

BELONGING POLICY

Despite there being a high level of passion and commitment to becoming a beacon of inclusivity or more importantly a place where we all belong and all are safe to bring their true authentic self into the room, this policy has proved incredibly hard to write. This is mainly because, as a staff and governors and school team, we are all learning and have a lot more to learn personally in this area.

Despite being unsure of what to include, we are sure of what we want belonging to look like at Grayrigg:

A safe and happy place where everyone feels they can bring their whole authentic selves into the room.

A place that encourages all its stakeholders, including the children, to challenge anything that might make another person feel any sense of not quite belonging here (in school) or anywhere else- this includes the children challenging adults.

First we need to get to a place where we have a shared understanding of the terms we use so that we are able to reflect on what we create as a place of belonging, what do we internally accept as the “norm” and is the place we create a place of true inclusivity, belonging and justice if it is created by people who have not experienced places as harmful due to our own privileges¹?

In order to create a shared understanding we will use the following definitions from Representation matters written by Ayisha Thomas:

“Accessibility is being able to get into the building

Diversity is getting invited to the table

Inclusion is having a voice at the table

Belonging is having your voice heard

Justice is choosing if you want to be there in the first place!”

In order for us all to develop, we want this to be a safe space to have open conversations and admit we are ignorant (**and that it’s ok not to know**), where we will undoubtedly need to educate ourselves and will often need to seek support and help from others to learn and unlearn what we may or may not know. **A safe place to ask questions does not equate to it being acceptable to remain ignorant**, it is merely an acknowledgement that we have a lot to learn and that this is an ongoing journey. It is expected that every member of staff and of the governing body will be travelling on this journey, we may be at different points and the speed of travel may be different but all staff and governors can map their journey and the obstacles they have faced and **must be** committed to achieving the aims as stated in orange at the start of this policy.

¹ privilege_ it is not an advantage, it is lack of disadvantage

We have questioned if this should be a policy or not: it would be far easier to make this document a procedure or guidance rather than a policy but it is only through making it a policy that we can fully hold all team members to account **and ensure that it is being upheld by everyone.**

This policy will be reviewed annually (and more often when needed). If anyone reading this policy believes it needs changing or challenging to improve our work towards the aims in bold then please do email the headteacher kirsty@grayrigg.cumbria.sch.uk and Belonging lead emma@grayrigg.cumbria.sch.uk we are always keen to improve our practice.

To be a place where everyone belongs, we first need to admit that we cannot fully (however well intended) put ourselves in another person's shoes. We must acknowledge that in some ways we all experience some privilege. As a staff and school team, we acknowledge that we experience a lot of privilege. If we have not lived the experiences of another, we can never fully understand the impact of that lived experience and therefore we must trust those who share these experiences through training, books and as many other resources as possible: Our place is not to challenge lived experiences of prejudice and discrimination people share with us; our place is to provide an environment where all forms of prejudice and discrimination are challenged in order to make this a place where everyone can bring their whole authentic selves into the room.

As a school we will invest financially in

- Training and consultancy to support areas where more insight and support is needed
- Books and literature to enable staff and governors to learn and unlearn about experiences of those who have suffered prejudice and discrimination and educate ourselves in what discriminatory behaviour is so that what we may not have previously recognised to be discriminatory e.g. microaggressions², cultural appropriation, we do going forward
- Resources that increase representation of the protected characteristics in school, particularly those where there is currently lower representation in our community.

All staff and governors will invest time in

- Acting on any learning from training and consultancy and embedding that learning
- Reading and educating ourselves
- Evaluating the curriculum and sharing our learning from reading, training and other sources to enable others
- Improving representation across the whole curriculum (not just History) and not just via books; recognising there are so many ways in which we can represent
- Working with the children to evoke change so they recognise they can be the change they want to see in the world and become courageous allies.

² Microaggressions_

https://www.ted.com/talks/nova_reid_not_all_superheroes_wear_capes_you_have_the_power_to_change_the_world?language=en

We will be confident to

- Challenge anything we see that is unrecognised as discriminatory and explain to the person why (if they are ignorant)- please note this does not make any form of discrimination acceptable and is not an excuse for deliberate discriminatory behaviour/prejudice.

There is an expectation on us and a responsibility for us all to

- Be open to learning and being challenged by others, if we do not fully understand we should seek to understand and learn for ourselves.

WE WILL ALL EDUCATE OURSELVES- through literature (both books and online), other resources and training. We will not expect those who have experienced prejudice and discrimination to educate us. This is important, e.g. asking a Black person to recount experiences of racism is asking them to re-experience every emotion they felt and continue to feel because of it. This is not acceptable. In addition, we expect there to be a financial obligation to education in relation to this policy, it is not the job of those who experience prejudice and discrimination to give their time for free to educate us or others.

There is a lot more that could be (and over time will be) included in this policy as we all learn and grow as humans- it is the duty of every person working in Grayrigg to be learning and unlearning, improving, challenging, changing and growing to ensure that Grayrigg is

A safe and happy place where everyone feels they can bring their whole authentic selves into the room.

A place that encourages all its stakeholders, including the children, to challenge anything that might make another person feel any sense of not belonging here (in school) or anywhere else- this includes the children challenging adults.

Places to start

<https://www.theproudtrust.org/>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

<https://antiracistcumbria.org/>

<https://theteacherist.com/category/decolonise-the-curriculum/>

<https://theblackcurriculum.com/>

<https://www.diversityrolemodels.org/>

Date approved by FGB: 15.11.2022

Signed by Chair of Governors: