

Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, Leeds

Equality Statement

Introduction

Under the Equality Act 2010, we welcome our general duty to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations, and our specific duties to publish information about our school population; to explain how we have due regard for equality and to publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities and reduce or remove them.

Principles

Our school is committed to equality. Therefore:

- We do our best to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- We make sure the school is a safe, secure and stimulating place for everyone.
- We recognise that people have different needs, and we understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same.
- We recognise that extra support is needed for some pupils to help them to achieve and be successful.
- We do our best to make sure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example by talking with pupils and parents and carers, and by means of our School Council.
- There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents.

Systems and strategies, policies and procedures are in place to support these principles. As a result, a recent pupil survey showed that the vast majority of pupils:

- are happy at school;
- feel safe;
- state that they learn a lot;
- think the teaching staff help them to learn a lot;
- state that they learn about good behaviour.

The Role of School

The School has an important role to play in combating ignorance and prejudice. We aim to create an environment in which all staff and pupils, whatever their sexuality or gender, feel equally welcome and valued. This statement underlines our school's commitment to equality, diversity and tolerance, and its challenge to homophobic bullying.

Equality In Relation to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Pupils, Staff and Governors

This school values all its pupils, staff and governors equally, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender assignment.

Recognising the existence of homophobia in society, the school will ensure the following:

- Pupils will not be denied fair and equal treatment because of their sexuality or gender.
- All areas of the curriculum and resources will be closely monitored to see that they do not rely on heterosexist assumptions and that they contain no homophobic material.

Equality Statement for Staff, Pupils and Governors; Equality Act 2010; Duty to Publish Information and Objectives

- Homophobic abuse, harassment and bullying (e.g. name-calling, derogatory jokes, graffiti, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences, and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.
- Staff will not be excluded from employment or promotion because of their sexuality or gender.
- School will provide a supportive environment for staff, pupils or governors who wish it to be known that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning. However, it is the right of the individuals to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexuality in the school. To “out” someone, whether staff, pupil or governor, without their permission is a form of harassment and will be treated as such.
- Assumptions will not be made that partners are always of the opposite sex.
- LGBTQ issues will be included in equality training.
- Monitoring of complaints of homophobic abuse, harassment and bullying will be undertaken at least once a year.
- Staff undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to gender reassignment will receive positive support from the school to meet their particular needs during that period.
- The school recognises that LGBTQ pupils, staff and governors come from diverse backgrounds, and will strive to ensure that they do not face discrimination either on the grounds of their sexual orientation or with regard to other aspects of their identity (e.g. race, age, religion, disability, belief).

Overall, the school aims to create an environment in which all staff, pupils and governor, whatever their sexuality or gender assignment, feel equally welcome and valued, and in which homophobic behaviour is not tolerated.

The school’s key objectives, summarised below, are for all pupils, whatever their sexuality or gender assignment.

- Secure and maintain excellent teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils.
- ‘Narrow the gaps’ in achievement between different groups and national standards.
- Ensure that pupils are free from bullying in all its manifestations, including all types of prejudice-based bullying.
- Deal with unacceptable behaviour and disruptions to learning.
- Build a cohesive school community where all pupils can thrive.

Explanation of Terms

The terms ‘heterosexism’ and ‘homophobia’ are used in this statement in the following sense.

Heterosexism is any negative valuing and discriminatory treatment of individuals and groups who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered or those perceived to be so. It is based on social values which teach that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual. Heterosexism can show itself through practices of institutions and also through the personal behaviour of individuals. These are known respectively as systematic heterosexism and personal heterosexism. Expressions of dislike, hate or fear based on heterosexism are usually known as homophobia, although the terms lesbophobia and biphobia are also coming into use.

The reactions to LGBTQ people can range from indifference to denied personal and professional opportunities, through to harassment and violence. These reactions often leave LGBTQ people feeling excluded and unsafe in a heterosexist environment.