



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (for Schools and Kindergarten)

AIMS

The aims of this policy are:

- to promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference
- to ensure that every child is included and not disadvantaged
- to ensure that children learn to value diversity in others
- to provide a safe and caring environment, free from discrimination
- to promote freedom from discrimination and to promote equality of access and opportunity for all members of the school community

POLICY STATEMENTS

Equal opportunities underpin the value system of Thomas's. The ethos of the schools and kindergarten is one of tolerance, understanding and striving for excellence in all. All members of Thomas's community are encouraged to understand, appreciate and value the differences between us and to challenge negative labels and attitudes.

Thomas's recognises its responsibility to avoid discrimination and to promote equality for pupils, staff and others using the school facilities.

It is acknowledged that discrimination may be direct or indirect and includes victimisation and harassment. Promotion of equality must exist in our employment procedures and in our dealings with pupils, parents and other members of the community. As such it should be noted that all references to parents and carers throughout all our policies are intended to be entirely gender neutral.

In each of the Thomas's schools and kindergarten there is a named equal opportunity officer who is responsible for ensuring the equality of opportunity. This includes equal opportunity issues for the children, parents and staff, in for example resources, building, admissions and recruitment.

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| • Thomas's Battersea: | Clare Oswald |
| • Thomas's Clapham: | Philip Ward |
| • Thomas's Fulham: | Annette Dobson |
| • Thomas's Kensington: | Jo Ebner |
| • Thomas's Kindergarten: | Maureen Desmond |

PRINCIPLES

Staff

- We shall not discriminate directly or indirectly in the recruitment or employment of staff on grounds of any of the following “Protected Characteristics” as identified in the Equality Act 2010 and its Schedules: disability, ethnicity (including gypsy and traveller groups), gender, gender identity and transgender, faith, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age.
- With regards to disability, we shall make every reasonable adjustment so that a disabled person is not at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.
- We shall not discriminate in relation to terms and conditions, promotions, disciplinary procedures, trainings opportunities and employment practices such as dress code.
- Staff are required, through their behaviour towards each other and towards the children, to foster an awareness of the importance of equal opportunities and respect for others.
- For further information please refer to the Staff Equality Policy in the Staff Handbook.

Pupils

- We will not discriminate directly or indirectly against children seeking admission to the school or kindergarten or with regard to how current pupils are treated, on grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or belief.
- All pupils will have equal access to the curriculum, including the early years’ education. With regard to child with disabilities, this may mean treating them more favourably so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage when compared to children who are not disabled.
- Thomas’s has regard to the SEND Code of Practice and strives to put its recommendations into practice in all aspects of provision.
- Children with special educational needs (ie those who have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provisions to be made for them) have equality of access to the curriculum and have their needs met through inclusion.

Promoting Equality

The schools’ and kindergarten’s aims and ethos will be effectively communicated to all members of the community and our Code of Conduct, policies and procedures will underpin the promotion of equal opportunities. Any incident of discrimination or intolerance will be dealt with promptly and sensitively.

Race

Thomas’s is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to promoting good relations between people of different race and nationality. We will monitor:

- the success of the school/kindergarten in recruiting staff and pupils representative of our society in race and nationality.
- the promotion of race equality through the curriculum.
- attainment levels of pupils from different groups.

The Schools’ and Kindergarten’s Improvement Plans will include a response to such reviews. All racist incidents will be recorded and will be subject to sanctions as set out in each school’s Behaviour Policy.

Disability

The schools and kindergarten are committed to promoting equality of opportunity between disabled and other people.

A disability is defined by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. To be disabled, a person must fulfil each and every criterion listed in this definition. A disabled person is a person with a disability.

While Thomas's physical facilities for the disabled are limited, we will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to children who have disabilities and to comply with our legal and moral responsibilities under 'The Equality Act' (2010) and the 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice' (2014) in order to accommodate the needs of applicants, pupils and members of the staff who have disabilities for which, after reasonable adjustments, we can cater adequately.

In line with the 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice' (2014) Thomas's will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with disabilities are not disadvantaged in their access to:

- the physical environment to Thomas's
- the programme of learning and development offered
- the information provided to children and parents
- high aspirations and outcomes

The Curriculum

The curriculum must demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities

As a schools group we undertake to:

- have regard to the outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' held within the Children Act 2004 i.e. being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing
- have regard to the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years' (2017) and 'Development Matters' (2012)
- encourage everyone to value the contributions of others regardless of cultural and religious differences
- provide opportunities for all members of the school community to understand roles in society free from prejudice based on race, gender and religion
- provide the children with the opportunity to experience aspects of different cultures at first hand
- promote the needs and rights of others
- encourage the development of personal, social and professional relationships
- acknowledge individuals' rights and roles in the world of work and the work environment
- to provide equal educational opportunity regardless of physical ability
- fulfil our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010

The curriculum will achieve these aims by:

- using positive images to combat negative stereotypes.
- being aware of different types of learning and developing and encouraging different teaching methods to take account of these.
- ensuring that children with special needs have access to the curriculum through the implementation of the special needs policy.
- screening the reading and audio-visual resources to ensure that positive images of women, people of different races and cultural backgrounds and people with disabilities are promoted.
- using assemblies as a forum where the children are encouraged to acknowledge and celebrate individual differences.
- staging events and visits with the aim of promotion equal opportunities using display materials which promote the positive contribution of women to society, racial equality, cultural diversity and awareness of disability.
- involving pupils, staff and parents in welcoming the cultural and ethnic diversity of our community.

Parents

We shall ensure that parents are informed of the principles and philosophies that lie behind our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Parents will be made to feel welcome and all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure physical access to the schools and kindergarten.

Through the Code of Conduct and in all dealings with parents, the schools will demonstrate and encourage respect.

If a parent or carer believes that our practices or procedures are not meeting the aims of this policy or that they or their children have been treated less favourably because of their ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, disability or special educated needs they may make a formal complaint under our complaints procedure. This is a whole school policy, which also applies to Early Years.

In this and in all our policies it should be noted that any reference to a “parent” applies not only to a pupil’s birth parents, but to adoptive, step or foster parents, or other persons who have parental responsibility for or care of a pupil.

REFERENCES

This Policy has been informed by:

DfE ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years’ (2017)

DfE Statutory guidance ‘SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years’ (January 2015)

Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance ‘What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools’ (2014)

DfE Departmental advice ‘The Equality Act 2010 and Schools’ (May 2014)

HM Gov ‘Every Child Matters’ (2004)

See also: Admissions Policy, Race Equality Policy, SEND Policy, SENDA Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually			
Created: December 2008	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal	
Latest Review: April 2019	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal, Equal Opportunities Officers	Minor changes
Next Review: April 2020	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal	