

# Community cohesion policy

Retford Oaks Academy

September 2023

## Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Promoting community cohesion .....	4
3	Teaching, learning and curriculum .....	5
4	Equity and excellence .....	5
5	Engagement and ethos.....	6

# 1 Introduction

Our schools continue to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students and of society and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

As migration and economic change and the impact of the global pandemic alter the shape and cultural diversity of our local communities, it is more important than ever that schools play a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our schools are thriving, cohesive communities, but we also have a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Every school - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. The staff and student populations of some schools reflect this diversity, allowing students to mix with those from different backgrounds.

In some respects our family of schools do not reflect these variations and we may need to make links with other schools and organisations in order to give students the opportunity to mix with and learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds. This is also a key area of work for our Personal Development Days.

Through our shared ethos and curriculum we can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing students how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We believe that it is the duty of all schools to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.

Community cohesion means working towards a society in which:

- there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities
- the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued
- similar life opportunities are available to all
- strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

For schools, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- school community – the students it serves, their families and staff;
- family of schools community – the students from all our family of schools, their families and staff
- community within which the school is located – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;

- community of Britain - all schools are by definition part of this community;
- global community – formed by EU and international links.

In addition, schools themselves create communities – for example, the networks formed by schools of the same or different faiths.

## **2 Promoting community cohesion**

All schools, whatever the mix of students they serve, are responsible for equipping those students to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds.

For some schools with diverse pupil populations, existing activities and work aimed at supporting students from different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other, will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For other schools where the pupil population is less diverse or predominantly of one faith, socio-economic or ethnic group more will need to be done to provide opportunities for interaction between students from different backgrounds.

Just as each school is different, each school's contribution to community cohesion will be different and will need to develop by reflecting:

- The nature of the school's population – whether it serves students drawn predominantly from one or a small number of faiths, ethnic or socio-economic groups or from a broader cross-section of the population, or whether it selects by ability from across a wider area.
- The location of the school – for instance whether it serves a rural or urban area and the level of ethnic, faith and socio-economic diversity in that area.

Broadly, schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach students to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- Engagement and ethos – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

We need to consider what activities already take place within the school and what might be arranged in cooperation with other schools.

In addition, schools will want to consider the duty to promote well-being as some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards the Every Child Matters outcomes of 'making a positive contribution', 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieving economic well-being'.

### **3 Teaching, learning and curriculum**

Our teaching, learning and curriculum provision will support high standards of attainment, promote common values and build students' understanding of the diversity, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

We need to ensure:

- Lessons across the curriculum promote common values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for students to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- A programme of curriculum based activities where students' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of students in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.

### **4 Equity and excellence**

We will continue to focus on securing high standards of attainment for all students from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that students are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The school tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

We will continue to monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment.

Monitoring of whether students from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

## **5 Engagement and ethos**

### **School to school:**

We shall continue to develop the effective partnerships with our family of schools while creating new partnerships with other schools. Utilising technology to develop the relationships with schools further afield

Sharing facilities will provide a means for students to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport, music, art, literacy and drama.

### **School to parents and the community:**

Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with the students, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- Provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours, including adult and family learning, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.