**What is “Equal Opportunity**?”

Equal Opportunities is about ensuring that all children and adults have equality of opportunity in terms of access and outcome throughout all aspects of involvement with Cedar Prime and that their life chances for the present and future are not impeded or distorted by anything that happens during their participation in their involvement with Cedar Prime but are in fact widened to allow them to achieve the whole scope of their potential. It is important to note that equal access does not necessarily lead to equality of outcome.

Equal opportunity recognises and celebrates our similarities and our diversity as individuals and groups. It recognises that all individuals have an intrinsic right to be nurtured in such a way as they are able to reach their full potential.

Equal opportunity accepts that while we all have something of value to contribute, we do not all start on a level playing field. Consequently, some individuals will be disadvantaged in their attempts to reach their potential. We as an organisation will work hard to differentiate and maximise their personal achievement.

Issues of equality are applicable to us all, but there are a number of people about whom Equal Opportunity concerns are often more formally expressed. Such groups are often referred to in terms of race, gender, sex and disability or with reference to their age, class, religion or educational achievement. These terms in themselves may be problematic in that they are social constructs (“man-made”), but they may also have use as frames of reference.

Equal Opportunities covers the whole process of our support and mentoring service but particularly embraces issues of multiculturalism, anti-racism, disability, ethnicity, gender and trans-gender, sexuality, and socio-economic disadvantage. Strategies to combat inequality include those dealing with issues of self- esteem and sense of self-worth, organisation, delivery and provision for those considered to have special educational and or English as an additional language need, underachievement, and building social relationships within the school community. Equal opportunity is about creating the structures and contexts for unlocking potential.

On 1 October 2010 new equality legislation came into force. The Equality Act 2010 has replaced all existing equality legislation, including the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, and Sex Discrimination Act.

This means that three equality duties (Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality) have been replaced by a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force on 6 April 2011.

Under the PSED, our organisation must show due regard to the general duty and its three “components” as well as complying with a set of specifications.

The three components to the PSED are:

a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act

b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant

protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This means the staff are still required to take proactive steps to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Explicit incidents which contribute to inequality include racism, sexism, classicism or any kind of discrimination. Physical violence, verbal abuse, insults, name calling, jokes / ridicule, threats, bullying and graffiti are some of the manifestations of this. Any such undermining of a person’s sense of worth or self-esteem is unacceptable.

CEDAR Prime has a legal duty to implement and monitor an equal opportunities policy, and this is our latest update. Norton Road is proud of its excellent record of harmony, showcased by our zero permanent exclusion and very low general exclusion, bullying and racist incident record.

**The Projects Ethos and Hidden Curriculum**

CEDAR Prime recognise that this overall ethos should contribute to how our children learn from us; that children pick up on the values and expectation we promote. It could be said that children learn as much from the subtle „little things‟ that go on, all the hidden messages that are so powerful. Consequently, we use our project ethos as a means to promote equality and self- worth. We will endeavour to create and maintain a Project ethos which is welcoming, reflective of the diverse multicultural society around us, fosters a sense of well-being, confidence and security; that affirms individual identity and demonstrates respect for each other; that ensures time and space for each individual; that challenges and expands horizons and encourages confidence, independence, co-operation and participation.

In order to achieve this, we will:

Always challenge in an open and frank manner, behaviour and language which threaten the promotion of equal opportunities and take time to discuss with children the negative and damaging effect it has.

Implement praise, reward, criticism and consequences with due consideration for equality. Equal opportunity demands a right to an equal response and outcome to a situation whether the child is a boy or a girl.

Encourage a climate of openness where children feel safe and confident to raise issues of concern to them, bullying, racism, e – safety, taunting etc., and where the project can place a positive influence on discussion and events.

Be sensitive to the needs of all individuals; recognizing each in his or her own right, and without placing labels on individuals or groups of children. This includes a commitment to offer time to each individual and ensure that individual or group needs are met.

Be aware of the power of language as a tool which can promote equality or perpetuate inequality.

Children, too, need to be made aware of their language use and its implications.

**Resources**

Care will be taken with the purchase of new material to ensure resources**,** promote positive images and avoid stereotyping. Please be aware that books, which display sexism, negative images or stereotyping may have a planned, place in our curriculum as a tool for discussion with the children in order to promote a positive understanding of the surrounding issues.

Careful attention will be given to teacher exposition, facilitating discussion and questioning techniques to ensure equal demands are made of both sexes, all ethnic groups and intellectual abilities. Similarly, care will be taken in allocating teacher-spent time amongst all the children in class.

**Assessment recording and monitoring**

Staff share a responsibility for monitoring and effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy and reporting concerns to the project Leader.

**Aims**

To ensure no discrimination takes place during sessions and Project work on the grounds of gender, transgender, or sexual orientation. To create a service in which men and women, boys and girls from all faiths and cultures are valued equally, while their different backgrounds, experiences and needs are respected.

To establish an ethos of equality and adopt strategies to achieve equality of opportunity for both sexes.

**Rationale**

In our society a large number of differences which have been conventionally associated with sex are actually socially constructed and are maintained through social pressure. Sexism is the term used to describe discrimination on the basis of gender; where the operation of forces in society, (beliefs, attitudes and behaviours) can allot benefits and privileges, as well as curb and limit preferences and opportunities, on the basis of a persons’ gender rather than on the basis of inclination or ability. Sexism and gender stereotyping can be offensive and is equally damaging to boys and girls. Conforming to gender roles can inhibit the abilities, performance and aspirations of both boys and girls by restricting their choices.

CEDAR Prime is committed to sexual equality and seeks to counter sexism and gender/ transgender or sexuality stereotyping in order to extend the choices and horizons of all staff and children so that they can discover who they are, what they like doing and achieve their full potential at whatever they attempt.

In order to achieve this we will employ the following strategies:

* Raise awareness amongst the staff of the dangers of gender role stereotyping and of procedures and principles to counter it.
* Encourage all children and young people to extend their horizons and make them aware of all the opportunities available to.
* Be aware of word use, the power of language and its implications; for example ‘police man’.
* Ensure all staff are scene as positive roll models regardless of their gender (or transgender) and / or sexuality.
* Monitor our own practice, beliefs and expectations through self-evaluation.

**Equalities Policy: Anti-Racist Policy**

**Aims**

Provide a support which emphasises respect and understanding of all cultures and religions.

Encourage appositive relationship enables children to develop skills to recognise and challenge inequality. Ensure a consistent approach to tackle racism in all its forms and manage racist incidents.

**Rationale**

Racism refers to the consequence of placing social significance in concepts of race which have as their outcome the disadvantage of individuals and groups.

Racism may be exhibited in many forms including physical assault, derogatory name calling, verbal abuse, insults, jokes, graffiti, provocative behaviour, (including wearing badges or bringing literature to school,) ridicule of an individual for cultural or religious difference and refusal to co-operate with others because of their ethnic origins.

Racism includes all practices and procedures that discriminate against people because of their race, colour, culture, nationality and national or ethnic origins (including religion and language) whether on an individual, institutional or cultural level. Discrimination is defined as action or behaviour which disadvantages a group of people.

Racism can take many forms from direct harassment (e.g. racist name calling or physical bullying) to indirect and institutional racism (e.g. discriminatory admissions criteria and allocation to teaching groups). Racism can occur between any ethnic group.

Racism has a long history affecting millions of people. People are seriously harmed and injured by it. The law recognises the seriousness of racism by requiring that courts should impose higher sentences when an offence is aggravated by racist or religious hostility.

**What is a racist incident?**

A racist incident is defined as ‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’ (Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report 1999). An incident may have occurred either intentionally or accidentally either overtly or covertly.

This definition is deliberately broad. In the past, racist incidents nationally have been under-reported and this definition ensures that any reported incident has the scope to be investigated, without the potential of the racist dimension disappearing unchallenged. A well-intentioned response may well be to excuse the incident by emphasising the lack of explicit intent.

This underplays the feelings of the individual or group on the receiving end and perpetrators must be made of aware of the hurt that they have caused and should not be allowed to be empowered at someone else’s expense.

The distinctive feature of a racist incident is that a person is attacked not as an individual, but as the representative of a family, community or group. This has potentially harmful consequences not just for the immediate individual, but the wider community.

When an incident perceived to be racist is investigated the following should apply the worker should ascertain if there was a racist incident and if necessary should inform the lead project worker, social worker or appropriate professional.

Verbal abuse, threats and name-calling, racist graffiti, racist comments in the course of discussions, physical intimidation, violent attacks because of a person’s colour, ethnicity, nationality or religion, incitement of others to behave in a racist way, refusal to co-operate/work with other young people or staff because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality or religion, or of cultural differences e.g. food, dress, language, names, appearance. Racist jokes (including those circulated on mobile phones and via the internet), damage caused to a person’s property, possession/distribution of racist material, wearing racist badges/insignia.

In order to work towards the elimination for racism, promote a climate of:

respect and understanding and prepare children or young persons for life in an inter-cultural and increasingly global society, we will employ the following strategies:

Place value on different ethnic groups, cultures and languages in our multi racial / cultural society, recognising that culture is central to a child’s identity and foster these cultures and incorporate them into our work.

Ensure that each child is valued as an individual. Regard bilingualism as an asset. Ensure that lack of fluency in English will not be used as an indication of academic potential.

Give equal status to all ethnic groups and hold appropriately high expectations of all children.

Foster a climate where children are confident in reporting and discussing racism.

Avoids racial or cultural stereotypes. Those in classical literature that cannot be avoided should be explained to children and contextualised.

As an organisation we should actively counter discrimination, prejudice and inappropriate behaviour and statements by children whenever they occur.

**Monitoring**

Racist incidents will be logged and monitored for patterns of behaviour. The Project leader will monitor the content of sessions to ensure, where appropriate, it includes opportunities to address issues of equality and has in inter-cultural and global outlook.

**Outcomes**

Staff are confident to deal with racist incidents quickly and sensitively.

Children and young people bring racist incidents to the attention of staff.

Cedar Prime reflects an anti-racist, intercultural and global outlook.

Equal Opportunities Policy - Nov 2023