

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. The Aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy
3. Ethos and Atmosphere
4. An Inclusive Curriculum
5. Classroom Management and Organisation
6. Pupil Welfare and Guidance
7. Child Protection
8. Resources
9. Staff
10. Parents and Community
11. Equal Opportunities Affecting Particular Groups
12. Dealing with Harassment

Appendix 1: The law

1. Introduction

We need an Equal Opportunities Policy because inequalities exist in our society. This can make the achievement of some people's full potential considerably more difficult to attain than others. Equal **Opportunities**, in a school situation, means **ensuring that every individual has equal access to an education** or to career development in education. **Equality means having the same rights and status as everybody else.**

The law gives us guidance and provides positive duties for schools to promote equality. This policy outlines how our school ensures that equality is being promoted, outlines what provision is available and what action is to be taken.

It is the responsibility of the whole school community to abide by our policy.

2. The Aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy

At Montessori Córdoba we believe that every member of our school community has the right to receive education or employment in an environment which is free from prejudice. Every pupil has the right to receive the best possible education. We are committed to providing our pupils with an equal opportunity to thrive in a setting free from discrimination in all its forms. We strive to be a school where adults and children, whatever their race, religion, gender, abilities, age, family and social circumstances will find safety and respect for themselves, their families and their traditions. Our policy should ensure that every member of our community respects others and is respected, achieves his or her full potential and is welcomed and valued.

To make this commitment real, we aim to develop policies and practices based on the particular needs of our school and community.

We aim to:

- ensure that pupils have the opportunity to reach their potential in all areas of school life.
- ensure that parents and pupils can make choices free from prejudice and stereotyping.
- oppose any form of racism, sexism or any form of discrimination.
- value every pupil's language and cultural background.
- promote respect between cultural backgrounds.
- promote respect between cultures.

3.Ethos and Atmosphere.

The school positively values all staff and pupils and welcomes diversity.

We seek to promote the achievement of all pupils. Teaching staff make time to praise the children for their behaviour, contributions and their work.

Children and staff are called by their preferred names and we ensure that names are spelt and pronounced correctly.

Religious education within the school promotes justice, fairness and equality as well as informing pupils of many different religious stories, traditions and beliefs.

Circle time sessions are held regularly in each class. This is part of our Health Science and Peace curriculum. At these times issues relating to Equal Opportunities are discussed.

Children and class teachers follow the Montessori Classroom rules, of which all children are aware, this helps them to understand and ensure equality in the classroom.

Playground behaviour is monitored and unacceptable behaviour challenged to ensure that pupils are safe and free from harassment.

Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with immediately. We have developed systems to deal with playground incidents. These are followed by all staff. Offensive remarks or behaviour based upon prejudice or misinformation are always challenged.

4. An Inclusive Curriculum

At Montessori Córdoba pupils have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills, concepts and experiences through their participation in a broad and balanced curriculum. We have high expectations of all pupils and do not make assumptions about ability or areas of interest.

The school aims to deliver an inclusive curriculum combining the requirements of the Montessori curriculum and the Spanish National Curriculum in the Spanish language, science and culture areas.

Our teachers have due regard to the three key principles:

1. Setting suitable learning challenges.
2. Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The focus is far wider than disability and special educational needs. It includes pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds, pupils of different ethnic groups including those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

An awareness of multi-cultural issues informs all our planning. Through geography and history topics, pupils learn about different societies, environments and cultures. Religion is taught within certain topics and as a subject in its own right. Religions, cultures, traditions and societies are presented by the teachers with equal respect and value. When discussing these issues, teachers focus on similarities as well as differences.

Teachers aim to take into account individual pupils' experiences and try to make lessons and activities interesting and accessible to all.

Children who speak English as an additional language and those who have been identified as having educational or physical needs are considered in all aspects of planning, teaching and assessment.

Observing inclusive teaching strategies is a key element of the school's annual programme of monitoring.

5. Classroom Management and Organisation

Class teachers develop strategies to ensure appropriate access to classroom equipment and resources

In the classroom in accordance with Montessori philosophy the teachers regularly work with the children on a one to one basis and in small groups carrying out the work presentations, mixing children of various abilities and ages. Whole class discussions are also carried out in various subject areas.

6. Pupil Welfare and Guidance

Pupils are offered sympathetic support by their class teacher and other members of the school community.

We have a planned programme of personal and social education in line with the Montessori philosophy, including our Health Science area and Peace curriculum.

There are planned opportunities often arising from literacy and humanity topics, to discuss equality issues, to challenge stereotyping, discrimination and harassment. This ensures that these issues are dealt with pro-actively, not just after an incident.

We have a behaviour policy and an anti-bullying policy which include positive strategies and monitoring procedures.

7. Child Protection

Our utmost priority is the safety and well being of all the children in our care. The school based SEN and Child Protection Officer is always made aware of any concerns staff may have and appropriate steps are taken for the child's protection.

Teaching staff receive training and support on how to act when suspicions of child abuse are raised and how to proceed with sensitivity if a child discloses information. The Head teacher, as Child Protection Officer, works closely with other agencies to promote the safety and well being of the child.

8. Resources

The term "resources" is used to include all the learning materials used in school. We intend that any pictures and posters on display around the school are in keeping with the Montessori philosophy and present positive images of people from all sections of our society.

We aim to show a positive portrayal of women and men, people of different ages, physical abilities, races and religions, across the social class spectrum. When ordering new resources time is spent choosing material which challenges stereotypes and promotes our diverse community.

We aim to meet specific resource needs for pupils of different abilities. Please see our Special Needs Policy.

9. Staff

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. Further details of some legal provisions are set out in appendix 1.

All new staff are given a staff handbook that collates key school information.

A file of policies is kept in the School Director's office for reference.

Teaching and support staff are encouraged to further their professional careers by attending courses suited to their posts.

10. Parents, Carers and the Community

We acknowledge and support the varied family circumstances in which our pupils live and we try to ensure that all carers and parents are always welcomed at our school.

11. Equal Opportunities Affecting Particular Groups

Religion

We welcome families of any religion or non-religious persuasion. All individuals have the right to express their religious views and practises within the constraints of the National and Montessori curriculums, whilst maintaining respect for the belief of others.

Lessons regarding religion give pupils opportunities to learn about the variety of world religions. Pupils are encouraged to accept and respect a variety of religious and cultural views within religions studied. Pupils are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and discuss diversity.

Displays and resources should reflect the diversity of religions.

Sexuality

The school welcomes parents, carers and staff, whatever their sexual orientation.

Mental Health and drug/alcohol abuse

The school is sympathetic to the needs of families with mental health issues or drug or alcohol abuse. Information given to teachers is treated with sensitivity and only passed on to other members of staff who have contact with the child and may need to be aware of a particular home situation.

When teaching children about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, teachers are sensitive to the experiences of children in their class. We

aim to give factual information in a balanced non-judgemental way. We encourage children to discuss issues and develop their own opinions.

Offensive language is challenged and staff will explain why certain language is considered offensive to groups of people.

12. Dealing with harassment

Harassment on account of ability, gender, race, religion, sexuality or social background are unjust and totally unacceptable.

Harassment can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups or games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

We aim to take all incidents of harassment seriously and the school has a statutory responsibility to deal with racial and sexual harassment.

We have developed a clear procedure for dealing with complaints and grievances. For more information see the complaints procedure policy.

Appendix 1 The Law

The following section provides short summaries of some of the legal provisions on equality issues facing schools.

La Constitución Española

Estatuto de Andalucía

Ley para la igualdad de Trato (España)

European Human Rights Act 1998

It may be unlawful for the school to act in a way which infringes the rights and freedoms of a pupil or member of staff under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. An example of a possible infringement might be failure to take action against bullying of a pupil in breach of the prohibition of inhumane and degrading treatment.

A school must not treat a person less favourably on racial grounds with regard to admissions, exclusions, access to benefits, facilities or services or the employment of staff. Racial grounds are grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Discrimination on racial grounds can also be indirect. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless justified irrespective of racial grounds and can occur when a practice appears neutral, but in fact has a disproportionate adverse impact on those from a certain racial group.

It is unlawful for an educational establishment to discriminate directly or indirectly on racial grounds with regard to:

- admissions
- access to benefits, facilities or services
- exclusions
- the employment of staff

Racial grounds are grounds of race, colour, nationality – including citizenship – or ethnic or national origins. A more precise definition of racial groups has been given by the House of Lords, who said that

- a long shared history
- a cultural tradition of its own

were essential characteristics, but that other characteristics were also relevant:

- a common geographical origin, or descent from a small number of common ancestors;
- a common language;
- a common literature;
- a common religion
- being either a minority or a majority within a larger community

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Schools are required to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

A school must not treat a person less favourably on grounds of sex or status as married with regard to admissions, exclusions, access to benefits, facilities or services or the employment of staff.

Discrimination on the grounds of sex can also be indirect. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless justified irrespective of grounds of sex

and can occur when

It is unlawful to discriminate against a boy or girl on the ground of sex with regards to

It is unlawful to discriminate against a boy or girl on the grounds of sex with regards to:

- Admissions
- Access to benefits, facilities or services
- Exclusions

An exception is made for admissions to single sex schools, though the facilities at such should not be less favourable than those at another school.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against staff with regard to employment on the grounds of sex or marriage.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (in force by 2003)

A school will be placed under new duties not to treat disabled pupils less favourably than non-disabled pupils and to take reasonable steps to remedy substantial disadvantages to disabled pupils. The act also affects the law on Special Educational Needs, including strengthening the right of parents to a mainstream place for their child with SEN

Signed:
Signature:

Reviewed:
Signature:

Reviewed:
Signature:

Date:

Date:

Date