

Equal Opportunities Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

To be read in conjunction with policies for Disability Non-Discrimination and Special Educational Needs

1) Introduction

1.1 Just Learn's 'Ethos & Aims' statement values the individuality of all of our students. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of students' varied experiences, abilities and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.

This Equal Opportunities Policy extends to adults: staff, parents and carers.

1.2 This policy is in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all previous legislation in relation to equal opportunities. In line with that legislation, it seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with 'protected characteristics', in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

2) Aims and objectives

2.1 We aim not to discriminate against anyone, be they staff, student or parent, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, attainment or background.

2.2 We aim to promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some students differently.

2.3 We seek to ensure that all students have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

2.4 We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups of students.

2.5 We aim to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

2.6 We aim to challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

2.7 We value each student's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school community, and showing respect for all minority groups.

2.8 We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are often caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

3) Racial equality

3.1 At Just Learn we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
- seek to educate pupils in a manner which promotes community cohesion in a multi-cultural society.

3.2 We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures (see policies for Racial Equality and for Behaviour and Discipline)

We endeavour to make our school and its environment welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

3.4 Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups - for example, in the curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children learn the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

4) Disability non-discrimination

4.1 The school is committed to providing an environment that allows all students and adults access to the school premises.

5) Gender equality

5.1 We are committed to seeing all individuals and groups of students making the best progress possible in our school.

5.2 We have put in place a number of measures to raise the achievement of both boys and girls. These may include:

- ensuring that early literacy skills are promoted in all activities in the Foundation Stage;
- ensuring that the starting points for writing activities capture the interests and imagination of boys and girls alike;
- removing gender bias from our resources
- employing a variety of activities;
- making sure that our school environment promotes positive role models, in relation to learning and achievement;
- minimising stereotyping;
- providing challenge, competition and short-term goals;
- valuing and celebrating academic achievement in ways which will motivate both girls and boys.

5.3 If our analysis of students' attainment data indicates areas where girls achieve less well than boys – or vice versa - we will take measures to address this discrepancy. These may include:

- ensuring that individuals do not dominate certain lessons, for example by answering the teacher's questions more readily;
- ensuring that all learning activities are relevant to real life situations and problems;
- beginning lessons by clarifying the learning intentions, and giving the 'big picture';
- minimising female and male stereotyping;
- using praise and celebration of girls' and boys' achievements in those areas where they may traditionally achieve less well than the opposite gender.

5.4 We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to the relative achievement of boys and girls. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group does not do so at the expense of the other.

6) The role of the class teacher

6.1 Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all students are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child.

6.2 When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.

6.3 We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues - for example, in geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.

6.4 All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school log book and draw them to the immediate attention of the Headteacher.

7) The role of the Headteacher

7.1 It is the Head teacher's role to:

- ensure that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;

- promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for students, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life - in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school;
- manage all incidents of unfair treatment – and/or any racist incidents - with due seriousness, and in line with this policy.

8) The role of the board of trustees

8.1 In this policy statement, the board of trustees has set out its commitment to equal opportunities, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

8.2 The board of trustees collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all students are making the best possible progress and that no group of students is underachieving. To do this we monitor:

- progress over time;
- attainment
- attendance;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parents' and students' questionnaires.

8.3 The board of trustees seeks to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010 (see section 1.2 above) are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The board of trustees welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group a child may come from.

8.4 The board of trustees take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

8.5 The board of trustees ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

9) Monitoring and review

9.1 It is the responsibility of our board of trustees to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. They will therefore:

- monitor the progress students from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other students in the school;
- monitor the progress of boys and/or girls, comparing it with the progress made by other students in the school;
- monitor the progress of students from vulnerable groups – including specific SEN cohorts – and compare it with the progress made by other students in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- require the Headteacher to report to board of trustees annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or students regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's behaviour policy and the number of students from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the board of trustees every three years or sooner if it is considered necessary.