BEIS YAAKOV PRIMARY SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

School Mission Statement

Beis Yaakov Primary School exists to serve the Orthodox Jewish Community by offering a broad and balanced Jewish and secular education, rooted in an ethos of Torah values, to girls between the ages of 3 and 11.

The policy should be viewed in the context of the appropriate school Aims, which are:

Aim 4  To provide opportunities and role models which will encourage social, moral, cultural and spiritual qualities which reflect the teachings of the Torah.

Aim 6  To provide access to the curriculum for all pupils, within a differentiated programme, and using modern technology where possible.

Aim 7  To identify and provide for the natural differing abilities and needs of each child.

Aim 8  To value all members of the school community, adults and children alike, for themselves, so that everyone has an opportunity to reach their full potential, while acknowledging what is realistic to expect of everyone.

Aim 9  To encourage all members of the school community to be sensitive to the welfare and wellbeing of others.

Aim 10 To teach respect, tolerance and compassion for all.

Much of the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy concerning differentiation has been fully integrated into the individual policies of the subject areas and its Special Educational Needs and Assessment policies, and so is not just a sterile document, but a fundamental principle governing the School’s everyday life.

As a single-sex, inclusive, Orthodox Jewish school, Beis Yaakov is sensitive to the problems caused by racism, sexism and against those with disabilities in today’s society, and has sought to address them in a way compatible with its ethos.

It aims to establish an environment where school becomes effective in reducing prejudice and raising self esteem and to contribute towards imparting a sense of citizenship in the pupils.
By paying special attention in its Limmudei Kodesh lessons to the role models established by the Biblical Mothers of Israel – Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, and also to the achievements of the many other women who feature so strongly in Jewish History, the School tries to instil in the girls a great pride in their ancestors and a sense of the importance of women in Orthodox Jewish society. It also encourages the staff to recognise in their teaching the contributions to the development of Science, Technology and the Arts which have been made by women of all religions.

The School tries to choose resources
- which portray a world view as seen from male and female perspectives and thereby communicate how it may feel to be of another gender.
- are factually accurate and use up-to-date text, illustrations and maps.
- do not:
  - stereotype individuals or groups.
  - equate men with being the dominant gender or women the subservient gender.
- which show the achievements and attributes of both genders, both past and present.
- show children of both sexes involved in the activities described e.g. physics, design, music, mathematics.
- where girls can find characters which enhance their self esteem.
- show characters not having to justify their gender by being exceptionally virtuous or brave etc.
- where illustrations avoid caricature.

In addition there are several other areas of education that need to be separately mentioned in a comprehensive policy on Equal Opportunities, i.e.
1) Teaching styles.
2) Entitlement of access to the whole course of study.
3) Progression within the course of study.

1. Teaching styles
There are a few strategies which are fundamental to the teaching styles at the School:
- Pupils experience a variety of experiences/activities during a course of study and during a lesson if possible.
- There are appropriate opportunities for individual and group activities. Cooperative group-work can enhance communication, social and critical thinking skills.
- There will be occasions when the whole class is taught the same basic concept – this develops listening and learning skills that are crucial to a successful education at primary/secondary school and beyond.
- Staff will encourage pupils to pursue a piece of work over a period of time e.g. project work.
- Staff encourage the development of higher order skills such as formulating hypotheses, testing others, drawing conclusions from evidence and clarifying their own values, particularly in Limmudei Kodesh.
- Staff encourage pupils to formulate questions and to seek answers for themselves.
• The staff regularly exchange their experiences at subject or year-group meetings – the successes and failures of different strategies are a prominent part of this exchange. For further details on the variety of teaching styles see the individual subject and cross-school policies which show how differentiation is put into practice.

2. **Entitlement of access to the whole course**
   All pupils follow the same Scheme of Work in all years. Some pupils may work at a faster pace and/or study more extension work than others. Differentiation is the means by which different pupils achieve different results and levels of achievement. The time at which the class teacher will direct a pupil onto a higher level is purely dependent on the stage of cognitive development reached by the pupil and not on his /her age, and at the same time the teacher has to be especially sensitive to the extra needs of children whose rate of progress is less than the average for the class.

**Progression within the course of study**

There is an implication in the way that the National Curriculum is set out, in the apparent hierarchy of levels, that pupils learn fundamental concepts in a linear fashion. This is not necessarily the case and much care needs to be exercised in the construction of a scheme of work. We accept that some pupils make what appears to be erratic progress through the levels. For this reason our Scheme of Work is a spiral/progressive system that allows, in as much as is possible, for concepts to be revisited. The levels of the bulk of the work experienced in each of the year groups is shown in the following table:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Levels experienced</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A – 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A – 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 - 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 – 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 - 5</td>
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The current scheme of work appears to satisfy the needs of pupils of all abilities. It is also sufficiently demanding to test the most able pupils to the full, and encourages those of average abilities and below to new levels of achievement.

**Equal opportunities for adults**

All staff are given career development opportunities and access to course. Any vacancies within the school, where appropriate, are advertised internally and open to all staff to apply.