

The duty on schools to promote community cohesion

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Community cohesion

The duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion came into force on 1 September.

Responsibility for this duty is placed on governing bodies and Ofsted will include schools contributions to promoting community cohesion in its inspections from September 2008.

Promoting community cohesion is central to the Every Child Matters Agenda. Many schools already consider promoting community cohesion as an important part of their role and are undertaking good work with pupils and the wider community. The purpose of the duty is to build on best practice.

DCSF guidance to support schools in implementing the duty was published in July. The guidance defines what is meant by community cohesion and how this relates to the role of schools: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion

There is also a range of case studies to support schools to implement the duty:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/Community_cohesion_case_studies

The council would like to work with and support schools to promote community cohesion. Your School Improvement Advisor, or School Improvement Partner, will discuss this duty with your Headteacher during their school visits. The council's community cohesion strategy can be found at www.luton.gov.uk/communitycohesion

Your school's approach to promoting community cohesion should reflect the nature of the school's population and the community it serves in terms of race, faith, age, gender, disability, sexuality and socio-economic background.

Your approach will probably include a range of activities:

- within the school
- with other schools
- with parents and the local and wider community.

Your school can promote community cohesion in many ways; citizenship education, the extended schools programme and youth participation activities are some key areas. Broadly, schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under three headings:

- **teaching, learning and curriculum** – helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity while 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 through, for example, the new *Identity and diversity: living together in the UK* strand within citizenship education.
- **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 children, young people and their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relationships: including links with different schools and communities and the provision of extended service with opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.



More details can be found in the DCSF community cohesion guidance – see www.luton.gov.uk/governors

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