



Policy No: 22a(6)

## OUR LADY'S ABINGDON (OLA) COMMUNITY COHESION POLICY

*This policy, which applies to the whole school, is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.*

### Document Details

Information Sharing Category	School Domain
Version	1
Date Published	September 2021
Authorised by (if required)	Head
Responsible Area	Leadership Team

We comply with the Government guidance and regulations, currently in force, regarding COVID.

**Availability:** All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school.

### Monitoring and Review:

Reviewed: September 2021

Next Review: September 2022

Signed:

Head	Deputy Head
Mr Daniel Gibbons	Dr Beth Reynaert
Signed: 	Signed: 

### 1. Aims

This policy is closely linked to OLA's Cultural Capital Policy and Student Voice Policy. An aim of OLA is to provide a framework within which all children are enabled to develop the highest possible level of achievement, fulfilling their academic, moral, social, physical and spiritual potential. The curriculum of OLA should prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

### 2. Promoting community cohesion

#### What is community cohesion?

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common Mission 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 in the wider community.

#### Community from a school's perspective

The term 'community' has a number of dimensions including:

- the **OLA community** – the students it serves, their families, the staff, our Governors and our alumni
- the **community within which OLA is located** – the community of Abingdon, our proximity to Oxford and the people who live or work in these areas
- the **community of Britain** - all schools are by definition part of this community; and
- the **global community** – formed by international links through families, other international schools, international accreditation and other international corporations, agencies and organisations.

*OLA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*

*Community Cohesion Policy: Reviewed September 2021*

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 play a full part in promoting community cohesion. Our school should be a thriving, cohesive community, but it also has a vital part to play in building a more cohesive society.

#### **Developing cultural capital at a societal level**

It is vital that students at OLA understand their locality, communities and economies. Every school - 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. We wish to show that through their ethos and curriculum schools 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 the duty of all schools to address issues of 'how we live together' and 'dealing with difference' however controversial and difficult they might sometimes seem.

#### **Developing cultural capital at a global level**

Global issues are an important part of the lives of our pupils, who live in a world where economies are increasingly interdependent and global communication is a daily reality. They have access to digital media and increased opportunity to travel, watch news stories from around the world as they develop and follow, for example, international sporting events as they happen. Therefore, the global dimension should be reflected in the attitudes and values of the pupils, OLA's ethos and Schemes of Work through:

- enabling pupils to know more about global issues.
- celebrating the rich and diverse heritage represented in School, and local and national communities.
- understanding complex international interdependencies in the global economy.
- respecting and valuing different cultures and beliefs.
- enjoying regular contact with students and adults living in different countries and promoting communication and friendship through letter writing and emails to friends in partner schools.
- encouraging greater involvement in environmental issues and to raise awareness of issues other than those in our locality through joint projects with partner schools.

OLA will continue to liaise with the British Council on projects, where relevant.

**The eight Key Concepts** of the global dimension of our pupils' learning experience which we will aim to develop are:-

- (1) diversity
- (2) conflict resolution
- (3) global citizenship
- (4) human rights
- (5) interdependence
- (6) social justice
- (7) sustainable development
- (8) values and perceptions.

OLA will develop and fully exploit a variety of global learning partnerships.

These will include activities such as:-

- email, Internet and art projects
- interacting with visitors from other countries
- pupil/staff visits to places of cultural interest in the UK and abroad
- pupil exchanges.

OLA will encourage the study of foreign languages for all pupils and organise regular celebrations of our rich and diverse heritage.

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### How do we promote community cohesion?

OLA supports students from different ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds and those with protected characteristics. Students learn with, from and about each other, and OLA provides opportunities for interaction between students from different backgrounds in wider settings. We group our work 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.
  - As stated in updated 2021 *guidance*, Schools are not required to teach about all the protected characteristics in every year group. Our curriculum should be planned and delivered so that children develop **age-appropriate knowledge and understanding during their time at OLA**. At KS3 and 4, this includes age-appropriate knowledge of the protected characteristics, including those of sexual orientation and gender reassignment. In the Lower School, pupils are taught about the different types of family groups that exist within society. Teaching on these matters is integrated appropriately into the curriculum, rather than addressed separately or in one-off lessons. As a catholic school, OLA teaches the new subjects in accordance with our school values and ethos while also having due regard to the guidance and being consistent with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (DFE Statutory guidance).
  - In our RSE/PSHCE 'Life to the Full' programme, OLA takes a holistic approach to the teaching of all RSE subject matters including teaching on the Protected Characteristics. There is a continuous, age-appropriate approach to the teaching of the subject from 7 to 18.
  - In Lower KS2, we explore similarities and differences (LKS2 Module 1, Unit 2: We Don't Have To Be The Same) and deepen children's exploration of family and others in LKS2 Mod2 Unit 2: Family, Friend and Others.
  - In Upper KS2, we explore difference once again through the Paradise Street series, including discussion around 'two mums and two dads' etc.
  - From Year 7, we make it clear to students that the teaching of Relationship Education is for all, irrespective of sexual orientation, and we begin to introduce scenarios that include people with the protected characteristics.
  - In Year 8, we provide substantial teaching on the Protected Characteristics, an in-depth look at transgender people, and homophobia.
  - In later years in secondary schools, we return to these topics in age-appropriate ways, ensuring that the teaching is appropriately integrated into the curriculum.

As detailed in the Cultural Capital Policy, we ensure that:

- *lessons across the curriculum* that promote common values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping – for example, opportunities for students to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK';
  - *a programme of curriculum and co-curricular 'OLA Sphere' 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 and
  - *opportunities for effective voice, advocacy and involvement of students* in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their families, in their local community and beyond.
- **Equity and the right to flourish** - 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. We continue to focus on enabling our children, irrespective of their ethnic background or the different socio-economic statuses, to be treated with respect and supported in achieving their full potential. Our assessment tools enable us to evaluate progress of different groups and to tackle underperformance by any particular group. We monitor incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment and whether children from particular groups are more likely to be excluded or disciplined than others. This is accompanied by appropriate behaviour and discipline policies in place to deal with this.

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- **Engagement, connection and relationships** - 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 schools and communities locally, across the country and internationally.
  - **School to school:** We seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. Sharing facilities provides a means for students to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama. Fundamental to our interactions is the sharing of knowledge, ideas and insights with other UK catholic schools.
  - **School to parents and the community:** Our partnership activities with the local and wider community include:
    - working together with community representatives or bringing community representatives into school to work with the students
    - maintaining strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies, such as the youth support service, the police and social care and health professionals;
    - inviting parents to attend workshops led by faculty/staff and/or guest speakers
    - engagement with parents through coffee mornings, open mornings, curriculum evenings, parent meetings
    - provision of extended services, and in particular bringing parents together from different backgrounds through community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours.