

***A Brief Guide For  
Anti-Bias/Social Justice Work At  
Brooklyn Friends School***

## **BFS Mission Statement**

Guided by the Quaker belief that there is a Divine Light in everyone, Brooklyn Friends School cultivates an intellectually ambitious and diverse community that celebrates each individual's gifts. We challenge our students to value and embrace difference as they develop critical thinking skills and apply their knowledge and intelligence both in and out of the classroom. In this rich learning environment, we inspire all members of our community to voice their convictions, to discover and pursue their passions, and to seek truth. Our graduates are compassionate, curious, and confident global citizens who let their lives speak in the spirit of leadership and service.



## *Diversity at Brooklyn Friends School*

### **History of the Diversity Office**

The Diversity Office has been in existence for four years. Prior to July 2011, there were various individuals within the BFS community who were actively involved in diversity related work and helped to lay the foundation. BFS recognized the importance of this work, the way in which it falls in line with the mission of the school and the Quaker commitment to social justice. Members of the school community worked together to actualize the vision for the creation of the Diversity Office. This office has been instrumental in building off of the foundation that had been laid by individuals by giving the previous efforts shape, language and direction.

### **What does Diversity look like at Brooklyn Friends School?**

Since its inception in July 2011, the Diversity Office's program has incorporated school wide initiatives for all members of the Brooklyn Friends community. Although the program is continuously evolving, here are a few examples of some initiatives:

#### -Diversity Speaker Series

Various speakers were invited to engage all members of the BFS community that covered a wide variety of issues that directly reflect and impact our community. These events took place during and after school hours so that everyone could have equal access to information.

#### -Professional Development

In addition to supporting individual needs regarding diversity related work, the office provides annual professional development for faculty and staff: In-House Professional Development, People of Color Conference, Undoing Racism, Gender and Sexuality Conference, Courageous Conversations and the White Privilege Conference to name a few.

#### -Student Identity Work

The Office works with faculty and staff in a consultant capacity to support students growth and development as they continuously explore their identity in an age appropriate manner. This work is being done through affinity group work, the diversity speaker series and student leadership conferences.

### **How is diversity approached at Brooklyn Friends School?**

The Diversity Office takes a three prong approach to the work. The program explores the various aspects of diversity through three different lenses: Comprehensive, Intersectional and Power and Privilege.

-Comprehensive- *Critical analysis of the various aspects of diversity and the way in which it impacts us as individuals as well as interpersonally.*

-Intersectional- *is a concept often used (in critical theories) to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.*

#### -Power and Privilege-

*Privilege: Benefits and resources gained by any person(s) or groups of people who have access to a larger dominant culture within a society due to any one of their social identifiers.*

*Power: The possession of control or command over others; exercising authority or being able to impact/influence a perceived reality or external environment.*

### **How do I get involved?**

Contact the Director of Diversity and Institutional Equity, Orinthia Swindell, oswindell@brooklynfriends.org, 718-852-1029, x378

## SOCIAL IDENTITY GROUPS

Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self-claimed and frequently ascribed by others. For example, racial groupings are often ascribed as well as self-claimed.

### Examples

(feel free to use your own language for your identities)

Gender	Woman, Man, Transgender
Sex	Intersex, Male, Female
Race	Asian/South Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American/First Nation, Arab American, Latina/o, African American/Black, White/Caucasian, Biracial/Multiracial
Ethnicity	Irish, Italian, Korean, Polish, German, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Persian, Jamaican, Russian, Japanese, Dominican
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual, Asexual, Queer
Religion/Spirituality	Atheist, Agnostic, Jewish, Christian, Quaker, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Bahá'í
Social Class	Poor, Working Class, Middle Class, Upper Class, Owning Class
Age	Youth/Child, Young Adult, Middle-Age Adult, Older/Mature, Elderly, "Baby Boomer," "Gen X/Y"
Ability	Temporarily Able-bodied, Person living with a disability, Temporarily Disabled
Body Size/Type	Thin, Overweight, Underweight, Heavy, Slim, Healthy, Skinny, Person of Size, Fat

## Anti-Bias/Social Justice Vocabulary List

*Language both contributes to oppression and privilege and can also potentially be a tool of liberation. The power inherent in the ability to name oneself and others is tremendous. For these reasons, we encourage you to consider the following definitions as a rough starting point. Many of these terms and definitions will and should change over time. We welcome your input.*

**Ableism:** The system of oppression based on ability; assumes disabled people as flawed, insufficient, and inferior. Includes assumptions about what is “normal” and results in the marginalization of the disabled. In brief, it is the unearned privilege afforded to non-disabled people.

**Ageism:** Is the pervasive oppression of people based on their age. Discrimination comes from the societal myth that older and younger people cannot perform certain cognitive or affective standards in the same way simply because they are younger or older. Therefore, based on people's ages, they have unfairly prescribed roles.

**Ally:** A person who supports marginalized, silenced, or less privileged groups without actually being a member of those groups. This person will often directly confront and challenge systems of oppression.

**Anti-Racism:** More than an intellectual opposition to the principles of racial supremacy, it is the recognition of racism as part of institutional structures and the struggle to stop power and gain based on racism and/or race bigotry.

**Assimilation:** Assimilation-from the Latin, *assimilare*, to make similar-is the process whereby newcomers to society are encouraged to give up their cultural way of life and accommodate as quickly as possible to values and culture of the host society. It is an ethnocentric, one-way process of cultural exchange, in that only the newcomer is expected to adapt, with the implied promise that group acceptance will be the social reward.

**Attitudinal barriers:** People with disabilities face barriers as part of their everyday lives, including “systematic barriers” in the workplace and society. Attitudes are often the greatest barrier, reflecting society’s low expectations and unwillingness to recognize and appreciate the full potential of people with disabilities.

**Bias:** An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment.

**Bigotry:** An unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes or prejudices.

**Bisexual:** A person who has significant romantic, emotional, physical, and/or sexual attractions to both men and women, but not necessarily simultaneously or equally.

**Christonormativity:** The system of oppression which assumes Christianity as the norm, favors Christians, and denigrates and stigmatizes anyone that is not Christian. Equates Americanness with Christianity.

**Cisgender:** The term used to describe those having a gender identity or performing in gender roles that society considers appropriate for one's sex.

**Class:** A class consists of a large group of people who occupy a similar economic position in the wider society based on income, wealth, property ownership, education, skills, or authority in the economic sphere. Class affects people not only on an economic level, but also on an emotional level.

**Culture:** Culture is the sum total of human creations-material and nonmaterial that comprise the complex pattern of living that directs human social life, and is handed down through generations by communicative interaction rather than by genetic transmission.

**Disability:** Depending on the model informing the definition (i.e., medical, social, economic, feminist, legal, social justice, etc.) social, historical, political, and mythological coordinates impact the actual meaning of disability and disabled people as objects of institutional discourse.

**Ethnicity:** A social construct which divides people into groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group identity, values, culture, language, history, ancestry and geography.

**Feminism:** A term commonly and quite indiscriminately used. Some of the currently used definitions are: **(a)** a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women equal to those of men; **(b)** an organized movement for the attainment of these rights; **(c)** the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have created; **(d)** belief in the necessity of large-scale social change in order to increase the power of women.

**Fluid Identity:** The concept that identity is not rigid, but can and does change. This idea is often used in terms of gender, sexuality, and race, as well as other factors of identity. This concept is fundamentally contrary to binary systems. A person who feels her/his identity is fluid often believes that rigid categories are oppressive and incapable of accurately describing her/his experience and identities.

**Gay:** A term used to describe an individual who is emotionally, physically, an/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex. This term is often used in relation to men.

**Gender:** Socially constructed categories of masculinity and manhood, femininity and womanhood. **Gender identity:** A person's internal sense of themselves as a specific gender.

**Gender Binary/Gender Dualism:** A system that defines and make room for two and only two distinct, natural, and opposite genders (i.e., male and female). These two genders are defined in opposition to each other, such that masculinity and femininity are seen as mutually exclusive. In this system, there is no room for any ambiguity or intermingling of gender traits.

**Gender expression/image/display:** The external presentation of self as gendered through cultural identifiers/markers such as clothing, behaviors, etc.

**Genderqueer:** A self-identifying term for someone who rejects the male/female gender binary in favor of a more fluid, nontraditional identity which merges or blurs characteristics of gender and gender norms.

**Heterosexism:** The system of oppression which assumes heterosexuality as the norm, favors heterosexuals, and denigrates and stigmatizes anyone whose gender or sexual behavior is considered non-heterosexual.

**Inclusiveness:** A commitment to foster a climate that represents and values members of diverse social identity groups. Inclusive practices occur at the individual, cultural and institutional levels, creating a culture where all members feel they are welcome and belong.

**Intersectionality:** An approach largely advanced by women of color, arguing that classifications such as gender, race, class, and others cannot be examined in isolation from one another; they interact and intersect in individuals' lives, in society, in social systems, and are mutually constitutive.

**Lesbian:** A term used to describe a woman whose primary romantic, emotional, physical, and sexual attractions are to other women.

**Microaggressions:** Microaggressions are subtle words, cues, and/or behaviors that insult, invalidate, or exclude traditionally marginalized group members. The long term effect of micro aggressions can have a significant negative effect on one's health

**Oppression:** Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access.

**People first language (PFL):** Puts the person before the disability. "People with disabilities" acknowledges that individuals with disabilities are people first and not their diagnosis or disability.

**Privilege:** Systemic favoring, enriching, valuing, validating, and including of certain social identities over others. Individuals cannot “opt out” of systems of privilege; rather these systems are inherent to the society in which we live.

**Queer:** A political term or identity to describe any person living or identifying outside of heteronormative ideals

**Race:** A social construct that divides people into groups based on factors such as physical appearance, ancestry, culture, history, etc; a social, historical and political classification system.

**Racism:** A system of oppression involving systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups by those who have relatively more social power. This subordination occurs at the individual, cultural and institutional levels.

**Sexism:** A system of oppression that privileges men, subordinates women, and denigrates women identified values. This subordination occurs at the individual, cultural, and institutional levels.

**Sexual orientation:** A concept referring to sexual desire and preference for emotional and sexual relationships with others based on their sex/gender; often implies that sexual object choice is an essential, inborn characteristic, so may be problematic to some.

**Social class:** (as in upper class, middle class, lower class, working class) refers to people's socioeconomic status, based on factors such as wealth, occupation, education, income, etc.

**Transgender Person:** A broad umbrella term for people whose self-identification challenges traditional notions of gender and sexuality and do not conform to traditional understandings of labels like male and female or heterosexual and homosexual.

**White Privilege:** Institutional set of benefits, including greater access to resources and power, bestowed upon people classified as white.

**White Supremacy:** The assumption or theory that whites are superior to all other races and should be in power and control.



## **Four Anti-bias Domains**

### ***Identity***

Students will understand the multiple facets of their identities, know where those traits come from, and feel comfortable being themselves in a diversity of settings.

### ***Diversity***

Students will recognize the diversity of people in the world, be able to identify differences and commonalities, express interest in the lived experiences of others and develop genuine connections with others.

### ***Justice***

Students will be aware of bias and injustice, both individual and systemic, will understand the short and long-term impact of injustice, and will know about those who have fought for more fairness and justice in our world.

### ***Action***

Students will feel confident that they can make a difference in society and will commit to taking action against bias and injustice even when it is not popular or easy.

## **THE FOUR CORE GOALS OF ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION (Preschool)**

From: Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards, 2010. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. p.xiv.

### **ABE Goal 1**

Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

### **ABE Goal 2**

Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

### **ABE Goal 3**

Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

### **ABE Goal 4**

Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discrimination.

**\*\*These four goals interact and build on each other. They are for children of all ages and backgrounds.**

## **General Essential Questions for Preschool**

### **IDENTITY**

- Who am I?
- Who am I within my family unit?
- Who am I within a community?
- What identities do I share with my family? What identities do I have that are different from my family?

### **DIVERSITY**

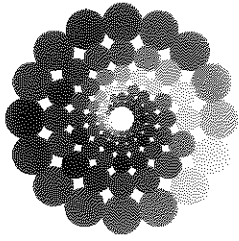
- How am I different from other people around me? How am I similar to other people around me?
- What are the differences between how I live and how other people live?
- How can I learn more about other people? How can other people learn more about me?
- How do people similar to and different from me affect my life?
- What can people who are different from me teach me about myself, my family and other people?

### **JUSTICE**

- What does it mean to be unfair? At school? In my classroom? At home? In my community? In the world?
- How do I know when people are being treated unfairly?
- How do I stand up for my rights?
- How do I stand up for the rights of others?
- How have people been treated unfairly in the past? How are they being treated unfairly presently?
- How have people stopped unfairness in the past? How can unfairness be stopped in the present moment?

### **ACTION**

- How can I respect myself and others?
- How can I be kind to all people?
- How can many people speak up together when people are treated unfairly?



# PERSPECTIVES for a DIVERSE AMERICA

A K-12 LITERACY-BASED ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM

TEACHING TOLERANCE

## General Essential Questions

### GRADES K-2

IDENTITY	DIVERSITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What groups do I belong to?</li> <li>• What are my identities? How do others see those identities?</li> <li>• What identities do I share with my family? What identities do I have that are different from my family?</li> <li>• What are clues that show people are proud of who they are?</li> <li>• When do I change the me I share with others?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How am I similar to people around me? How am I different from people around me?</li> <li>• What are the differences between how I live and how others live?</li> <li>• How can I learn more about other people?</li> <li>• How do people similar to and different from me affect my life?</li> <li>• What can people from different groups teach me about myself? My family? Other groups of people?</li> </ul>
JUSTICE	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are individuals unique?</li> <li>• What does it mean to be unfair? In class? In school? At home? In my community? In the world?</li> <li>• How do I know when people are being treated unfairly?</li> <li>• How have people been treated unfairly in the past?</li> <li>• How have people stopped unfairness in the past?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I be kind to all people?</li> <li>• What can I do to make things fair?</li> <li>• How do I speak up when I see people treated unfairly?</li> <li>• Why is it scary to speak up sometimes?</li> <li>• How can many people speak up together when people are treated unfairly?</li> </ul>

### GRADES 3-5

IDENTITY	DIVERSITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are group identities and how do they describe me? Others?</li> <li>• What has happened throughout history to people like me?</li> <li>• How do I get to know others and allow others to get to know all of me?</li> <li>• What does it mean to feel good about myself and how can I express that I like who I am?</li> <li>• How can I be proud of who I am and celebrate others?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can I describe and compare my group identities with those of other people?</li> <li>• What role do words play in understanding people different from me?</li> <li>• How can I ask people about their lives and experiences in a respectful, kind and understanding way?</li> <li>• How can I live, work and play with others when we have differences?</li> <li>• How does history impact how people live today?</li> </ul>
JUSTICE	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are we both individuals and members of groups?</li> <li>• What clues help me identify when and how people are being treated unfairly?</li> <li>• What advantages or disadvantages do I notice because of identity groups?</li> <li>• How is my life easier or more difficult based on who I am and where I was born?</li> <li>• What contributions have people made to justice and fairness historically?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can one person do to create a safe, welcoming place for all people?</li> <li>• Why is it important for me to stand up for others and myself?</li> <li>• How can I encourage others to stand for justice?</li> <li>• How can we create a fair and just community?</li> <li>• How can I work with others toward fairness in my community?</li> </ul>

General Essential Questions

GRADES 6-8

IDENTITY	DIVERSITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes us who we are?</li> <li>• How are our identities today shaped by history?</li> <li>• Do the ways we identify ourselves change over time?</li> <li>• How do different parts of our identities combine to make us who we are?</li> <li>• Do the ways we present our identities change depending on where we are or the people we are with?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are people similar to and different from each other?</li> <li>• What are the benefits and challenges of living in a diverse society?</li> <li>• How can we celebrate what we have in common while also honoring our differences?</li> <li>• How can we make connections across our differences?</li> <li>• How do communities become diverse?</li> </ul>
JUSTICE	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important to judge a person by the content of their character and not the color of their skin, as Dr. King said?</li> <li>• What is the difference between being treated unfairly by another person and receiving unequal treatment under the law?</li> <li>• What effect does injustice have on people and groups?</li> <li>• How does privilege shape the lives of individuals and groups?</li> <li>• How have people advocated and fought for justice throughout history?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can one person do to create a safe, welcoming place for all people?</li> <li>• Why is it important for me to stand up for others and myself?</li> <li>• How can I encourage others to stand for justice?</li> <li>• How can we create a fair and just community?</li> <li>• How can I work with others toward fairness in my community?</li> </ul>

GRADES 9-12

IDENTITY	DIVERSITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do our various group identities shape us as individuals?</li> <li>• What part do culture and history play in the formation of our individual and collective identities?</li> <li>• How do our intersecting identities shape our perspectives and the way we experience the world?</li> <li>• What is the difference between feeling proud and feeling superior?</li> <li>• How do we remain our authentic selves as we move in and out of different communities, cultures and contexts?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do our similarities and differences impact the relationships we have with people inside and outside our own identity groups?</li> <li>• What do we gain when we learn about the lived experiences of other people?</li> <li>• What are the challenges of celebrating what we have in common while also honoring our differences?</li> <li>• How do we connect in meaningful ways with people who are different from us?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between diversity and inequality?</li> </ul>
JUSTICE	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What problems arise when we relate to people as members of a group, rather than as unique individuals?</li> <li>• What is the difference between individual bias and structural inequality?</li> <li>• How do bias and injustice impact the future?</li> <li>• How do power and privilege impact the relationships people have with each other as well as with institutions?</li> <li>• What shared beliefs have inspired social justice movements throughout history?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is empathy a seed of social action?</li> <li>• Does everyone have an equal responsibility to stand up to injustice?</li> <li>• How can we effectively interrupt biased speech when we hear it?</li> <li>• Why is it important to stand up to injustice when those around us do not?</li> <li>• What is necessary for collective action to successfully defeat injustice?</li> </ul>