

Community Cohesion Policy

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Community Cohesion Policy

There is a duty for Academies to promote community cohesion under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

1. Introduction

The curriculum of our Academy should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students and of society and prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We already consider this part of our role, and already work in ways which promote community cohesion. As migration and economic change alter the shape of our increasingly diverse local communities, it is more important than ever that all schools and Academies play a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our Academy should be a thriving, cohesive community, but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

Every school and Academy - whatever its intake and wherever it is located - is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of culture, faith, ethnicity and social backgrounds. The staff and student population reflect this diversity, allowing students to mix with those from different backgrounds.

We wish to show that through the ethos and curriculum, Francis Combe Academy can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing students how different communities can be united by common experiences and values.

We believe that it is our duty to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.

2. What is community cohesion?

By community cohesion, we mean 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; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and Academies and in the wider community.

Community from an Academy's perspective

For the Academy, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the Academy community – the students it serves, their families and the Academy's staff;
- the community within which the Academy is located – the Academy in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area;
- the community of Britain - all schools and Academies are by definition part of this community;

- The global community – formed by EU and international links.

3. What can we do to promote community cohesion?

3.1 How does our Academy contribute towards community cohesion?

All schools and Academies, whatever the mix of students they serve, are responsible for equipping those students to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. However Academies that are driven by divisions are less likely to perform well.

For some Academies with diverse pupil populations, existing activities and work aimed at supporting students from different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other, will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For other schools and Academies where the student population is less diverse or predominantly of one faith, socio-economic or ethnic group more will need to be done to provide opportunities for interaction between students from different backgrounds.

Just as each Academy is different, each Academy's contribution to community cohesion will be different and will need to develop by reflecting:

- the nature of the Academy's population – whether it serves students drawn predominantly from one or a small number of faiths, ethnic or socio-economic groups or from a broader cross-section of the population, or whether it selects by ability from across a wider area.
- The location of the Academy – for instance whether it serves a rural or urban area and the level of ethnic, faith and socio-economic diversity in that area.

In the light of the new duty we need to consider how different aspects of our work already support integration and community harmony; to take stock of what has worked well so far. We also need to consider where there may be scope to improve their existing work through a more explicit focus on the impact of their activities on community cohesion.

Broadly, the contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – to teach students to understand others, to promote common values and to value diversity, to promote awareness of human rights and of the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action.
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, removing barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups.
- Engagement and ethos – to provide a means for children, young people and their families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including links with different Academies and communities locally, across the country and internationally.

3.2 What do we need to consider in promoting community cohesion?

We need to consider what activities already take place within the Academy and what might be arranged in cooperation with other Academies and schools.

In addition, Academies will want to consider the duty to promote well-being as some of the work and activities that support community cohesion can also contribute towards the Every Child Matters outcomes of 'making a positive contribution' , 'enjoy and achieve' and 'achieving economic well-being'.

Teaching, learning and curriculum

An effective Academy will have a high standard of teaching and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values and builds students' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Opportunities for discussing issues of identity and diversity will be integrated across the curriculum.

We need to ensure:

- Lessons across the curriculum that promote common values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in citizenship classes for students to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- A programme of curriculum based activities whereby students' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- An effective voice and involvement of students in the governance and organisation of the Academy in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in Academy, in their local community and beyond.

Equity and excellence

We should continue to focus on securing high standards of attainment for all students from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, ensuring that students are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential.

The Academy tracking systems will enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.

We need to redouble our efforts to monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment. Monitoring of whether students from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others should be accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

Our Academy admissions criteria emphasizes the importance of admission arrangements that promote community cohesion and social equity.

Engagement and ethos

Academy to Academy: We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other Academies and schools. We shall look either locally or further afield and the means of developing the relationship may be through exchange visits or more likely through the internet.

Sharing facilities also provides a means for students to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama.

Academy to parents and the community: Good partnership activities with the local and wider community might include:

- Working together with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into Academy to work with the students, ensuring that the pupil voice is heard and able to effect change.
- Maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the Academy and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals.
- Engagement with parents through coffee mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- Provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through parenting and family support and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of Academy hours, including adult and family learning, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes.

Review

The Governing Body will review this policy every two years.