

The Firs Lower School
Equal Opportunities Policy (including Gender Issues)



At the Firs Lower School, Governors and all staff are committed to equality of opportunity whether it is within the classrooms, during job appointments, information sent out by the school or in conversations within the working day. The principles and values set out within this policy document will be upheld and practiced.

1. Each child is encouraged to be proud of his/her gender and cultural and religious background, to develop self-respect and respect for others and to make a positive contribution to our diverse society.
2. Children have equal access to the whole school curriculum, irrespective of race ethnicity, class, ability or sex difference.
3. Staff present a positive image which challenges stereotypes and gives validity to all groups in society. They are prepared to discuss racism, gender issues and bullying.
4. Staff are aware that achievements of many minority groups are often not recognised. Technology, Art, Science and History particularly provide an opportunity to rectify this situation.
5. Teaching styles will encourage children to contribute their own experiences and cultural perspectives to class activities.
6. Resources and displays will reflect our diverse society.
7. Staff will encourage children to have respect for the variety of language used in Britain today and ensure that there is a positive attitude to community languages and dialects.
8. Children will be given opportunities to become aware of the variety of languages used in Britain today.
9. Children have opportunities to understand the concepts of 'stereotypes' 'prejudices' and 'racism'. They will have opportunities to talk about issues of equality and inequality and to be able to recognise bias.
10. Staff development and performance management will reflect issues of equality.
11. Topics from the National Curriculum will reflect, where appropriate the experiences of all children e.g. similarities as well as differences between races.
12. The Governing Body of The Firs Lower School is an equal opportunity employer. They wish to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment because of race, colour, gender, marital status or disability.
13. At the initial contact with parents, staff will establish the special needs of a child, such as dress pertaining to religion and culture, physical disabilities, religious practices, which may affect practices of the school and special dietary requirements.
14. Staff will take opportunities which arise with individual parents to communicate our commitment to equality of opportunity. Similarly feedback from parents is encouraged.

The Firs Lower School
Equal Opportunities Policy (including Gender Issues)

15. The school recognises that it is the responsibility of the whole school community to challenge prejudice and stereotyping that can be shown in behaviour e.g. name calling, use of space in the playground etc.
16. The school's charging and remissions policy reflects the equal opportunities policy.

Specific Gender issues

The Firs Lower School endeavors to develop a happy caring school within which each child, irrespective of gender, can develop and contribute to the whole school community.

The school is committed to gender equality and endeavors to ensure that there are no sexist practices within the school. The process of sex stereotyping leads people to conform to gender roles, which can inhibit their abilities, preferences and aspirations. The effects of sexism impoverish both sexes by limiting horizons and restricting choices. Sexism is incompatible with good educational practice and our commitment to gender equality is a fundamental obligation.

Gender equality issues impinge upon many aspects of work within The Firs Lower School. Our aims in relation to gender equality are to :

- a. Maximise the potential of all the people, both staff and children irrespective of their sex.
- b. Adopt positive approaches to achieve equality of opportunity for both sexes.
- c. Counteract sexism and all discriminatory practices to which it gives rise.

Implementation

- Boys and girls should be positively encouraged to develop non-sexist attitudes about themselves, the opposite sex, and their role in school and society in general. There should be equal opportunities for boys and girls across the whole ability range to benefit from all areas of the curriculum. No area of the curriculum should be perceived as the domain of one particular sex. Particular attention may need to be given to certain curriculum areas to ensure equality of opportunity e.g. science, maths, technology, dance, the home/role play corner in early years etc.
- All after school activities including sports clubs, will be gender free e.g. girls are encouraged to join Saturday football and boys to join Netball club.
- The curriculum will promote positive images of both sexes and avoid stereotypes e.g. in art include the study of female and black artists.
- Assessment procedures should be 'gender fair'.
- Resources including reading books will be reviewed for gender bias before purchase and will reflect the interests of both boys and girls.
- Positive relationships and understanding between sexes will be developed by encouraging children to work together, collaboratively, valuing each other's unique contributions.
- Teachers will be aware that their attitudes can make a significant difference to children expectations and achievements.

Only by giving such issues careful considerations can our school be sure of offering equality of opportunity.