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**Focus 1st Academy**

**Equality and Diversity Policy**

**Focus 1st Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment!**

Working in Partnership with North London Schools & Local Authorities since 2000

Accredited Independent School Status 2014 (DFE REG NO. 308/6003)

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Focus Inception

*Focus 1st Academy was set up in the year 2000 using European Social Fund to provide education and training and to-date has defied all the odds and was awarded the Independent School status in August 2014. This enables us to work in partnership with schools and local authorities to provide an alternative method of education for 14 to 16 year olds. Our student referrals are some of the most vulnerable young people and it is our duty to ensure that they are equipped with the appropriate skills and qualifications to ensure full participation within the modern workplace. Our team of professionals consisting of tutors, tutor assistance, pastoral support staff and mentors to nurture the students ensuring our work-based-learning approach alongside a variety of techniques are utilised and compatible to ensure the prevention of social and economic exclusion prior to adulthood which is underpinned through the subjects delivered whilst in classroom environment as well as on an individual basis.*

Focus Ethos

*Our programme fulfils the need of students who are disengaged from academic studies and may be exhibiting behavioural problems as a result. Our hands-on approach to learning creates an inspirational motivation for students wishing to pursue a career via the vocational route. The students are taught methods on how to improve their social skills in preparation for work/apprenticeship schemes and/or further education by learning in real-life situations and participating in sports, art and drama to express emotions. We believe that all individuals have a certain quality, which is sometimes concealed due to lack of confidence, mixed sentiments or disabilities. As such, recognising and coming to terms with barriers is a small part of the conflict, we are certain that all individuals are aware of their own weaknesses; the most vital part is engaging with professionals and adhere to individual training plans set which in turn prepares our students for economic and social integration into adulthood.*

Equality & Diversity Policy

Policy Statement Aim

Focus 1st Academy aims to foster a sense of cohort in which all students and staff are valued and can thrive in a range of diverse background to bring harmony and inclusion for all in our school regardless of religion, race, language, ability/disability, sexuality, gender or age, this is welcomed and celebrated.

We will not tolerate racism, sexism, negative attitudes towards disability and other discriminatory practices. Any breach of this policy is dealt with by the appropriate member of staff such as the deputy head or Headteacher. Where further action is needed, this will be taken in-line with our schools’ student disciplinary code of conduct or the staff handbook for staff and/or Procedure or Complaints Policy. This Policy takes into account The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties).

Focus 1st Academy recognises that discrimination is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the school, its employees, students and external colleagues to ensure that everyone is,

* Valued
* Happy
* Safe
* Respected
* Included
* Thrive academically, spiritually, socially, culturally and physically

Objectives

We strive to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect. We fully embrace our duty under the Equality Act to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations but we also aim to actively enhance the life opportunities for all involved in Focus 1st Academy by,

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* Ensuring our school is a safe, secure, welcoming and a stimulating place for everyone
* People with differing needs are catered for and understand that treating people equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same. For some students, extra support is needed to help them to achieve and be successful
* People are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example talking to students and parents/guardian and through our professional links and staff consultation processes
* No-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age, any disability they might have, their ethnicity, colour or national origin, their gender, their gender identity or reassignment, their marital or civil partnership status, or having recently had a baby, their religion or beliefs, their gender identity and sexual orientation
* To ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect
* The active promotion of “British values", such as mutual understanding and respect and equality, supporting ideals such as democracy, respect and tolerance for all races, cultures, faiths and beliefs and following the rule of law
* Actively deliver and to create an understanding of (PSHE/RSE) Personal, Social, Health & Economics, Relationship & Sex Education
* Ensuring our students are prepared adulthood in the modern workplace and a multicultural society
* Encourage students to be open-minded and challenge prejudice
* Help students to develop their self-esteem and to recognise that they are each

valued as individuals through actively encouraging their access to the full curriculum and extra-curricular activities such as one-to-one

* Demonstrate that students are respected as individuals
* Support each student to achieve their maximum potential
* Enable students to contribute actively to the process of education by bringing

their cultural experiences, values and perspectives to it

* Be sensitive about equal opportunities issues in the selection of teaching

materials and be aware of images and text, which may stereotype or denigrate

groups or individuals ensure that Focus 1st Academy is an equal opportunities employer so that everyone feels valued, supported and have appropriate advice and encouragement for professional development and use our resources to help those who need additional help to overcome barriers; this is achieved by,

* Treating all those within the school (e.g. students, staff, parents/gradians and external colleagues) as individuals with their own particular abilities, beliefs, challenges, attitudes, background and experiences
* A school ethos which promotes equality, develops understanding and challenges myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices
* Encouraging everyone within our school to gain a positive self-image and high self-esteem
* Having high expectations of everyone involved with the school
* Promoting mutual respect and valuing others' similarities and differences and

facing equality issues openly

* Striving to identify and remove all practices, procedures and customs which are

discriminatory and replace them with practices which are fair to all

It is the declared aim of Focus 1st Academy to ensure that no student, employee, or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment on the grounds of sex, age, gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or dependents, special training needs or are placed at a disadvantage by imposed conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

What are your rights?

* Focus 1st Academy is committed to equal opportunities in terms of equal treatment, equal access and equal share in all aspects of its policies, procedures, training programmes, administration, management and support
* Our aim is to offer an environment which is safe, supportive and sensitive to the diverse needs of students so that they can achieve their full potential
* Students or employees will not advice, assist, encourage or commit any act which amounts to a breach of discrimination law
* This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any Codes of Practice issued by The Commission for Racial Equality, The Equal Opportunities Commission, The Disability Rights Commission, The Department for Education, and other statutory bodies.
* We strive to ensure harmony amongst students, parent/guardians, employees and our external colleagues
* Every student will have the right to access to his/her personal file and could have a copy of any repost written about him/her
* We have developed policies and procedures to be followed to ensure we fulfil our commitment to equal opportunities
* Our objective is to emphasise the strengths and abilities of each student so they can achieve excellent results

What are your Responsibilities?

It is the duty of all staff and students to comply with the requirements of this policy and exercise responsibility for its implementation. This means you must not,

* Use unacceptable behaviour that causes distress to others
* Persecute others by intimidation, unfair or malicious behaviour
* Threaten or undermine the safety of others
* Use language that is offensive or disrespectful of others
* Come into school with weapons of any type or any illegal substances

Definitions

Two types of discrimination are covered by statue - Direct and Indirect

Direct Discrimination

* Direct discrimination occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than others
* Segregating a person or group on the basis of their race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability is unlawful. It is also unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a job applicant whose conviction

Indirect Discrimination

* This already applies to Age, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation and Marriage and Civil Partnership. It is now extended to cover Disability and Gender Reassignment
* Indirect Discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic

We will not accept

1. Harassment

Unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for anyone within our school

1. Victimisation

Occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done. For example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case to investigation, or supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information

1. Gender

All students have equal access to activities, opportunities and services offered at Focus 1st Academy.

Teaching and support staff are aware that gender stereotyping may influence their expectations and attitudes. Our teaching ethos and curriculum organisation should actively encourage students to make choices based on their preferences and staff act as positive role models

1. Race

The whole school abides by the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/74 which defines racial discrimination as discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

Appropriate actions are taken in-line with our staff handbook in dealing with any incident of physical or verbal threats, abuse or harassment of individuals or groups related to their religion, race, language, ability/disability, sexuality, age or gender.

This policy, having been developed with reference to the Human Rights Act and

the Disability Acts http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents 5 and this policy will be reviewed if substantial changes occur so that it always sets out our commitment to tackling racial discrimination and promoting equality and good race relations. Focus 1st Academy will promote race equality and oppose racism in all its forms and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality.

1. Religion

We acknowledge and respect that our staff come from a diverse range background, and we seek to promote an ethos based upon understanding and respect for the beliefs and practices of others

With regards to the teaching of RE, we invite speakers of other faiths such as Christians and Muslims to educate our students so that they gain a better understanding and learn to respect people with different faiths and cultures. In seeking to make our students aware of faith and respect the faith of others we have also built this into our curriculum

1. Vulnerable groups

All students have equal access to activities, opportunities and services offered at Focus 1st Academy as appropriate and teaching and associate staff are aware of how vulnerability (e.g. a looked after child) may influence their expectations and attitudes and should therefore adjust their behaviour accordingly

Student behaviour, discipline and exclusion

The school's procedures for managing behaviour and disciplining students are fair and applied equally to all students

The process of excluding a student is fair and equitable to all students and strategies to reintegrate long-term truants and excluded students when joining or already a student

Racism and racial harassment

There are established procedures for dealing with and recording incidents of racism and racial harassment through our disciplinary procedures

Admissions and transfer procedures

Focus 1st Academy takes active steps to ensure that the admission process is fair and equitable to students from all groups. We monitor students’ attendance for all groups and endeavour to use the data to develop strategies to address poor attendance. Provision is made for students to take time off for religious observance, through leave of absence and authorised absence.

Rights of disabled

Focus 1st Academy attaches particular importance to the needs and rights of disabled people. We cater for most disabilities, when appropriate.

Under the terms of this policy all staff are required to,

* Maintain the services of a student who becomes disabled through training, provision of special equipment or reduced study hours
* The Headteacher, Marinna Savva along with Sarah Barker will advise on the availability of funds from external agencies to maintain the disabled student in education
* Include disabled people in educational/development programmes
* Give full and proper consideration to disabled students who attend Focus 1st Academy, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to achieve their objectives.
* Students are encouraged to have an awareness and understanding of disability, which will be promoted through our PSHE
* All staff are aware of the specific individual needs of students with disabilities and will provide appropriate support and school access will be appropriate for all students

Managerial Responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring effective implementation and operation of these arrangements will rest with our Headteacher, Marina Savva; she should ensure that

* All staff and students are aware of the policy, arrangements and reasons for the policy
* Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible
* Proper records are maintained
* Parents/guardians are welcomed and respected

The Headteacher, Marina Savva will be responsible for monitoring the overall operation of the policy in respect of employees, job applicants and students, parent/guardians, including external colleagues and inspectors.

Responsibility of Staff and Students

Whilst the responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination, this rests with the headteacher, the attitudes of staff and students are critical to the successful operation of fair employment practices. Every student and member of staff should,

* Comply with the policy and arrangements
* Accept their own personal involvement in the practical application of this policy
* Not discriminate in their day-to-day activities or induce others to do so
* Not victimise, harass or intimidate other students, members of staff or groups on the grounds specified in this policy
* Inform their superiors if they become aware of any discriminatory practice

Related Policies and Arrangements

All processes of admissions, progression and assessment of students have a bearing on equality of opportunity. Our policies and procedures will be reviewed annually or as and when a change has occurred and any discriminatory elements removed.

Staff Recruitment and Career Development

Recruitment and selection procedures are consistent with the statutory

Race Relations Code of Practice in Employment

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/630/contents/made and other equality legislation by,

* Applications from all are welcomed at all levels
* The recruitment and selection process ensures that discrimination is not taking place when new appointments or promotions are being considered
* The school monitors the employment and professional development of staff by ethnicity and gender
* Proactive steps are taken to identify, support and provide opportunities for the professional development of all staff
* Staff training is usually covered during appraisals of intermittently, where applicable.
* All staff will be asked to read the polices when joining Focus 1st Academy (along with Kcsie). All staff will familiarise themselves with this polices and know that their responsibility is to ensure that these policies are implemented. They will know the implications of the policy for their planning, teaching and learning strategies as well as for behavioural issues and in their fulfilment of their duties of any aspect of school life.

Policy Implementation:

If any Focus 1st Academy student or parent/carer has questions concerning the Equal Opportunities Policy, they should enquire Marina Savva about it or the concern should be raised on an arranged meeting with her.

Parents and students should know that the school has an Equality and Diversity policy and is committed to equality of opportunity for all students. All of our policies will be in our website and hard copies made available upon request.

Focus 1st Academy will put this policy into practice by:

* Recognising and fulfilling its legal obligations under the terms of:

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Race Relations Act 2000

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended

The Human Rights Act 1998 (The right to privacy and freedom of expression)

The Prevent Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Forced Marriage Unit [FMU] Act 2014

Documents to refer to RE: Safeguarding in Education

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – 2015

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Keeping Children Safe 2018

Prevent and Tackle Bulling 2017

Consultation of Improving Information in Identifying Children Missing in Educations 2016

Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment Between Children in School or College 2017

Behaviour & Discipline in Schools 2016

Information Sharing 2015

We are committed to,

* Interviewing all new students with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a vacancy and consider them on their abilities.
* Making a reasonable adjustment where any arrangements or any permanent or temporary physical feature of premises places an individual with a disability at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.
* Making every effort when students become disabled to ensure they stay in education; when appropriate.
* Taking action to ensure key employees develop the awareness of disability needed to make our commitments work.
* Ensuring that all students are aware that they have the right to be treated with dignity and that sexual or racial abuse at work will not be permitted.
* As part of the Induction procedure making all new students aware of the company’s Equal Opportunities Policy and practices.
* Encouraging any student who believes that unfair treatment has been applied to him or her, within the scope of this policy, to raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure, without fear or subsequent victimisation.
* Initiating disciplinary action if any student is found to be acting unlawfully either by denying equal opportunities or when a complaint about racial or sexual Abuse victimisation is proved to be well founded.
* Build student resilience to extremism / radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. Focus 1st Academy staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately by reporting this to the designated safeguarding officer; line manager, head teacher or external colleagues such as social workers etc.

Monitoring

Focus 1st Academy deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be maintained to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements. We have bought into MyConcerns which is a software to ensure that polices and government guidelines have been met as well as a secure way of safeguarding students’ information.

Sarah Barker will be in charge of collecting and analysing the student’s information by gender, ethnic origin, qualifications, school year and length of time in Focus 1st Academy via the My Concerns programme. Information regarding the number of students who are registered disabled will be also maintained. The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.

Sarah Barker will continuously:

* Compile statistics on the profile of the students which will be used for the development of effective Equal Opportunities Policies and Health & Safety procedures.
* Make regular analyses of these statistics to identify specific issues.
* Annually approve a strategy for delivering objectives and monitoring their attainment.
* Student achievement is analysed in terms of disability, ethnicity, gender,

eligibility for Free School Meals and Looked After Children via MyCon

* Overall performance against the policy is assessed through the College’s self-evaluation procedures.

Grievance, Discipline & Complaints

Students and staff have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the school’s grievance procedure.

* Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure that we have in place
* Any grievance arising during the course of your school year concerning your rights under this policy should be raised first Sarah Barker which will be reported to Marina Savva
* Parents/guardians and students should know that our school’s Equality and Diversity policy is committed to equality of opportunity for all students and staff
* If any member of staff in the school feels that this policy is not being followed, then they should raise the matter with Sarah Barker and if appropriate, the Headteacher Marina Savva. If any parent/guardian feels that this policy is not being followed, then they should raise the matter with Sarah Barker and if appropriate, the Headteacher Marina Savva. If any visitor feels that this policy is not being followed, then they should raise the matter with the person who invited them or the school and/or Sarah Barker and if appropriate, the Headteacher Marina Savva. If there is a formal complaint, then the school's Complaints Procedure should be used.

Review

The policy and assessments will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, Marina Savva MA.

The operation of the Equal & Diversity Policy in relation to the schools’ services will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be often mentioned in,

* Team Meetings
* Management Meetings
* Training Meetings for Training Co-ordinators

Marketing, Recruitment and Public Liaison

 Focus 1st Academy will ensure that all marketing and publicity activities and training materials are developed in-line with its Equal & Diversity Policy

* All marketing materials will include a statement confirming the company’s commitment to equal opportunities.
* Focus 1st Academy will work towards researching the developing needs of all groups within the local community in order to provide appropriate training for the staff so they can work together towards the students’ wellbeing.
* Liaison with community groups, voluntary organisations, schools, LA’s, North London Strategic Alliance and local industry will be maintained and developed, continuously.

Students’ Work Placements

 Focus 1st Academy will not knowingly use a placement where a non-discrimination order is not in force.

* Both Focus 1st Academy and the work experience placements are subject to our Equal & Diversity and our Health & Safety Policies.
* Students should be aware of their equal opportunity rights at their Work Placement.

Students

 All students will be made aware of the school’s Equal Opportunities Policy and advised of the procedures to be followed if they feel that have been unfairly treated.

* All students’ referrals and admissions will be monitored according to sex, ethnic origin, disability and special educational needs.
* Students will be made aware of how the policy applies to them. They will learn to treat each other with respect and report incidents of discrimination to an appropriate adult.

Attainment and progress

* Our students’ attainment and progress in individual subjects is monitored by ILPs
* We strive to develop individual strategies for tackling differences in the attainment and progress of groups
* Focus 1st Academy values the achievements and progress of students from all students
* All students have equal access to extra-curricular activities and 1-to1 where applicable
* Students are offered the support and guidance they need during their time in school
* Staff challenge racism and stereotyping and promote racial and gender equality in education, employment, training and career choice

Curriculum, teaching and learning

* We actively promote an inclusive curriculum which celebrates the diverse nature of our society that we live in
* Diversity is promoted and racism and discrimination of any kind is challenged
* Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all students
* Subject Leaders provide guidance and examples of good practice for colleagues
* Focus 1st Academy monitors and evaluates its effectiveness in providing an appropriate curriculum for all students
* The allocation of students to teaching groups and optional subjects is fair and equitable to students from all groups
* Assessment outcomes are used to identify the specific needs of all students and to inform planers of the allocation of resources needed
* Teaching methods and styles take account of the needs of students from different ethnic groups and of students with SEN and encourage positive attitudes to ethnic differences, cultural diversity and racial equality
* Continuous active steps are taken to ensure that resources in all areas of the curriculum are inclusive

 Venue / Facilities

Our aim is to maintain our building safe and facilities as accessible as possible for all the students and staff. We provide, e.g. separate toilets for students and staff and sinks in each toilet with running hot and cold water.

Resources / Materials

The design and use of resources are vital in our learning programme. They can motivate and awaken the student interest, provide variety in learning, contribute experience, and improve our communicative skills. Therefore, we ensure that resources should not contain any racist, sexiest and homophobic comments as well as offensive materials.

Reviewed June 2022