaidsuk.org.uk.

Students should not have their feelings dismissed or minimised because of a lack of understanding on staff's part and staff should ensure they make themselves aware of the issues surrounding gender identity and reassignment.

If a student decides, with support from appropriate organisations and professionals, that they want to go through the gender reassignment process then staff should ensure that they are supported in this whilst at school. Support required will differ with each student and this should be discussed with the individual student, their parents and carers (where appropriate) and other professionals to ensure that the student is not discriminated against and that their wishes are listened to and wherever possible actioned.

14. Sexuality:

If students are confused about their sexuality, staff should ensure that the student can discuss this with someone they feel comfortable with, either a member of the staff team at Meadows or provide them with opportunities to access external organisations.

15. Additional Information	
Copies of this policy may be obtained from:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Server • The Main School Office
This policy links with the following policies & Documents	Behaviour Policy
Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation & other sources of information are:	Barnardo's EDI Code of Conduct. The Equality Act 2010 government guidance Diversity, Performance and Employees Relations. www.gires.org.uk www.mermaidsuk.org.uk
The lead member of staff is:	Principal