



# **EQUALITY INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES**

June 2012

Ian Mikardo High School is a warm and welcoming environment. We are dedicated to supporting vulnerable people and every aspect of our work focuses on removing barriers to learning and development. Our aim is to support our students and to enable them to reach their potential as confident, open-minded citizens. In this spirit we are committed to challenging negative attitudes and we actively promote a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.

This applies to our students, who have statements of special educational need, and to other people involved with the school who may be subjected to discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of their characteristics. These can include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender identity/ gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act of 2010 requires public bodies to publish equality information and objectives (Public Sector Equality Duty.) It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

This document fulfils that requirement and demonstrates that equality and equal opportunities are an integral part of our ethos and vision.

### **Our duty**

We will actively seek to:

- Promote equality of opportunity throughout the school
- Eliminate discrimination and harassment
- Promote positive attitudes to other people irrespective of their differences

### **Our School Community Profile – Students, Staff, Governors**

We are a day special school for boys aged 11 to 16 who have severe and complex social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). We are located in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets which is rated as having the fourth highest level of deprivation in the country. All the boys had significant difficulties settling to learn in their previous schools. Many were excluded. Most experience extremely challenging circumstances outside school and remain vulnerable.

Whilst a majority of our students are ethnic White British, we welcome students from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds and our roll includes students from Black Caribbean, Asian Bangladeshi and dual heritage backgrounds

Our staff are multicultural and international in background and have had diverse experiences of life, both personally and professionally. This is deliberate; we believe that the diversity of our staff is part of our strength. Many of them live or have roots in the local communities of East London. Our governors are also from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, reflecting the range of social and economic activity in Tower Hamlets.

### **Our ethos**

It is central to the way we work, and to the school's success, that we think about each student as an individual. We identify his needs and work out how they can be met. We also think about him in the context of his family and the communities he encounters, and because of this we understand the importance of including the social and cultural identities of our staff, students and other stakeholders in our thinking about how we provide appropriate opportunities for each student to reach their potential. This is not a school where we expect conformity other than in respecting each other as people.

Our model is based on the belief that in order for children to develop and learn they need first to feel contained and safe. The school puts great emphasis on building relationships with our students and through these we help them to understand that diversity is a strength and that everyone has a responsibility to promote good relations with each other and between all local communities, irrespective of any differences.

Many of our students have severe difficulties related to their own sense of personal identity, as well as difficulties in empathising with others, particularly those whom they perceive as different. We understand that the work we carry out with them to address these issues often needs to continue over a long period of time, and that our messages must be consistent.

We ensure that the workforce reflects the community we serve and that everyone is able to access the opportunities that are available. Our aim is to be a school community where people's differences are understood and respected, where the services we provide are accessible to everyone and where discrimination and harassment of any kind is always challenged.

### **Our practice**

We are committed to ensuring that no individual, whether a student, member of staff or anyone else involved in the school, is treated less favourably in any respect because of a characteristic they have. To underline respect for difference we regularly organise themed days - such as Black History Day, International Women's Day and International Day Against Homophobia – which combine relevant teaching across the curriculum with a celebratory atmosphere than includes music and art work.

We do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any individual. We listen to and support victims of all forms of bullying and put in place appropriate strategies to

safeguard them in the future. We also understand that the perpetrator in any form of discriminatory behaviour may require as much support as the victim. (For detailed information about our practice, see our Behaviour and Discipline policy.)

Our staff work closely together, all of them focused on showing our students how to treat other people with respect. This means that at all times we are modelling respectful relationships, each of us in our own way. Our work is challenging and we expect staff to support each other, irrespective of any differences in our backgrounds or personal circumstances.

At Ian Mikardo we treat all students as individuals and encourage them to recognise their differences in potential and ability. Work is differentiated in ability and the way it is presented. This encourages students to adopt positive attitudes towards each other.

Inclusion lies at the heart of everything we do. If we believe that a student might be at risk when carrying out a school activity, we conduct a risk assessment to establish how we can manage the circumstances so that he can be included. Our aim is always to include, not exclude.

In order to support our students, we recognise that it is essential to extend our support to their families, all of whom have personal difficulties. We build relationships with them, involve them in the school, and attend meetings involving other professional agencies, acting as their advocates when necessary. We offer transport to parents who need to attend meetings, giving them access to services that can support them.

We set high standards at Ian Mikardo and we are proud of our students' achievements and at all times seek to represent them positively in the community outside school. This avoids any possibility of the stigma that can sometimes be associated with special education.

When the school was rebuilt in 2011, a central requirement of the design was that it should be accessible to disabled people. This means that disabled students, staff and visitors can be accommodated and have access to our facilities. The school is also designed to be a safe learning environment for our students, and to contain and reduce the erratic behaviour that stems from their emotional problems.

All the school's policies embrace the principles of diversity. They include procedures for dealing with bullying, harassment and grievance.

## **Our Vision**

Our central aim is to remove the barriers that are stopping our students from engaging with learning and to help them to gain the skills they will need to lead stable, fulfilling and independent lives. We constantly strive to find creative, innovative and appropriate ways to achieve this.

In the course of this work we commit to ensuring that students, staff, parents, carers and visitors have equal opportunities. By the time our students leave the school our aim is that they will understand and respect the notion of valuing difference, and that they will become

young adults who treat other people with respect at all times. We will continue to develop and promote ways of working that keep this imperative at the heart of our work and practices.