



COOKSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Community Relations Equality & Diversity (CRED) Policy

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Rationale:

Cookstown High School is a safe environment that is dedicated to the holistic development of the individual. Our school community embraces a culture that is inclusive of all and nurtures respect and equality. Cookstown High School is a proactive, open welcoming school that is driven by a flexible approach to Community Relations. We work to challenge bias and promote the values of equity, diversity and inclusive education while remaining true to our mission to promoting and providing excellence, opportunity and support.

Statement of Ethos:

As a school founded upon Christian principles, we believe in and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual and encourage all members of our community to show respect for all.

We seek the development of Character through Knowledge believing each individual has a duty to build a community, to strive to do their best, to show compassion for those in need, and to take responsibility for their own words and actions.

Cookstown High School seeks to develop young people who are independent learners and active citizens.

Definitions:

Equity is the understanding of what we must do to ensure that each person, regardless of their background or their circumstances, is provided the opportunity for success as learners, workers and citizens. It is a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Diversity is essentially the recognition and celebration of the richness that comes from the many differences amongst our community in Cookstown High School. It is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

Inclusivity is the ultimate goal in our school and in society, it incorporates and builds upon diversity and equity. Inclusivity has a great deal to do with how each person feels. People not only feel valued and equal as individuals but also together, as a collective in the class, school and community that is made up of each individual. When each person feels included, it creates a sense of belonging, safety and happiness. Inclusion fosters well-being. Inclusive Education is based on the principle of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

School Aims:

1. To develop the full potential of each pupil by promoting a sense of personal achievement and enjoyment in the pursuit of academic and vocational excellence.
2. To enable pupils to gain qualifications relevant to further education, employment and adult life in a rapidly changing world.
3. To create a caring school community in which staff and pupils live and work together in mutual respect and in which the personal problems of individuals receive a sympathetic and understanding hearing.
4. To set high expectations for learning, behaviour and dress code.
5. To help pupils acquire self-discipline, self-respect, self-confidence and a wide range of knowledge and skills.
6. To help pupils communicate by effective use of language, written, spoken and electronic.
7. To create an awareness and develop an understanding and tolerance of other ways of life.
8. To help pupils, through their studies, to an aesthetic appreciation of human achievements in the Arts and Sciences and to encourage exploration of their own personal creativity.
9. To help pupils appreciate the importance of physical and intellectual pursuits outside the classroom.

In keeping with the ethos and aims of Cookstown High School we:

Safety - aim to promote the emotional well being and secure the physical safety of each individual within our school.

Respect - will nurture respect for ourselves and others within our school and the wider community.

Inclusive - will strive to make our school a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive environment for all.

Empathy - will promote an environment of empathy by fostering a culture of support, care and understanding.

Holistic - will promote a holistic approach to education which encompasses the emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual needs of the individual.

Objectives:

- We do not discriminate against anyone, staff or pupil, on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origins.
- We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through our ethos and the education that we provide in Cookstown High School.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of discrimination that may form barriers to learning.
- We ensure that all pupils have access to pathways which allow for an appropriate range of educational opportunities offered by the school.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.
- We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.
- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Therefore, through positive educational experiences and support for each individual we try to ensure the effects of both are minimised.

EQUITY

We work to engage people from all sections of society and promote equality of opportunity to engage in economic, political and social life through redressing inequalities that arise through negative experiences and disadvantage. We ensure that everyone who comes into contact with the school community is treated fairly as an individual and as part of any group or organisation to which they belong.

DIVERSITY

We acknowledge and celebrate the differences between individual human beings and groups of people. We recognise that these differences improve and enhance the quality of personal, community and societal lives and should be valued, explored and understood.

INTERDEPENDENCE

We recognise that all people and groups of people are shaped by the relationships they hold with themselves and others. Our potential as human beings and as a society is dependent on the quality of our relationships with one another and these are to be nurtured and given space to flourish.

CHALLENGING BIAS

We actively address and challenge prejudice, discrimination, exclusion and violence. We recognise the obstacles to actively challenging bias and seek to overcome these by adopting non-judgemental and honest approaches, which hold the individual or school community in regard at all times. Our work is rooted in the values of restorative practices.

THE RIGHT OF EVERY HUMAN TO LEARN AND GROW

We view the right of every human to learn and grow as being at the heart of our approach to Community Relations education. Our approaches and practice empower participants and colleagues to acquire or modify knowledge, behaviours, skills and values through interactive, experiential peer-led learning experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities:

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNORS

- The governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities for all in Cookstown High School within this policy statement. The governors will continue to ensure that everyone in our school community is treated equally and fairly.
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs in Cookstown High School. In partnership with the local Education and Library Board, the governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities.
- The governing body will, in its annual report, make reference to arrangements for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- The governing body will regularly monitor our admissions to ensure that we are accessible and welcoming to young people and families from all backgrounds.
- The governing body welcomes all applications to be enrolled in the school, whatever background or Special Educational Need a child may have.
- The governing body works to ensure that no child or adult is discriminated against whilst in Cookstown High School on account of their sex, religion or race, taking account of its remit to ensure sufficient and effective use of resources.
- The governing body values good relations and will provide all staff with the support and opportunities for personal and professional development within the field of good relations.

THE ROLE OF THE HEADMASTER

- To implement the Community Relations In Schools policy on behalf of the governing body.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Community Relations In Schools, and that the guidelines are applied fairly in all situations.
- To ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- To promote Community Relations In Schools when developing the curriculum.
- To treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness.

THE ROLE OF THE STAFF

We value the role and contribution that all staff make to the life of the Cookstown High School community. All members of staff will:

- Promote and model respect, equality and fairness in all aspects of their work.
- Foster a warm, open, safe and challenging environment, enabling young people to form and express their views, values and opinions.
- Work together to intervene in a proactive way against any incident of discrimination. Individuals will also be held accountable in accordance with our positive behaviour policy and procedures.
- Ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect.
- When selecting class materials, pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and not provide material that is overtly racist or sexist in nature.
- Where appropriate, strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups.

- When designing schemes of work, endeavour to use this policy to guide them, both in their choice of topics to study, and in how to approach sensitive issues.
- Challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism.
- Support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any incident of discrimination.
- Ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational, extra-curricular and residential opportunities offered by the school. This will be supported by:
 - ✓ Integration
 - ✓ Individual Education Plan's
 - ✓ Continuous Review and Evaluation
 - ✓ Intensive Support for young people with Specific Needs

All the above is subject to the efficient use of the school's resources.

THE ROLE OF PUPILS

In Cookstown High School, we expect pupils to:

- 🏰 Ensure that all other pupils and staff are treated fairly and with respect.
- 🏰 Pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the school community and not make comments or enter into conversations that are racist or sexist in nature.
- 🏰 Allow other pupils and staff to form and express their views, values and opinions.
- 🏰 Not discriminate against anyone, staff or pupil, on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origins.
- 🏰 Celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and have respect for all minority groups within it.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS

We welcome, encourage and value the role, involvement and input of parents and guardians in all aspects of the school community. We will work to ensure that all information and policies are available in various mediums to include ability, language and accessibility. This will be done subject to the efficient use of the school's resources.

Process

IN LINE WITH OUR LEARNING AND TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES

- 🏰 We will deliver the Northern Ireland Curriculum in a holistic manner which promotes the spiritual, moral, intellectual and emotional development of each pupil.
- 🏰 We will endeavour to provide a multi cultural education that is planned and delivered as part of our curriculum provision. This will be delivered in an age and stage appropriate manner.
- 🏰 We will continue to develop and engage in proactive cross community and personal development programmes that enable individuals to explore their own identity and that of others.
- 🏰 We recognise that flags and symbols have been, are and will continue to be a contentious issue within Northern Ireland. In Cookstown High School we recognise our role in promoting an environment where flags and symbols are explored in a safe and age appropriate manner.

COMMUNITY

- 🏰 We value our role and that of others within the wider community and we will continue to engage in and promote good relations.
- 🏰 We will positively challenge stereotyping and prejudice in an encouraging way that promotes the value of self and others.
- 🏰 We welcome and value parents, young people and staff within the school community regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, age, ability and nationality.
- 🏰 We value our school as a community venue and therefore welcome its use by the community. All groups who wish to utilise the school must adhere to relevant school and EA policies.

Equality

To promote the knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes necessary for equality and the elimination of discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, the school will:

- 🏰 Use opportunities within the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and assemblies to promote positive attitudes towards culture, ethnic diversity, special needs and differences generally.
- 🏰 Provide opportunities within the curriculum appropriate to pupils' age and attainment, for pupils to understand and recognise racist / sectarian behaviour and to challenge the myths and legends that underpin both.
- 🏰 Ensure that learning resources are not used in a way which reproduce or reinforce negative stereotyping.
- 🏰 Make use of the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and assemblies to positively affirm the cultural and religious identities of all pupils, including those from minority ethnic and faith communities.
- 🏰 Regularly monitor the curriculum to ensure that these learning opportunities are in place.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Current Activities in Cookstown High School which are developing community relations:

School Council

Links with Holy Trinity College

School Aid Romania

International awareness (international coordinator)

Work with the Ulster Scots Agency & School of Piping and Drumming