



Ashfield Girls' High School



“Each different. Each talented. All valued.”

Equality and Inclusion Policy



Author(s)	Mrs L Hanvey - Principal
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Executive Summary

Each different. Each talented. All valued.

Ashfield Girls' High School is committed to equality and inclusion.

We recognise the value of diverse environments and strive to promote a culture in which all pupils, staff and members of the school community are welcomed and supported to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background or personal characteristics.

We are committed to an ethos and culture of inclusion in our school for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, disability, SEN status, gender, gender identity (e.g. transgender) and/or sexual orientation (LGBTQ+).

Ashfield Girls' High School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of all our children and young people and where all members of our school community are of equal worth. We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength that enriches our lives. We take account of differences and strive to remove any barriers to learning and development.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and bullying and harassment. As a school community, we recognise the need to champion equality and ensure inclusion for all pupils in the full life of our school; where appropriate making necessary adjustments to enable everyone's participation. The school recognises that this can only be achieved by creating an atmosphere where every pupil wishes to attend school and does attend school because they feel valued and secure. This policy is one of a number of interrelated policies which are concerned with pupils being included in their education.

Ashfield Girls' High School believes that education (both formal and informal learning) is fundamental to equality of opportunity. It prepares young people for life and is a powerful influence on access to and advancement in employment. All young people should be able to learn and develop fully in a truly diverse and inclusive environment.

All our policies and practices are fully inclusive and supportive of a welcoming culture for all communities; this is evidenced in our practices and procedures.



Section A (Aims of the Policy)

The aim of Ashfield Girls' High School is to provide each pupil with a secure and supportive learning environment for a programme of education which meets her individual needs, and which brings her success and fulfilment in her school life and prepares her for life beyond school. In seeking to fulfil this aim, the school will endeavour to:

- Create an information-rich environment where each pupil may reach her full potential
- Provide a pastoral care system which gives support and guidance at all times
- Promote self-confidence, self-respect, self-discipline, self-motivation, initiative and positive attitudes
- Promote strategies which enable pupils to develop a language for life and learning
- Provide a curriculum which affords opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills which promotes intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, spiritual and moral growth
- Provide guidance which will prepare pupils for the challenges of changing patterns of work and leisure
- Forge strong links with outside agencies and with the local community which it serves

The aims of the policy will be to:

- Ensure that learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination
- Educate children and young people to live and participate in a changing world, so that they value and respect difference and engage positively with it, taking account of the ongoing intercommunity divisions arising from conflict and increasing diversity within our society
- Equip children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to develop mutual understanding and recognition of, and respect for, difference.
- Outcomes
- Encourage staff to showcase best practices and support and encourage the sharing of skills across and between the formal and non-formal sectors;
- Develop Understanding and respect the rights, equality and diversity (including linguistic diversity) of all section 75 groups
- Develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and engage positively with it
- Demonstrate its relevance and connectedness to improving outcomes for children and young people, and link to other education and wider Government policies, including its contribution to strengthening the economy by reducing the economic cost of sectarianism and civil unrest and through a more peaceful society, encouraging investment
- Recognise the collaboration and partnership that already exists, including between school, youth groups, colleges and training organisations, and build on this in a way that meets the needs of young people



Section B (Legislative Context and Linked Policies)

- The Northern Ireland Act 1998
 - Special Education Needs and Disability Order 2005
 - The Equality Act (Northern Ireland) 2010
 - Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland) 1995
 - The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
 - The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003
 - The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
 - The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978
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- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017 updated 2019)
 - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)
 - Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)
 - Department of Education: Good behaviour at school.
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
 - The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Ashfield Girls' High School does not consider the Equality and Inclusion as a stand-alone policy document. This policy links with the other school policies such as:

Special Educational Needs Policy
Pupil Wellbeing Policy
Pupil Voice Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Literacy Policy
Numeracy Policy
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy



Section C (Policy and Procedures)

The school recognises that this can only be achieved by creating an atmosphere where every pupil wishes to attend school and does attend school because they feel valued and secure. This policy is one of several interrelated policies which are concerned with pupils being included in their education.

Ashfield Girls' High School promotes equality and inclusion within our school through the following activities:

- Having an Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Recognising that prejudice and fear are potential barriers to learning, and that the need for young people to overcome those prejudices is intrinsically linked to 'every learner fulfilling his or her full potential',
- Examining all relevant policies for inclusivity, equality and diversity
- Explaining clearly our values and school ethos
- Setting clear expectations about acceptable behaviour
- Teaching young people about the effect that behaviours and language have on other people
- Training all our staff in diversity and inclusion
- Having an inviting and inclusive reception area
- Having an accessible building that allows access to everyone
- Having signage, displays and resources reflecting all languages and cultures throughout the school
- Organising activities that encourage links with people of different backgrounds
- Making every effort to ensure that the workforce represents the diversity of people in the community
- Promoting activities that value the commonalities and differences among people
- Encouraging all our people, both young people and staff to have a natural and respectful curiosity for others
- Using effective strategies for intervening in conflict situations that involve issues of identity or background
- Teaching collaborative problem-solving techniques
- Encouraging young people to talk about difference without making judgements
- Looking for evidence of high expectations from all staff and young people
- Providing opportunities for pupils to maintain home language skills
- Providing opportunities for all to learn about one's own culture
- Providing opportunities for all to learn about other cultures and have evidence of the range of cultures the young people explore
- Providing workshops / training for staff to deepen knowledge of different cultures, social conventions, languages, accessibility and diversity
- Providing opportunities for parents to learn about the local area



- Providing information for parents on how the school is promoting equality/inclusion
- Providing opportunities for members of different cultural groups to become involved in the school, I.e. through Parents and Friends of Ashfield Girls'.
- Supporting the development of children and young people's self-esteem and their knowledge of equality and diversity through the revised curriculum and the youth curriculum in a way that encourages progression
- Involving children and young people in planning and evaluating the effectiveness of programmes in a way which is representative of the school or youth group and of society in general
- Encouraging the concept of active learning which is underpinned by the formal and non-formal curriculum
- Considering mechanisms for engaging those marginalised young people who are not in formal or informal education through outreach work
- Following development planning and self-evaluation processes are directly linked to the needs of the setting and wider society
- The Equality and Inclusion policy will support the delivery of the curriculum by ensuring educators have the skills and experience to deliver curricular requirements, learn from good practice and provide opportunities for children and young people to put learning into practice
- Working with outside agencies to seek advice and support

The school has a robust and transparent Complaints procedure. If a complaint is made regarding equality or inclusion, the Complaints process will be applied. Access to the Complaints procedure can be found on the schools website at

<https://www.ashfieldgirls.org/policies.htm>



Section D (Roles and Responsibilities)

The Board of Governors are responsible for:

‘Promote equality, good relations and diversity and to comply with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school’ *‘Every school a good school – the governors role’* (Department of Education NI, August 2019)

Having overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality and diversity in our school.

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to comply with equality legislation
- ensuring the school implements policies and practices in line with the principles of equality and inclusion
- following the relevant procedures and taking action in cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying
- ensuring appropriate training and awareness raising is undertaken with staff
- ensuring that appropriate records are kept of any cases of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- putting the school’s equality and inclusion policies and codes into practice
- making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive the support and training necessary to carry them out
- following the relevant procedures and taking action where necessary

The Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Teams (led by the Designated Teacher) will manage the implementation of the policy in partnership with the Principal.

All School Staff (teaching and non-teaching) have a responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and will contribute to an inclusive and welcoming environment within the school.

Pupils/pupils are responsible for:

- respecting others in their language and actions;
- following the relevant school policies and codes of conduct in line with the principles of equality and inclusion.



Section E (Consultation, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy)

The policy will be monitored via a range of methods:

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, parents, staff and governors.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Equality and Inclusion Policy.

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- be updated regularly on any regulation changes, respective of qualifications
- identify trends and priorities for action
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at ensuring equal and inclusive opportunities.

The Equality and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed by all stakeholders, if required, updated:

- following any incident which highlight the need for such a review.
- when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance
- at two-year intervals (as identified on the front cover of this policy)



Appendix

Newcomer Support

What is meant by the term Newcomers?

For the purpose of clarity, when referring to particular members of the school community at which this policy is aimed, pupils for whom English is not the primary language spoken at home and who have been in the UK for less than three years will be referred to as Newcomers. In particular, this policy focuses on those pupils who may arrive to Ashfield with little or no English.

Welcoming Newcomers

New pupils with little or no English should be invited, with their parents, to a first contact meeting. At the 'first contact' meeting the following staff should attend:

Vice Principal and Head of Progress along with an interpreter (if needed).

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Discuss expectations or concerns the parents/pupil might have about their new school and in particular the new system of education they will be entering. Differences in school system, classroom environment, routine, examinations, meals etc. will all need to be clarified.
- Provide the pupil and parents with the school welcome book, including map of the school, important organisational information and pictures of the key staff involved in supporting the pupil initially. Talk through the book to clarify understanding of school routine.
- Gather important information about previous education and relevant admissions details, including any relevant pastoral issues. With the help of the interpreter, the usual admission/ medical/ permission forms can be completed before the parents leave.
- Ensure that information is shared with relevant teaching staff.



When a pupil with little or no English arrives for her first day at Ashfield, she will be greeted by her Head of Progress and shown around the school. The pupil will 'buddied' with someone in her class to help provide reassurance and provide company for break and lunch (where possible, this will be from someone of a similar cultural background).

The pupil will be made aware of the support they will get and how the pupil can access this, for example, where the member of staff can be found.

Newcomers will be assessed using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The Newcomer Tutor (who may be an external member of staff employed specifically as a language tutor) should ensure that pupils are provided with appropriate tuition and support to achieve the following (when and where appropriate):

- Basic 'survival' language skills to cope in the school environment;
- Improvement in overall competence in understanding and use of the English language, indicated through the successful completion of examinations;
- The successful completion of GCSE examinations in their first language if available from examining board.
- CEFR monitor forms to be completed by Newcomer Tutor at the end of the year and passed on to relevant staff.
- Further timetabling of pupils for Newcomer tuition to be organised by the Vice Principal and relevant staff informed of lessons/subjects to be adjusted.
- Heads of Progress to arrange interpreters for Parent Consultations / pastoral issues.

Supporting Newcomers in the Classroom

Teaching staff should refer to "The European Languages Framework and Cross-Curricular planning". This gives guidance on how to support Newcomers in the classroom and provides examples of appropriate tasks.

The following key points should be evident in classrooms:

- Use of a language diary/keywords book – new subject-specific words should be noted and learned. The pupil might also find it helpful to translate the new words into their first language using a bilingual dictionary which will need to be provided by themselves and which can then be used during exams within the first two years of arrival.
- Pre-reading/teaching – the pupil should be given the opportunity to read the text that will be used for a particular topic before it is taught.
- 'Newcomer friendly' teaching methods, such as pictorial instructions, clear and straightforward learning outcomes, and customised tasks.
- Staff must not insist on a Newcomer pupil taking part in oral activities as part of the immersion period is passive learning and demands huge effort on the part of the pupils. This period can take a year.



Supporting Newcomers Wellbeing

Pastoral support will essentially follow the same approach and structure as per other pupils in the school community. However, some culture-specific issues may have been highlighted at the 'first contact' meeting and will need to be communicated to and monitored by the pastoral team.

Form teachers should try to make the form room and form time as welcoming and inclusive as possible.

Some suggestions are as follows:

- creation of a 'circle of friends' (similar to the 'buddy' scheme);
- celebration and/or exploration of cultural events/traditions, eg. Chinese New Year, Polish Christmas decorations
- enabling pupil to share information about their 'mother' country or previous hobbies/interests

The exact nature of the facilitation of suggestions noted above depends on the circumstances and language ability of the pupil concerned.

Should any problems or distress be detected during form time or elsewhere, they need to be communicated to the relevant members of the pastoral team, as soon as possible.



Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

<https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>

Overall oral comprehension

	Overall oral comprehension
C2	Can understand with ease virtually any kind of language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast natural speed.
C1	Can understand enough to follow extended discourse on abstract and complex topics beyond their own field, though they may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the variety is unfamiliar. Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. Can follow extended discourse even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.
B2	Can understand standard language or a familiar variety, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme [auditory/visual] background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influence the ability to understand. Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex discourse on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in standard language or a familiar variety, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. Can follow extended discourse and complex lines of argument, provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the argument is signposted by explicit markers.
B1	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job-related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided people articulate clearly in a generally familiar variety. Can understand the main points made in clear standard language or a familiar variety on familiar matters regularly encountered at work, school, leisure, etc., including short narratives.
A2	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type, provided people articulate clearly and slowly. Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment), provided people articulate clearly and slowly.
A1	Can follow language which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for them to assimilate meaning. Can recognise concrete information (e.g. places and times) on familiar topics encountered in everyday life, provided it is delivered slowly and clearly.
Pre-A1	Can understand short, very simple questions and statements, provided they are delivered slowly and clearly and accompanied by visuals or manual gestures to support understanding and repeated if necessary. Can recognise everyday, familiar words/signs, provided they are delivered clearly and slowly in a clearly defined, familiar everyday context. Can recognise numbers, prices, dates and days of the week, provided they are delivered slowly and clearly in a defined, familiar everyday context.



Challenging girls today; creating women of value in the future



Principal: Mrs Louise Hanvey BSc (Hons) PGCE, PQHNI, PGDH

Hollywood Road, Belfast
BT4 2LY

Tel: 028 9047 1744

www.ashfieldgirls.org
info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk