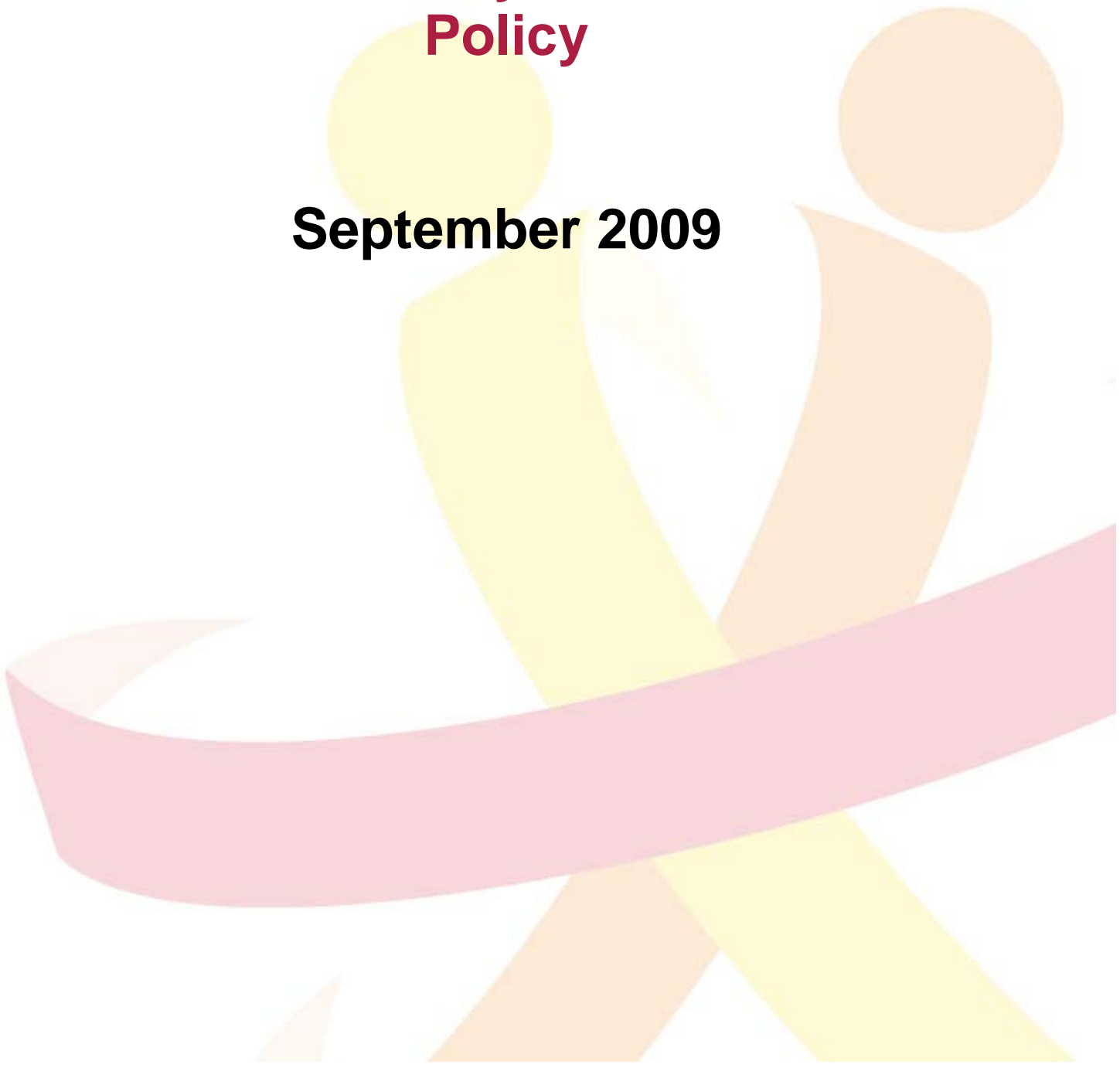


# **Darton High School**

## **Community Cohesion Policy**

**September 2009**



## Community Cohesion

The DCSF definition is: "... 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 in the wider community.

This policy aims to show how we at Darton High School will meet our duty to promote community cohesion.

### Our school vision

Our vision is to provide a high quality education for all our students. We are committed to continuously improving all aspects of that education for young people. What we offer at Darton High School will, within the context of our humanities ethos, support the development of successful, moral, adaptable, autonomous, life-long learners. When this vision is fully realised we will be the first choice for secondary education within our community.

### Our school aims

In order to prepare all our students for living and working in a diverse and cohesive society we will work with our students to:

- encourage the development of a secure sense of their own identity, both as individuals and as part of the local, national and global communities of which they are a part;
- encourage open and positive attitudes towards diversity and the development of the skills, understanding and confidence to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping;
- support the development of the skills, knowledge, understanding and motivation they need to become active citizens who recognise their rights and responsibilities;
- ensure equality of opportunity, remove barriers to access and eliminate discrimination and harassment;
- strive to ensure they receive a broad and balanced education and succeed in reaching their individual potential at the highest level possible;
- provide opportunities for positive interaction and the building of relationships with people from a range of different backgrounds both in our local community and the wider society.

### Our school context

Relatively low aspirations are a feature of the community, both in terms of learning and ambition, as seen from audits on adult learning carried out by local partnerships with which the school has close links. The community is also overwhelmingly white-working class and has a somewhat parochial and insular outlook. This limited cultural diversity has an impact on the work of the school.

Specialist School Status: The school's vision is reflected in the school's specialist humanities status. The status is more than a focus on the specialist subjects (English, citizenship & RE), but is an expression of our humanities ethos. This is based on shared human-values. It's about fairness & justice. Doing what is right. It includes a valuing of the moral, the ethical and the spiritual. We want to treat all members of our community with respect and accept all those from different cultures to ours. The ethos stresses the importance of student voice. In addition the school's specialist status is expressed through our work with community partners in promoting active citizenship and life-long learning.

BSF: The school is currently planning for a Building Schools for the Future (BSF Wave III) new-build on the same site. The school is projected to open in February 2011, as an 11-19 Advanced Learning Centre (ALC). Planning for the ALC has been the catalyst for the school to re-evaluate its curriculum and other fundamental aspects of its provision. For example this has led to significant shifts in the agreed principles underpinning the school's curriculum away from a large core model (with no disapplication and compulsory technology and MFL, and 20% science), to a more personalised model (with greater variety of pathways and more choice). However in the lead up to the ALC maintenance of the current school buildings is proving more challenging as its services & fabric meet the end of their life expectancies and little funding is available for repairs.

Learners' Attainment on Entry: Attainment on entry is broadly average compared with the national picture (Raise online); CAT tests taken in September by Y7 also indicate a broadly average profile. In September 2009 we have 12 students with a Statement of SEN and a further 151 on School Action/School Action Plus.

Learners' Social and Economic Backgrounds: 81% of students live in the Darton West and Darton East Wards of Barnsley. The area is a mixture of private and council housing in the former pit villages that make up this part of Barnsley (e.g. Kexborough, Darton, Mapplewell, Staincross, etc.). The socio-economic mix is favourable when compared with the majority of the borough, but the locality still contains areas of significant disadvantage in a national context, for example Darton Ward, where the overwhelming majority of the students come from, is 1,844<sup>th</sup> out of 8,159 wards in the country in the index of multiple deprivation. Other students come from even less advantaged wards, including Athersley (127<sup>th</sup>) and Monk Bretton (374<sup>th</sup>). ACORN categories for our students show that 31% are wealthy achievers, 29% are comfortably off, 14 have moderate means and 26% are hard pressed. The latest Y11 YELLIS results indicate that cultural capital and support for education at home is below the national average and significantly so in a number of areas.

## Policy into practice

### Teaching, learning and curriculum

We will:

- value diversity;
- promote shared values;
- promote awareness of human rights, how to apply and defend them;
- develop skills of participation and responsible action;
- integrate opportunities to discuss relevant issues across the curriculum;
- monitor and assess the impact of teaching, learning and the curriculum.

We will achieve this in the following ways:

Vertical Tutor Grouping & House System: As part of the promotion of the school's humanities ethos and in preparation for the ALC the school has introduced a Vertical Tutor Group (VTG) and House System. This pastoral system better supports peer mentoring and is being used to break down barriers between year groups; additionally the House System is proving to be an effective vehicle for student rewards as well as offering opportunity for student leadership (such as House Captains).

Integrated skills-based curriculum: The development and implementation of a Y7 skills-based curriculum: Skills for Learning (S4L). S4L commenced in September 2007 and incorporates English, citizenship, RE, geography & history content (i.e. the humanities). This integrated curriculum delivers transferable skills and utilises 20% of the time for each week.

SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) has been added to the Y8 and Y9 curriculum as a discrete subject; this is also mapped against the PLTs (Personal Learning and Thinking) framework.

All subject areas will be reviewed annually in line management meetings to ensure the curriculum promotes awareness of diversity, shared values, exploration of identity and human rights where appropriate and this will be monitored by Curriculum Team Leaders and the nominated Senior Leadership Team link. The Citizenship, Skills for Learning and RE departments will also act as trail blazers in this area. In addition, the House activities that are undertaken half-termly will reflect the aims of this policy, for example by focusing on human rights and associated issues.

Teaching methods will, where appropriate, encourage discussion, questioning and reflection, Philosophy for Children, collaborative learning etc. and this will be monitored through planning on the Lesson Plan Tool, lesson and learning observations. Staff will receive relevant training and support to ensure they feel confident in promoting discussions around sensitive issues.

### **Equity and excellence**

In line with our Equal Opportunity Policy, data will be rigorously analysed to identify students at risk of underachieving and appropriate intervention strategies will be utilised. We will also follow the Staff Protocol, put in place to ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in promoting and adhering to our school ethos.

We will work collaboratively with our students during the annual Teaching and Learning Review to address barriers to achievement, and analyse the annual Kirkland Rowell surveys carried out to pinpoint areas for development as well as areas of strength. We will also survey and analyse student take up of enrichment activities to ensure that all groups of children are equitably represented to eliminate variations in experience for different groups.

Student Voice: The school has a high-level commitment to student voice. This expresses itself in student involvement in Governors' meetings, monthly Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings, planning for the ALC and in many organisational processes (e.g. recruitment & tendering meetings). The process of student democracy is well developed and extends beyond the school to our promotion of a Pyramid Student Council and involvement in the borough-wide Youth Council. The school also promotes student leadership in many ways (e.g. House Captains, sports leaders etc).

### **Engagement and Extended Services**

We develop links with other schools (such as those we have with our feeder primaries and Greenacre Special School) which are curriculum based and which encourage communication on a range of topics. We take part in a local forum with other schools and organisations, at NECLA (North Eastern and Central Learning Alliance) which was set up to promote and provide an extended 14 – 19 curriculum offer. We also contribute extensively to the Regional Yorkshire and Humber Specialist School and Academies Trust (SSAT) and the SSAT National Humanities Steering Group. We maintain close relationships with Youth Service, Police (PCSO) Health Service. We also maintain and strengthen our links with parents employing a Parental Support Adviser to work with families.

We develop opportunities for consulting and engaging with students, encouraging them to contribute to the evaluation and improvement of their school community, particularly engaging with the design and of the new school plans and building works. We have also formed a DISC Community Action Group which tackles practical school and community work on a weekly basis. We also consult regularly with our students, staff parents and neighbours, via our Student Council, Staff Forum, Community Forum

and parent Forum, to engage with our stakeholders on school improvement. In addition to the formal termly full Governors' meeting we also hold an additional developmental and evaluative Governors' meeting, again focussed on school improvement.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The governors will ensure that:

- the school complies with its duty to promote community cohesion.

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- this policy is readily available and that governors, staff, students and their parents know about it and are updated on its progress;
- all staff understand their responsibilities and receive appropriate support and training if necessary;
- this policy and its procedures are followed.

All staff will ensure that:

- they have read the policy and understand their responsibilities;
- they promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes to diversity in accordance with this policy and other relevant policies.
- Assistant Headteacher (teaching and learning) will ensure that:
- practice in school supports the aims and procedures outlined in this policy;
- appropriate training is undertaken in order to support colleagues in carrying out their responsibilities;
- staff, governors, parents and students are kept up to date with relevant information;
- monitoring and assessment of the impact of this policy takes place.

### **Monitoring and assessment**

- Subject leaders will monitor teaching, learning, resources and the curriculum in their subject area to ensure they meet the aims of this policy. This analysis will take place in Line Management meetings, following lesson and learning observations (drop-ins) as well as scrutiny of work.
- This policy was prepared by SLT and ratified by the governors on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009. It will be reviewed annually.
- Review of the policy will generate points for action which will be incorporated into our SDP/Raising Achievement Action Plan, as well as learning experiences offered to children and young people.