

**Darwen Vale High School
And
Engineering College**



Equal Opportunities Policy

Darwen Vale High School and Engineering College **Equal Opportunities Policy.**

Rationale:

To ensure equality of opportunity for all who work or play within Darwen Vale High School community.

Principle:

We aim, within Darwen Vale to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices – in particular those relating to gender – do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

What is gender?

Gender is the expected social role which a person takes on as a result of cultural influences. It is learned through socialisation rather than the effect of biology.

The Need for a Gender Policy:

The influences which affect the acquisition of gender role are many and varied and many of these are beyond the influences of the school. However it has been shown repeatedly that gender expectations do affect children's performance in school and ultimately their adult work opportunities.

Many of the influences which the school imparts may appear trivial on their own and are often the subject of trivial comments. However, taken as a whole, they can have a huge influence on children's expectations for themselves and for others. In devising a school gender policy and the action to ensure its implementation it is necessary that we avoid introducing any influences which encourage stereotypical gender differences into the life of the school.

Daily Organisation of the school:

The daily organisation of the school can unwittingly reinforce gender stereotypes and to counter this the following Action is to be taken:

All staff, including non-teaching staff, should endeavour to avoid any organisational procedures which involve gender differentiation as this may appear to legitimise this in the eyes of the children. With this in mind:-

- there should be no lining up of separate gender lines to move around the school or in assembly;
- all school lists should be alphabetical with no separation by gender;
- all space, facilities (except toilets) and equipment in the school should be available to both boys and girls;
- in the allocation of class and school monitor duties there should no gender differentiation (except for access to toilets);
- staff should be aware that their actions can reinforce gender expectations, e. g. a male to "sort out the computer" or female to "mend a torn coat";
- both male and female teachers to lead assemblies so that both provide role models as "authority figures".

Classroom Organisation and Interaction:

Within their own classrooms, teachers should be cognisant of the numerous ways in which they contribute to children's perceptions of gender role. They should be alert to these possibilities and be able to stand back and review their practice. In doing so they should consider the following courses of Action:

- note to be taken of seating arrangements and whether they should be adjusted to counter gender bias;
- the allocation of children to groups for practical activities should be without gender bias;
- ensuring that rotas for classroom duties to not show gender bias;
- having the same behavioural expectations for both sexes, both in presentation of work and the manner in which they act;
- ensure conscious avoidance of the proven tendency of teachers of either sex to ask boys to answer more than girls;

As a school we ensure that local authority guidelines for Equal Opportunity are incorporated into our secondary practice. Certain strategies are employed to ensure that the cross-curricular dimension of equal opportunity permeates all of the life and work of the school.

Children of both sexes have equal opportunity within and equal access to all areas of the whole school curriculum. This includes both the Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets for the National Curriculum subjects; other subject areas currently outside the National Curriculum and areas such as extra-curricular activities. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.

- Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of gender bias in both our teaching and learning materials and our teaching styles
- Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid sexual stereotypes and gender bias
- Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to boys and girls
- All children are encouraged to work and play freely with others of both sexes
- Opportunities are given for children to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of both sexes where possible

Teaching and other groupings, such as dinner queues, assembly seating, lines for dismissal, classroom seating and playground areas are organised on the basis of criteria other than gender, for example, age, ability, friendship.

Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and children.

- Discipline procedures – notably rewards and sanctions – are the same for both sexes
- Our school uniform policy reflects equality of opportunity for all children
- Children and all staff are encouraged to value each other and build up and maintain cooperative working relationships both within school and in the community, such relationships being based on mutual respect for each other

Any differences involving gender which arise inside or outside the classroom are dealt with sensitively and are discussed with the children.

All teaching and non-teaching posts are not sex-specific. Both men and women are encouraged to teach all age groups and each Key Stage. All staff have equal access to in-service training and posts of responsibility.

Practices and approaches involving equal opportunity in terms of gender issues are regularly reviewed by all members of staff.