

THE CASTLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY COHESION GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The Governing Body of The Castle School recognises and is committed to its responsibility to promote community cohesion. This commitment is shared by the school community.

What is Community Cohesion?

Community Cohesion can be considered as 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 work place, in schools and in the wider community.

Community from the School's Perspective

For the school, the term "community" has a number of dimensions, including:

- the school community;
- the community within which the school is located;
- the UK community;
- the global community;
- communities created by the school, eg networks with other schools, such as the Taunton Learning Partnership.

The Role of the School in Promoting Community Cohesion

The school's approach to community cohesion will reflect the nature of its population, including:

- religions or beliefs;
- ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds;
- the location of the school.

As a starting point, the school will build community cohesion by promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion for different groups of students. Alongside this focus on inequalities and a strong respect for diversity, shared values will be promoted and students will be encouraged to actively engage with others to understand what they all hold in common.

The school's contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the following headings:

Teaching, learning and curriculum – through this students will be helped to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply 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, striving to remove barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups;

Engagement and extended services – to provide reasonable means for students and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, including: links with different schools and communities; the provision of extended services; opportunities for students, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.

The school recognises the strength of the link between promoting community cohesion and working towards realising the Every Child Matters outcomes.

Key features of the school's work under each of these headings will include:

Teaching, learning and curriculum – high standard teaching, learning and curriculum provision that supports high standards of attainment, promotes shared values and builds students' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them, recognising similarities and appreciating different cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds; high expectations of success; opportunities for discussing issues of diversity integrated across the whole curriculum; a programme of curriculum and enrichment activities whereby students' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits, for example to places of worship, and meetings with members of different communities; support for students for whom English is an additional language to remove barriers to effective learning; assemblies which promote engagement of learners and shared understanding, as well as the school's ethos and values; encouragement for learners to value diversity and develop a better understanding of UK society, for example by challenging assumptions and creating an open climate to address sensitive and controversial issues.

Equity and excellence – a focus on securing high standards of attainment for all students from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic statuses, abilities and interests, ensuring that students are treated with respect and supported to achieve well.

Engagement and extended services – establishing partnerships with schools locally, nationally and internationally – these will include both "one off" activities such as sporting/cultural events and more formal and extensive partnerships; working with community representatives, for example through mentoring and charity support; engagement with community groups; effective student voice and enabling students to take responsibility and provide leadership; maintaining strong links and multi-agency working with local agencies; working with work based learning providers and other employers; placements for students in voluntary community based activities; engagement with and support for parents; providing extended services, including study support; signposting other extended services; partnership with the Local Authority, including engagement with the Children's Trust and regard to the Children and Young People's Plan in developing the school's development and improvement plan.