

# F.S. Key Elementary School

A DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL



At Key, we are committed to:

- Academic excellence and active, engaged learning
- Ensuring every student is valued, supported, challenged, engaged and can thrive
- Ensuring all staff are valued, challenged, respected and supported
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Trust and transparency
- A safe, positive, respectful, kind, tolerant community and environment
- Social responsibility and philanthropy

At Key, our mission is to support the perpetual academic, social, and emotional development of each student within a safe, inclusive and supportive community environment. The community aspects involve the connection between students, staff, families and other members of our surrounding neighborhoods to promote a positive and equitable environment that embraces our diversity.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan**

Key is 100% committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. Our leadership, staff and Equity Team have worked to develop an action plan to promote and advance these goals.

*At Key, we stand against any form of intolerance, disrespect and discrimination.*

- We affirmatively commit to being anti-racist and anti-discriminatory. The community must acknowledge and understand the context of racism, sexism and discrimination to achieve a tolerant and inclusive community.

- We understand bias, problems, incidents and issues are inherent in any school and environment – but it is how we respond to them that defines us -- we must value a human and humane response above institutional and reputational protection.

\* Noting there are specific legal protections based on race/ethnicity, religion, sex/gender, sexual or gender identity, age, disability, pregnancy and national origin.

#### **Dealing with Issues Head-On: The Key to a Safe, Respectful Place**

“In some cases [of intolerance or harm], the viciousness is intentional; in others, perpetrators might have little clue—other than shock value—about the meaning behind the words, signs and symbols they shout, tweet, paint or text. In many ways, **the issue is less about intent**—who can know for certain why someone does something?**—and more about impact**. No matter the intention, these messages and behaviors can cause fear, damage and injury to individuals and the entire school community.” -- *From Teaching Tolerance*

“A school climate that encourages inclusion and promotes tolerance does not guarantee that bias incidents won’t happen. Instead, it creates an atmosphere in which these acts are less likely to gain momentum and more likely to be quickly and widely denounced.” – *Teaching Tolerance*

- **Revised Incident Response Plan:** Key has revised our response plan for incidents of racism, intolerance and bullying using on best practices from Teaching Tolerance, and every staff member is trained in how to respond. See the full response plan on Key’s website.
  - The staff commits to explicitly communicate to students that there are safe, caring adults who are there for them and will be respectful and supportive of their concerns.
  - Students and parents will be made explicitly aware of how to report incidents and concerns – in safe and confidential ways – and response process is fully transparent so everyone is aware of what to expect when incidents happen.
  - The top commitment is to ensure all children involved in incidents are safe, cared for and treated respectfully and that parents of students involved are immediately notified. The school will notify the community and restate the school commitment against intolerance.
  - Key is adopting a restorative practice response model to incidents – and the school leadership is examining discipline policies and practices – from routine day-to-day responses to incidents in classrooms and possible biases, and issues that require more intensive response, such as suspension policies.
    - Research shows that [children of color](#) and [children with disabilities](#) often receive harsher and more disciplinary action than other students, and that [boys and girls are held to different standards and expectations in behavior and in classroom work](#).
- **Restorative Practices and Discipline Policy Review:** The school will follow an evidence-based discipline model that includes for accountability as well as healing and learning from incidents and issues.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** The school’s 4Rs social emotional learning program has been expanded to include diversity, equity and inclusion to teach and engage with students in age-appropriate ways.

- **Staff Training:** The staff will continue to receive trainings and professional support to address biases and systemic practices. The staff have an explicit goal of giving students multiple adults around them they can trust and confide in.
  - Morningside Center provides training to all staff to continue 4Rs and Social Emotional Learning instruction. Summer 2019 training included how to facilitate classroom community circles. These circles provide a safe space, bringing students together to share, listen and build bonds. These are being used during morning meetings and for restorative capacity when necessary. Each classroom has staff community circle partners who participate in the circles to build bonds and trust with the students – so three adults will be working with each classroom. Partners have lunch gatherings and are part of the smaller classroom community.
  - Members of the staff engaged in Courageous Conversations (summer/fall 2019) (<https://courageousconversation.com/>), and some staff received professional development (summer 2019) through Teaching for Change and [Turnaround for Children](#), which focuses on connections between adversity, stress, and trust, as well as providing safe spaces for learning.
  - Staff received coaching focusing on supporting community building, identity development and cultural awareness during the first 4-6 weeks of school (2019-2020). Coaches received special training from Morningside and creating plans with support from a book entitled "[Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves](#)".
  - Teachers are prioritizing community building for the first month of school – focusing on developing deep trusting relationships and ensuring a safe space to learn.
- **Classroom and a Commitment to Diversity Every Day:** Teachers and staff will ensure lessons, books, conversations, examples and other items reflect and celebrate diversity.
- **Schoolwide Engagement:** The school will hold three schoolwide diversity and inclusion event initiatives that focus on active engagement for students, such as World Heritage Day, a Social Justice/Equity Night where parents can learn about the curriculum and school activities and acceleration block and classroom activities. These may vary year-to-year.
- **Equity Review:** The school will conduct an analysis of discipline and Key student performance on PARCC and other assessments based on race, ethnicity, gender and individuals with specialized learning differences.
- **Student Leadership Requirements:** The school has updated expectations and requirements for students to become part of the Student Council, Green Team, and other leadership groups.
- **Diversity Recruitment:** Staff will undertake ongoing hiring recruitment and outreach efforts to continue to diversify staff, and this remains a priority.
- **Parent, Guardian, Staff and Community Engagement:** The school has engaged Kindred (<https://kindredcommunities.org/>), a group that will facilitate a process to foster diversity and equity in a safe space with the community, parents, guardians and staff through discussions and events. The Equity Team will strive to hold or facilitate a minimum of three adult-focused community events per year to promote education around issues of racism and intolerance, and a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Communications and Website Resources:** The Equity Team will be posting a range of resources to Key's website – including school, DCPS, DC city and federal policies and procedures; links to expert and supportive organizations; information sources on diversity, equity and inclusion; sources for websites, books and other materials for children; and ways you can support inclusion and engage at home and in the community. Regular updates about equity activities and highlights will be sent to

families through email and sent home with students. Please always feel free to reach out to any member of the Equity Team or email at [keyequityteam@gmail.com](mailto:keyequityteam@gmail.com).

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## **KEY DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION EXPECTATIONS:**

### **Expectations for Staff and Teachers**

- The school climate and culture must foster inclusion and tolerance. All staff must:
  - Be trained and have ongoing support in addressing explicit and implicit biases and discrimination.
  - Build inclusion and diversity into learning throughout the year. Students should learn about differences in culture and experiences – with diversity and inclusion in representation in lessons, books, examples, role models, and other avenues and learn about valuing individuals for their differences.
    - For instance, teachers and staff are updating lesson plans and examples used to have more inclusive representation, reviewing classroom libraries for diversity in offerings, putting up inspirational pictures and examples of diverse, inclusive role models from different fields and other efforts.
  - At all school-community events, the staff should clearly and explicitly state the school’s commitment to inclusion and the expectation of tolerance and respect.
- Staff will follow best practices for responding immediately and effectively to any incident of hate, intolerance, racism or bullying (See Incident Response document for more details). This includes training in how to provide support for students who were impacted and informing parents and guardians of those directly impacted.
- Staff will explicitly and clearly inform parents how to report any incidents or concerns – and what the procedures are for handling these situations. Staff will inform parents and the community about incidents -- while respecting confidentiality – and explicitly reaffirm the community’s commitment to anti-discrimination.
- Staff must explicitly and clearly let students know this is a safe and respectful environment – and let them know this a community of caring adults. They should set an understanding and expectation for behavior, but also ensuring students know when and how to talk to staff about any issues in comfortable ways – including when they are worried about getting in trouble, getting others in trouble or have concerns about retaliation or ramifications.
- Staff must address issues of racism, prejudice, religious intolerance and other forms of discrimination to understand their existence and harmful impact – and how to respond against it when they see or experience it – in age-appropriate ways.
- Staff should encourage students to be [up-standers](#) – not bystanders – including teaching students to stand up for what is just and not to be penalized for it.

### **Expectations for Families and the Key Community**

- All parents and guardians are concerned about the welfare, wellbeing, education and safety of their children.
- Parents and guardians must treat educators and administrators with respect and tolerance – and respect other families in the community with respect and tolerance.

DRAFT DOCUMENT: For community review. Please provide comments by 12/15/19 to [keyequityteam@gmail.com](mailto:keyequityteam@gmail.com).

- While all experiences are different - parents and guardians should be in a position to practice respect and empathy and consider the questions:
  - What if my child was the target of any given incident – or similar incident – or a pattern of negative behavior, how would I expect and want the administration and community to respond?
  - What if my child was the one to carry out an intolerant or harmful incident or carried out a pattern of harmful behavior, how would I expect and want the administration and community to respond?
- Families of the Key Community will commit to ensuring that all activities reflect diversity and inclusion. This includes ensuring that activities such as the auction (including in its theme) reflect these values and is inclusive of families from a range of economic situations.

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## **Key Is Committed to Best Practices When an Incident Occurs**

### **How do I know my child will be safe and that staff will respond appropriately and effectively to any incidents that may happen?**

Issues and incidents can happen at any school and in any community. The school must have responsive and appropriate plans in place to be able to immediately respond to issues. This must be immediate and an inclusive approach that involves impacted children, families and staff.

Priority must be placed on the safety and wellbeing of students, and on an environment that acknowledges problems and focuses on learning from them and healing.

Teaching Tolerance has a set of best practices, and Key School has an established plan in place that every faculty member has been trained to follow. (Links to more on [teachingtolerance.org](http://teachingtolerance.org)).

[Put Safety First](#), [Denounce the Act](#), [Investigate – with Appropriate Confidentiality and Sensitivity to Those Involved](#), [Involve Others – Including Informing Parents and Guardians](#), [Provide Accurate Information— and Dispel Misinformation](#), [Seek Fairness](#), [Avoid Blame](#)  
[Support Targeted Students](#), [Promote Healing](#)

### **What Does an Effective, Best-Practice Response Look Like?**

- Adults must be present and available to observe and listen.
- Teachers or administrators must intervene when an incident arises or a pattern of issues emerge-- to make sure all are safe. If an adult witnesses any bullying, racist slurs, name calling or other acts of verbal and/or physical stop the incident immediately. Separate the student(s) doing the bullying and their target. Get assistance from school staff members if necessary. Make sure to ask the targeted student(s) "Are you okay?"
- Give a clear message. Bullying, hate, discrimination and racism are unacceptable. Remain calm when addressing the students. Cite relevant school or classroom rules (e.g. "name calling and not respecting others are both against the rules in our school.")
- Students who bully or commit acts of hate must hear the message that their behavior is wrong and harms others.

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- Targeted students must hear the message that caring adults will protect them.
- The need and concern for full investigations into incidents or situations is essential – but it must be balanced with the need for immediate and evolving efforts to address problems and to communicate with the community and efforts needed to heal for individuals impacted and within a community. Follow the Teaching Tolerance guidelines and best practices for [managing](#) and having an action plan in place for when incidents or issues arise.
- Concern for institutional and personal protection is inherent when problems arise – but they must come second to the welfare, safety and protection of the children and our community.
- Support and services must be available to 1) the students involved in any incident; 2) to the community most directly impacted by the incident – those who may have been witness to the incident or are close to those involved in the incident; 3) the broader school and community – everyone is impacted by incidents, and cumulative incidents create a climate.