



## 1. What does Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mean?

**Equality** - is about ensuring individuals are treated fairly and have access to equal opportunities. The Equality Act 2010 makes specific reference in law to 9 protected characteristics and the School's policies ensure that the School is compliant with the law in all aspects of its operations:



**Diversity** - in its simplest form, diversity is 'difference'. Diversity is real; it is what exists all around us. This Diversity Wheel (John Hopkins University) helps us to very quickly see many ways in which differences present. Some aspects of diversity are visible, enduring and permanent (inner ring) whilst others are not visible and can change over time (outer ring). Of course, as individuals in a diverse community these aspects will impact on all pupils in different ways depending on key factors including their background, family, faith, culture, community, heritage and ethnicity.



**Inclusion** - is what we actively do as an organisation to recognise, explore and to celebrate diversity at Forest School. Inclusive practice will always promote best outcomes for all members of the Forest community. Our aim is for everyone at Forest to develop an inclusive mindset that becomes second nature.



## **2. Here we are in November, what has happened to date?**

We have joined the Schools Inclusion Alliance (SIA). The SIA is a collaboration between Independent Schools who believe that a commitment to diversity and inclusion is essential to reflect the society we serve today and provide an environment within which all young people and staff can thrive and grow.

By joining, Forest School is making a commitment to work together with member schools to share best practice, work together and strive to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of their ethos, practice, and values.

### **All Schools Inclusion Alliance member schools must commit to:**

- i. Identifying a Senior Leadership Team member who has responsibility and accountability for Inclusion. At Forest, that will be Mr Kayne.
- ii. Collecting data across the school to identify where barriers to any members of the community “thriving” might be present.
- iii. Setting an annual action plan, implementing the right strategy for their own organisation that builds on the existing ethos and identity of each school.
- iv. Report on progress against the action plan each academic year, supporting the transparency and accountability needed to drive change.
- v. Having in place a training programme for staff that supports inclusion being embedded into behaviours and practices.
- vi. Having in place a programme to educate students about the diversity of the society around them and how to be inclusive leaders of the future.



All staff – teaching and non-teaching – were asked to watch a video released by the Schools Inclusion Alliance entitled ‘an introduction to anti-racism’. Heads of Section met with their tutor teams to discuss the issue and to help all teachers prepare to deliver a first session to pupils entitled, ‘Let’s talk about Race’. This introductory session - which will be followed by other sessions over the course of the academic year - focused on creating a shared understanding of the language of anti-racism including equality, prejudice, discrimination, racism, stereotype, equity, privilege and tokenism. A vital first step is to create a shared, understood language across the whole School to be able to discuss the issues confidently and openly. That work is underway.

Our pupil leadership met with the Forest School leadership team to explore EDI issues at Forest School. They spoke of their wish to see an embedded understanding of how the Forest provision must represent and include all pupils. And a hope that celebration of the School’s diversity should be continuous and ‘everyday’. There was an interesting sharing of resources (film/podcasts/music/novels/documentaries/articles) between pupils and staff.

As a follow-up to this, Ayanna and Will our Head Girl and Head Boy respectively made history by being the first pupils to attend a meeting of the full governing council. Ayanna and Will were outstanding ambassadors for our school community and spoke eloquently and passionately about different aspects of diversity and inclusion, making it clear to governors that pupil voice must be listened to as a key contribution to the School’s development on this front. The governors committed to spending more time meeting with pupils to gauge their thoughts and feelings about Forest.

Additionally, we now have a group of dedicated EDI prefects who will meet with Mr Kayne every cycle. Mr Kayne will also lead on the implementation of forums to promote open discussion about all matters pertaining to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

### **3. Who will be involved in this work?**

There is a fantastic opportunity for pupils of all ages across the Prep School and Senior School to be front and centre. Pupil voice has always been encouraged at Forest but a strong pupil voice coming from the centre of our community on EDI is a compelling one. Indeed, the task is for the whole Forest community – pupils, parents/carers and members of staff - to find its voice on these matters and to ensure the School develops an even stronger culture which articulates and reflects what it really values.

### **4. Who is going to help us?**

It is always useful to gain perspective and to invite people beyond the white gates to help us shape our review and make sure we are asking the right questions, not just setting ourselves up to confirm our subjective view of ourselves. We intend to partner with experts who will help shape our strategic implementation. All advice suggests meaningful and lasting change is likely to require this to be a long-term ongoing project.



**Diversity and Inclusion** - We will be working in partnership with [RS Academics](#) and [All-in Education](#). With respect to the latter, [Johan Jenson and Louise Ishani](#) are experts in the field of Diversity and Inclusion and will help us to audit our existing practices, will facilitate leadership team discussions about action planning and will deliver whole staff training.



**Anti-Racism** - [Professor Vini Lander](#) is the Director of the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality in the Carnegie School of Education. Professor Lander is going to work with the Leadership Team. The first of three sessions will be held on Tuesday 24th November. Forest School has also committed to the Anti-Racist Award ([Carnegie School of Education, LBU](#)) which is an assessment tool to evaluate current practices and initiatives within our school as we go along. It enables evaluation of the overall anti-racism support and strategies that exist, whilst also helping to give structure to the development plan for any improvements.

The Award framework focuses on the following areas: Governance, Leadership & Management, School Environment, Professional Learning & Development, Hidden Curriculum, Pedagogy & Curriculum and Parents/Carers & Community Partnerships.

[Professor Paul Miller](#) will deliver training to middle leaders at Forest School starting with Heads of House on Tuesday 24th November. This initial workshop is designed to

- i. provide a space for open and honest conversations about race/racism and its effects upon individuals and organisations and
- ii. provide opportunities to explore and develop positive ‘race conscious’ and race inclusive language for practice.

## **5. Who is the School accountable to in undertaking this work? Are the Governors aware that this is happening?**

Yes, the Governors are fully involved. Their responsibility is to ensure that the School is run properly and that the School evaluates its educational provision regularly to fulfil its educational aims. To that end, they work very closely with the Leadership Team at Forest. So, the School is accountable to its Board of Governors in terms of operations and strategy, it is accountable to the Department of Education in terms of educational law, as a charity it is accountable to the Charity Commission, but most importantly it is accountable to its pupils and their families in providing an outstanding all-round education that prepares them to take their place in adult society as useful contributors and potential ‘game changers’.

## **6. An exciting road ahead?**

Forest pupils are usually never short of things to say. They ask plenty of questions. They have a strong sense of justice and are happy to help others. All this means there is a real opportunity to embrace the challenges laid down by the voices urging society to work hard to become ‘anti-racist’ rather than ‘non-racist’. On the back of the privilege of a good education, plenty of support, and numerous opportunities to develop into young people ready to contribute to the world, Forest pupils are well-placed to make a difference. There is no one path through Forest or on leaving Forest, but an awareness of the needs of others, a desire to contribute to a community, an enjoyment of diversity, and an appetite for living a fulfilling, useful life are the hall marks of a good Old Forester.

We would really like to hear from you. Please do e-mail [EDI@forest.org.uk](mailto:EDI@forest.org.uk) to express ideas and thoughts on any aspect of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Forest School.



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SCHOOL