



# Darlinghurst

## ACADEMY

### **Equalities and Inclusion Policy**

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# Equalities and Educational Inclusion Policy

## Introduction

At Darlington Academy we believe passionately in the importance of equality and inclusion for all children and adults and strive to ensure that these values are at the heart of our practices. We celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity within each individual and place positive values on diversity within our community.

The Academy has a wonderfully diverse community and welcomes and values everyone whatever their ability, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or background. As a primary school, we believe we play a vital role in combating discrimination and promoting fairness, justice and equality through our teaching and in the role models we offer.

At Darlington we are committed to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. We aim to provide an education which is sensitive to individual needs and accessible to all children regardless of special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, gender assignment, race, religion and belief or disability. The Academy seeks to promote awareness, understanding and respect for diversity in our world. This is achieved through celebration of special days and festivals, an engagement with awareness-raising events such as Black History Month, e-safety day, Mental Health Day and Anti-Bullying week and the embedding of lessons learned through the achievements of individuals from diverse backgrounds across disciplines and through history.

Darlington Academy is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child. We have high expectations of all our children and strive to ensure that they achieve their potential through engagement with a range of strategies employed to issue challenge at an appropriate level, together with appropriate support to overcome barriers to learning. Children with special educational needs are catered for within their own class and, where useful, may be withdrawn for short periods to work with an adult, individually or in a small group.

Cultural development within the school allows for exploration of our differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It means understanding one another through the value of tolerance and to ensure that we truly embrace our differences. We know that each individual brings with them a diverse set of views, life experiences, religious and cultural differences. Together we learn to respect and value each other's backgrounds. Everyone is culturally and socially accepted – everyone belongs here.

**“Belonging is a sense of being somewhere where you can be confident that you will fit in and where you feel safe in your identity, in this changing world.” NEU**

## Aims

Equality and Inclusion is about making a difference to the lives of the people we teach, treating all people with dignity and respect, and recognising the value of each individual. We are committed to ensuring that our provision meets the varied and individual needs of the children in our school, that our employment practices are fair and promote equality and that we respect the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures.

We work hard to build strong and trusting relationships with our pupils and their families in order to harness their engagement and enjoyment in all aspects of academy life. We recognise that pupils and their family members may experience a range of different needs in their lives and we endeavour to meet these needs by working in close relationships with relevant agencies.

We aim to provide a happy, healthy and safe school by:

- Recognising, reflecting and celebrating the skills, talents, contributions and diversity of all our pupils
- Providing high quality pastoral care, support and guidance
- Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of pupils with linked policies
- Listening and responding to the concerns of children and parents
- Taking care to balance the needs of all members of the school community
- Ensuring all children have access to learning
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable
- Recognising the different learning styles of children, making appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the widest possible opportunity to develop their skills and abilities

We strive to secure inclusive education for our pupils by constantly reviewing and evaluating what we do:

- Does each pupil achieve as much as they can?
- Are there differences in the achievements of different groups of pupils?
- What else can be done for pupils who are not achieving their potential?
- Are our actions effective?
- Are all of our pupils happy to be in school?
- Are all of our staff happy to be in school?

This policy has been developed to

- Provide clear guidance for the future work of the school on matters of equality and educational inclusion issues
- Make sense of the wide range of initiatives that promote inclusion and to enable them to operate within a coherent framework that is explicit about the meaning of inclusion, and the principles that should underpin it
- Bring some cohesion to the different requirements that relate to the groups at risk of social exclusion
- Challenge discrimination and celebrate diversity
- Ensure that incidents of racism, racial harassment, bullying or harassment related to sexual orientation or gender, along with any other equalities issues, are dealt with firmly and sensitively
- Ensure all pupils and staff feel valued and able to contribute fully to all aspects of the school

### **Statement of Principle**

"Educational Inclusion" can be defined as:- "The process by which all those who provide education develop their cultures, policies and practices so as to include all learners. It is a crucial part of strategic planning for improvement. An educationally inclusive school is one in which the learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all learners matter. They are able to engender a sense of community and belonging, and also offer new opportunities to learners who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean that they treat all learners the same way. Rather, it involves taking account of learners' varied life experiences and needs. Educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their ability, age, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, impairment or social or economic background. However, it also goes much further, and is about tackling the

underachievement and exclusion of groups who have been marginalised or disadvantaged in the past, through taking positive action to ensure that they have their rights upheld." Inclusion also relates to the hidden curriculum. At Darlington Academy we aim to be an inclusive school and offer equality of opportunity and diversity when needed to all groups within the academy. Treating people equally can sometimes mean treating them differently. Policies, practices and programmes do not discriminate, but may be differentiated to take account of differences of life experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barriers and disadvantage which people may face in relation including:

- Gender – recognising the different needs
- Sexual identity □ Religion, belief, ethnicity and faith groups - so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- Learners with special educational needs and or disabilities
- Travellers
- Learners who need to be stretched and challenged
- Children "looked after" by the Local Authority
- Sick children
- Young Carers
- Children from families under stress
- Learners at risk of disaffection and exclusion

#### **Who does this Policy apply to?**

Everyone.

#### **Guidance in Implementing the Policy**

- Darlington Academy welcomes applications from the whole community
- Staff who follow up absences will be aware of, and sensitive to, relevant community issues
- There must be an awareness of the rights of staff and learners to provision made for leave of absence for religious observance
- Expectations must be high for all learners in the academy
- Cultural, linguistic or gender bias must be removed from all aspects of school life
- The access needs of all learners should be addressed so that they do not face barriers to learning, particularly in any assessment processes
- Learners should be appropriately supported in assessments so that they are able to show fully both what they know and what they can do, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Specific attention should be paid to identifying and meeting the needs of groups that are particularly disadvantaged
- The academy will publicly support and value diversity, actively promote inclusion and openly oppose all forms of discrimination
- There should be a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between learners and staff from different groups
- Children will be encouraged to share their worries and fears with adults
- Academy discipline must be fair and equitable
- Teaching styles should include collaborative learning so that learners appreciate the value of working together.
- Teaching and support staff should use a range of sensitive teaching strategies when teaching about different cultural traditions
- Learners should have the opportunity to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality, and to make connections with their own life

- All information and material for parents/carers should be made accessible in user friendly language.
- All those involved in recruitment and selection should be aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure good practice throughout the selection and recruitment process
- Any incidents of pupil or staff harassment or bullying will be recorded and analysed on equalities grounds.

**This will be achieved by:**

- Designing a curriculum to promote a full range of learning, thinking and life skills
- Providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum
- Using flexible and responsive teaching and learning styles
- Equipping pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to succeed as responsible and valued members of society
- Developing a close partnership within and with the whole community, particularly parents
- Ensuring all members of our community are valued, can feel secure and are offered opportunities to learn. Structures are in place to support inclusion if they cannot

**Finally**

National research has shown a link between effective inclusion and school improvement. The Academy Governors believe it is vital to tackle underachievement for particular equalities in order to raise standards within the academy. Such a belief is an underlying principle of this document