Featherstone High School

Equal Opportunities Student Policy

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Equal Opportunities Policy – Students

Introduction

Featherstone High School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for every person within a friendly, caring and stimulating school community regardless of sex (including gender reassignment), disability, age, need, socio-economic background, health, social or employment status, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, religion or belief and heritage. The school acknowledges the value of being in a multicultural and multilingual school and has set itself the task of fostering understanding, fair-minded attitudes and respect for others and to prepare individuals for citizenship as part of a British, European and the world-wide community. Every attempt will be made to ensure that equal and equitable opportunities are reflected in all aspects of school life. Prejudice and discrimination in any form will be addressed and students, parents and staff must report any incident to senior staff where they believe these are being exhibited.

Featherstone High is committed to providing:

- An environment which stimulates and motivates students
- An education that realises the full potential of every individual student
- An atmosphere in which everyone flourishes, achieves and feels valued
- A caring and well disciplined school.

Values and Aims

The values of Featherstone High are grounded on respect for:

- working hard and to the best of ones ability and aptitude
- diversity of achievement in all areas of the school's life
- oneself and each other
- the community and the environment

Our aims related to equal opportunities are as follows:

- to promote equal and equitable opportunities for all
- to enable every student to develop her or his aesthetic, cultural, social and physical talents
- to help students consider carefully key moral, religious and spiritual aspects of life
- to help students become considerate and responsible citizens able to make well-informed choices about their future
- to respect the variety and diversity of the backgrounds, cultures and faiths represented in the school community while at the same time valuing the common culture and heritage of which all are part

These aims form the core principles underpinning this equal opportunities policy.

The Law

Featherstone High School will operate within legal frameworks to ensure that the statutory responsibilities and obligations are met for equal opportunities under the following legislations:

- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1999
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Responsibility for Implementation

Featherstone High School's Head teacher, Chair of Governors and Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and that all staff are aware of it. All staff who work for Featherstone High are responsible for being familiar with this policy and to ensure they implement it effectively and fairly. All staff and students have a personal responsibility to:

- treat people fairly and without prejudice
- value and respect others
- ensure that no one is harassed, victimised or bullied in the workplace in line with this policy
- promote a work environment where everyone feels confident to report incidents,
- which are unfair or personally offensive, and to report such incidents to a senior
- report transgressions of this policy to a senior member of staff
- ensure that no racist incidents take place within the School. (A racist incident is any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim, or any other person).

General Principles

Featherstone High School condemns racism, sexism and negative attitudes towards disability, homophobia and discrimination of any kind. All students will be helped to develop self-esteem and feel valued as individuals. Tutor groups will be formed to reflect the diverse nature of the school population. Students will be given many opportunities to discuss and understand racism, sexism, homophobia as well as other forms of prejudice. It is important that everyone understands the hurt and harm caused by discrimination and prejudice of any kind. Students will be able to contribute to the development of equal opportunities and other school policies through the school council.

Reporting Discrimination and/or Prejudice

Students (and parents) must report incidences as soon as possible to their form tutor or Head of Year. Dealing with discriminatory behaviour, abuse and intimidation is the responsibility of everyone - all students can expect to be listened to and have their complaints investigated. If a student feels her or his complaint has not been properly dealt with s/he may take the matter to the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors. Bullying and harassment of any kind will be dealt with swiftly and may lead to exclusion where any allegation is proven with no extenuating circumstance. Students who have suffered racist, sexist, homophobic or other forms of personal verbal or physical abuse

or intimidation will be supported by the school and anyone who has committed such offences will be appropriately dealt with via procedures outlined in the behaviour policy. Positive attitudes towards gender, cultural diversity and special needs of all kinds will be included in all curriculum and student welfare policy statements, which will encourage all to be open-minded and to challenge prejudice. Featherstone High's performance in equalising opportunities will be monitored, including areas such as the use of resources, examination entries and successes, and school leaver destinations.

Ethnic and Cultural Issues

Students will be encouraged to contribute to their education and the education of others by bringing their cultural experience, values and perceptions to it. Choices of teaching materials will, so far as possible, take account of students' previous experience and knowledge and will recognise multi-cultural perspectives. Attention will be given to the integration of pupils from different ethnic groups in the classroom and throughout the life of the school.

Gender

Both boys and girls will be encouraged to aim high and to utilise all the opportunities available to them in all areas of the curriculum and school life. Careers education will make both girls and boys aware of the full range of opportunities available to them in a modern society.

Physical Disability

Every effort will be made to integrate students with disabilities into the normal life of the school and the classroom. Classroom strategies will be adopted to help students with disabilities. Featherstone High School will continue to improve access for pupils with mobility disabilities.

Socio Economic Backgrounds

It is recognised that students come from a range of social backgrounds and action will be taken to ensure that the school offers materially disadvantaged students opportunities and facilities to compete equally with their peers. Parents will be made aware of financial help and concessions available in cases of hardship.

Intellectual Ability/Disability

Each student will be encouraged to fulfil his/her potential in all areas of the curriculum. All students should experience different teaching and learning styles in order to maximise achievement. Policies, displays, notices, meals, uniform in the school will all reflect the entire student population in terms of ethnicity, heritage, language, gender, sexuality and disability. Positive images of students will be used to illustrate the commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities.

Race Equality

Featherstone High is committed to tackling racial discrimination in all its forms and is determined to promote race equality and good race relations across all areas of school activity. The policies of the school will reflect this commitment.

Concluding Statement

Featherstone High aims to be a fully inclusive comprehensive school that meets the individual needs of all our students. This policy is the framework within which all our policies are developed. It makes explicit the values of the school and seeks to ensure

that all stakeholders are committed to upholding these values. Everyone in the school is of equal value and should have equal opportunities in school and in life. The governing body, the Head Teacher and the staff, recognise their responsibility for making this happen. This means being both flexible and adaptable, and that the school may have to change in order to meet the needs of individual students (or of its staff).

Evaluation

Monitoring and review of progress will take place regularly within the Personnel Committee and Student Welfare Committee

Other relevant policies and procedures

- Managing and Improving Behaviour (procedural document)
- Student Discipline and Behaviour Policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Anti Bullying Policy