

COMMUNITY COHESION

WHAT IS COMMUNITY COHESION?

Community cohesion has been defined as follows:

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

WHY DO WE HAVE THIS POLICY?

At Notre Dame Catholic College we are committed to equality, to equal opportunities and developing genuine respect for all, regardless of ability, creed, faith, race, sex, social or national background.

Inspired by the vision of our patron, St Julie Billiart we will endeavour to provide our pupils with all that is necessary for life whilst recognising that the lives of our pupils are lived in an increasingly diverse society.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL RESPOND?

By working to:

- ❖ develop a set of shared values and a genuine sense of community to which all believe they can contribute and belong;
- ❖ develop and implement systems and procedures that enable all of our pupils to have equality of opportunity to achieve their full potential by removing, wherever possible, the barriers to their learning;
- ❖ foster strong and effective relationships with and within the communities to which we belong;
- ❖ promote high standards of teaching and learning that will enable our pupils to contribute actively to the creation of community cohesion.
- ❖ deliver a curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Practices

Teaching and Learning

- ❖ The Every Child Matters Agenda will be put at the heart of the policy and practice of the school;

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- ❖ departments will have regard to the principles of community cohesion when planning schemes of learning. Some departments may find this more relevant than others. The issues and topics dealt with in Religious Education, History, Geography, PSHCE and the Arts, for example, will tend to involve concerns of community cohesion in a more obvious way than may be the case in other subjects. However, in all subjects prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping will be challenged, issues of identity and diversity will be discussed and pupils will consider what it means 'to live together in the UK';
- ❖ ensure every pupil has access to the most appropriate pathway by continuing to offer extensive Option Choices at Key Stages 4 and 5 to allow all pupils to achieve their full potential.

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

- ❖ The majority of pupils in school are Catholics or members of other Christian denominations and so assemblies or acts of worship will be inspired by the Christian tradition. However, collective worship will be as inclusive as possible and will in no way disparage the other faith traditions represented in the school. Moreover, provision will be made for members of other faith traditions to pray at a time convenient to them and the school if such an arrangement is requested;
- ❖ The Special Needs Department will continue to lead the School's Inclusion Agenda and, in the context of community cohesion, will provide, in co-operation with outside agencies, provision for those pupils for whom English is an additional language to enable them to achieve at the highest possible levels across all curriculum areas.
- ❖ where language is a barrier to communication with parents or carers every effort will be made to enlist the aid of outside agencies including the production of school communications to parents and carers in a variety of languages as appropriate;
- ❖ the collection of data will be used to monitor the performance of different groups and to identify and address any underperformance. This will inform classroom practise in all subject areas;
- ❖ behaviour policy and practice will be committed to developing mutual respect. This is to be brought to the pupils' attention regularly through assemblies and the School Bulletin;
- ❖ incidents of prejudice, bullying and racism will be monitored with appropriate support for victims and offenders. All serious incidents are recorded and reported to the appropriate Local Authority officials.
- ❖ Pupil Council membership will reflect the diversity of the pupil body so that all have a voice and involvement 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.

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ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY AND EXTENDED SERVICES

- ❖ Notre Dame Catholic College has links with a variety of schools, locally, nationally and internationally. Staff and pupils have numerous opportunities to meet people and pupils from other backgrounds, to learn from each other and develop their knowledge and appreciation of cultures other than their own;
- ❖ pupils have opportunities to meet and coach pupils from local primary schools through a number of school activities;
- ❖ pupils have opportunities to engage with local community groups such as pensioners and the Local Council via the school choir who regularly perform at functions and community launch activities;
- ❖ we engage with a variety of support agencies to meet the varied academic, health and pastoral needs of our pupils. We value and use an extensive network of support agencies at local and national level;
- ❖ we engage with our pupils, parents and carers through parents' evenings, performances and the Home School Bulletin. Wherever possible we offer support and professional advice and information to meet the specific needs of their children;
- ❖ The School's Admission Policy will be in line with the Government's School Admission Code.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Community Cohesion Policy will be reviewed by the Chaplaincy Team, when necessary, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team and Governors and appropriate modification will be made.

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