



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Scope and Purpose of this Policy

The School is committed to promoting and achieving equality of opportunity for all students, parents, staff, governors, visitors and job applicants.

The School aims to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

The School does not discriminate against staff on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age (the protected characteristics).

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat students, parents, visitors, suppliers and former staff members.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Your attention is drawn to our separate Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It is provided for guidance to all members of staff at the School who are required to familiarise themselves and comply with its contents. The School reserves the right to amend its content at any time.

This Policy applies to the School's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not employees but who work at the School (collectively referred to as "Staff" in this policy).

All Staff must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the School's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Staff will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

Any questions about the content or application of this policy should be referred to the HR Officer in the first instance.

This policy applies to all aspects of the School's relationship with Staff and to relations between Staff members at all levels. This includes:

- job advertisements;
- recruitment and selection;
- training and development;
- opportunities for promotion;
- conditions of service;
- pay and benefits;
- conduct at work;
- disciplinary and grievance procedures; and termination of employment.

The School will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity. This policy aims to outline the ways in which the School acts to protect our community from discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics.

Development of the policy

This policy takes account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010, The Equality Act 2010 and schools - Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (May 2014) and also the most recent Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards.

We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes, progress and provision for students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

The PSED (Public Sector Equality Duty)

The PSED has three main elements and these are:

- Eliminating discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Fostering good relations across all characteristics – between people who do share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 includes direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and discrimination arising from disability.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Sex
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Disability
- Marriage and civil partnership

Equality objectives

Our current equality objectives are being reviewed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee. Our current equality objectives are:

1. The school will support all its students to achieve excellent educational achievement.
2. The school will minimise achievement gaps between different socio-economic groups and ethnic groups.
3. The school will support its students to develop an appreciation of the rich, diverse communities within the school community and modern Britain.
4. The school will support its students to be active participants in creating a more equal and inclusive community and wider society.
5. The school will support all staff members with equal opportunities to access professional development and career growth.

Eliminating discrimination

The School highlights the need to ensure equality and avoid discrimination in its policies and procedures. This includes its policies on:

- Safer Recruitment – which highlights how no employee or prospective employee with protected characteristics will receive less favourable treatment.
- Safeguarding – which highlights how the School looks to ensure children with special educational needs or disabilities are safeguarded, and outlines the School’s awareness of bullying.
- Admissions – which highlights how children with protected characteristics such as those with EHCPs or those that are in care are prioritised.
- SEND – which outlines the School’s approach to ensuring pupils with SEND are supported.
- Behaviour – which outlines how pupils of all characteristics are expected to create and maintain good relationships.

The School has provided training on unconscious bias and objectivity, which has been delivered in September 2020 and again in April 2021 with a particular focus on assessment. Equality issues are monitored through:

- Daily review by the Senior Leadership Team of teacher comments about behaviour, including discrimination or prejudice.
- Termly and annual review of trends in relation to behaviour and actions to address concerning trends incorporated into behaviour operational and development plans.
- Pastoral support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Annual review of the gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age and ethnic group of applicants to the School for job opportunities.

Advancing equality of opportunity

The School seeks to comply with, and go beyond, the DfE guidance of how to advance equality of opportunity. This includes:

- Minimising or eliminating disadvantages suffered by people, which are connected to a particular characteristic they have.
- Taking appropriate and reasonable steps to meet the needs of people who have a particular characteristic, e.g. enabling students with disabilities full access to the curriculum.
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities, e.g. ensuring school activities are accessible to all students.

In order to achieve these aims, the School:

- Records and analyses attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics perform, in order to identify key issues or trends, take actions to address areas of concern and monitor the success of our actions.
- Reviews data to identify trends in behaviour, attendance, punctuality and homework completion for specific groups.
- Promotes equality in relation to characteristics in the pastoral and academic curriculum.

The School seeks to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it by maximising the educational outcomes of all pupils but with a systematic review of the achievement of those with protected characteristics. This is achieved through:

- A curriculum which puts at its heart the moral lessons derived from wide reading, a deep and broad knowledge of the history and geography of Britain and the world, appreciation of the culture and languages of other societies, a love of art, music, dance and drama, and finally a celebration of the contribution of women and black and ethnic minority people to all aspects of life and academia.
- Excellent academic outcomes for pupils with protected characteristics – see Appendix One.
- A review after every Assessment Point and external exam series led by the Senior Leader responsible for that year group that considers the relative and overall achievement of groups with protected characteristics.

Fostering good relations

The School aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share them through:

- A curriculum that ensures pupils are educated in the best that has been thought and said, having read widely and developed a broad and deep knowledge that both reflects and enriches the community that makes up the school.
- A curriculum that ensures pupils are kind in their interactions with others, with a strong understanding of and relationship with the cultures and societies represented in the community and in the wider world.
- A curriculum that ensures pupils are cultured in their appreciation, experience and knowledge of language, music, drama, literature and art, including an understanding of the origins of these art forms and the contribution to them of non-western and minority societies.
- A curriculum that ensures pupils are courteous to others and decent in conduct.
- A curriculum that ensures pupils are active in their participation in the community and in bringing about an improvement to society.
- Promoting understanding, tolerance and respect of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum, through all subjects but especially RE, History, PSHE and assemblies.
- A pastoral (assembly) curriculum which ensure that equality issues are addressed in a thoughtful and considered manner and where appropriate, external speakers will be invited to support provision.
- School visits in and around the local community.
- Dealing promptly and effectively with any tensions between different groups of students linked to protected characteristics.
- Encouraging all students to engage with activities on offer such as music and sports clubs and monitoring participation in this.

Equality considerations

The School pays due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made and considers the potential impact of these decisions on particular groups. For example:

- When a school trip or activity is being planned, each school will consider whether the trip is accessible to all students including those with disabilities.
- Working to ensure all of our students have opportunities to engaged with our co-curriculum and enrichment opportunities.
- Following recruitment practises that promote objectivity and minimise unconscious bias, including blind applications.

Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination by or against a member of Staff is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified. Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in the School’s Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy. Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who had complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else’s complaint.

Recruitment and Selection

The School aims to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. The School’s recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate.

Job advertisements will avoid using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. A short policy statement on equal opportunities and a copy of this policy shall be sent on request to those who enquire about vacancies.

The School will take steps to ensure that its vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in the School.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which the School may use, for example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments);
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment;
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons;
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

Applicants will not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants will not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment without first considering whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account.

The School is required by law to ensure that all members of Staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective members of Staff, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to

satisfy current immigration legislation. A list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Officer.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in the School, the School will monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us to take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

The School is an organisation that uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess candidates' suitability for positions of trust working in an environment with children and young people. The School complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all candidates fairly.

The School undertakes not to discriminate unlawfully against any candidate who is required to provide information (a check) through this process. Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent a candidate from working with the School. Whether or not it does will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

The School's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders will be made available to all candidates at the outset of the recruitment process. The School will ensure that it makes any candidate who is subject to Disclosure aware of the DBS Code of Practice and will provide a copy of the Code on request.

As a disclosure is part of the School's recruitment process, the School encourages all candidates called to interview to provide details of any criminal record at any early stage of the application process. The School requests that this information is sent under separate confidential cover to a designated person with the School who may vary in case to case depending on the nature of the post being recruited. The School guarantees that only those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process will see this information.

Unless the nature of the position is such that the School may ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record, the School will only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

The School will ensure that it discusses with the candidate the relevance of any offence to the job in question. A candidate's failure to reveal information directly relevant to the job could result in withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Staff training, promotions and conditions of service

Staff training needs will be identified through informal and formal staff appraisals.

All Staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the School and all promotion decisions will be on the basis of merit.

The composition and movement of Staff at different levels will be reviewed from time to time to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation.

Where appropriate the School will take steps to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

The School's conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are available to all Staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

Termination of employment

The School will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

The School will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties applied are without discrimination, and are carried out fairly and uniformly for all Staff, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Disability Discrimination

If a member of Staff is disabled, or becomes disabled, in the course of his or her employment with the School, he or she is encouraged to tell us about his or her condition. This is to enable us to support the member of Staff as much as possible.

If a member of Staff experiences difficulties at work because of his or her disability, he or she may wish to contact the HR Officer to discuss any reasonable adjustments to his or her working conditions or duties which he or she considers to be reasonable and necessary or which would assist in the performance of his or her duties.

The HR Officer may wish to consult with the member of Staff and his or her medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where reasonable, practicable and proportionate in all the circumstances of the case.

Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it would not be reasonable for the School to accommodate a particular adjustment and in such circumstances it will ensure that it provides the member of Staff with its reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled Staff, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other Staff. Where reasonably practicable and proportionate the School will take steps to improve access for disabled Staff and service users.

Fixed-Term Employees and Agency/Temporary Workers

The School will monitor its use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service to ensure they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The School will also, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Part-Time Workers

The School will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. It will also ensure that requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the School's Flexible Working Policy.

Complaints of Discrimination, Victimisation and Harassment on the Protected Characteristics

The School will treat seriously and will take action where appropriate concerning all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation on any of the protected characteristics made by any of its Staff, students or other third parties.

Any member of Staff who considers that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, victimised or harassed within the meaning of this policy should discuss the matter in the first instance with their Line Manager or, if inappropriate under the circumstances of the case, with the Headteacher. In some cases it may be possible to resolve the matter informally and reach a satisfactory resolution.

If a member of Staff wishes to make a formal complaint then he or she should follow the School's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment, the School will investigate the matter fully. In the course of the investigation the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation for his or her actions.

If the School concludes that the claim is false or malicious then the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If on the other hand the School concludes that the employee's action amounts to unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment he or she may be subject to disciplinary action under the School's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Last review: October 2025.