

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

## Statement

The Queen's School is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities for every member of the school community.

## Aims

The school aims to provide an environment in which no child or adult is prevented from taking a full part in the life of the school as a result of:

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

(Equality Act 2010 defines these as protected characteristics)

In order to create and maintain this environment we aim to achieve the highest standards of teaching and learning for everyone;

- encourage respect for and understanding of the beliefs, doctrines and personal circumstances of individuals
- seek to promote the welfare in school of individuals who have specific physical, emotional, learning and religious needs
- deal swiftly, effectively and firmly with comments and incidents that are detrimental to the well-being of others.

This policy also covers Early Years Foundation Stage in this school.

## Objectives

- To ensure that each member of our community is valued as an individual and all staff act as role models, promote positive attitudes towards equality, avoid stereotypical ideas and challenge prejudice.
- To recognise that all members of our community are citizens and have rights and entitlements and that all members of our community have an equal right to be valued and listened to.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, parents, suppliers and other members of the wider school community.

The school fully recognises its duty to promote equality of opportunity and oppose racism. It aims to meet the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) the Race Relations Act (1976, amended 2000) and the Equality Act (2010).

Whilst political beliefs are not a protected characteristic, we do recognise that members of our community will hold diverse political beliefs. We encourage our community to ensure that they

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are moderate in the communication of their beliefs and do not try to unduly influence others. We do not tolerate extremism.

## Implementation

The School, with the assistance of the staff, will:

- Break down any barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members realising their full potential or accessing benefit.
- Advertise vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.
- Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed of this Policy.
- Monitor the composition of the School and the effects of its recruitment practices.
- Examine and review existing procedures to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation.
- Ensure that the language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy.

## Equality of opportunity: as an employer

The Queen's School is an equal opportunities employer.

Procedures are in place to ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to the admission and assessment of staff. In order to promote an environment within which the School can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skill and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, we are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of Protected Characteristics.

To this end, we shall regularly review the operation of our recruitment, promotion, training and development policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, in particular but not only, in relation to:

- Recruitment and selection.
- Promotion, transfer and training opportunities.
- Benefits, terms and conditions of employment.
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Termination of employment including redundancies.
- Conduct at work.

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## **Recruitment and Selection**

The staffing process is governed by the School's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between, on the one hand, the individual's knowledge and skills, experience and character and, on the other hand, the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

- The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the major selection criterion but the ability both to work with others and to be trained, coupled with individual potential will be taken into account.
- All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.
- Carefully selected and validated skills and/or psychometric tests may be used as part of the selection process and will be administered by a trained tester.
- Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of satisfactory references, DBS checks (and, where applicable, a check of the prohibition order), evidence of medical fitness [(including a satisfactory medical report)] and satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

## **Training and Promotion**

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

## **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 are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **Disability**

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Head of Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Head of Department may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments and you may be required to give your consent to a report being produced

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about your state of health and ability to perform your duties. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

The School will make such adjustments to work arrangements or School premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign and/or flexible hours.

Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, he or she should discuss this requirement with the Headmistress or Head of Lower School/

## **Part-time and fixed term work**

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **Breaches of this policy**

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal. If you believe that you have been the subject of discrimination you can raise the matter with the HR Manager. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

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## **Equality of opportunity: Ethnicity and social circumstances**

The school aims to foster an environment in which racist and negative social assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are always challenged.

It seeks, not simply to avoid discrimination or prejudice, but to promote an ethos where each pupil feels equally valued, regardless of their ethnic origin or social background.

We aim to achieve this by:

ensuring that, where appropriate, subject schemes of work have relevance for pupils from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds

- recognising that achievements, ideas and aspirations from a wide range of cultures should be represented in teaching materials
- ensuring that expectations of pupils from all social and ethnic backgrounds should be equally high
- taking particular care that advice and guidance offered to pupils is free of bias and will not restrict future opportunities and choices
- identifying and counteracting any pupils' attitudes which might limit ambition or perception
- all staff appointments and promotion procedures will be based solely on objective and job-related criteria to ensure equality of employment opportunities.

## **Equality of opportunity: Gender**

Many of the issues which might normally arise in a school context eg: balancing the curricular experience of boys and pupils, ensuring equality of expectations, addressing the needs of both sexes, do not apply in a single-sex learning environment.

However, the school recognises the need to counteract any possible stereotyping and to provide as wide a range of educational experiences as possible for the pupils, in order to ensure the fullest development of the potential and talent of every pupil .

The school aims to encourage pupils to take a balanced range of subjects and to ensure that subject choices are not distorted by a false sense of what is appropriate for pupils.

## **Awareness of issues of gender and ethnicity**

We value each member of the school community as an individual. We recognise that pupils might explore aspects of their gender identity during their time in the school and we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that those pupils are supported and have a safe and comfortable environment in which to do so.

The Headmistress will ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities and discrimination on grounds of gender (including gender reassignment) and ethnicity.

Pupils will be made aware through the PSHE programme and the Positive Behaviour Policy of the conduct expected of them and of the school's condemnation of discrimination based on gender and ethnic background.

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## **Physical ability / Physical Disabilities**

The school aims to ensure that every child, regardless of their physical ability, has full curriculum access. When pupils have an injury which restricts their mobility every effort is made to re-room their lessons to the ground or first floor at the Senior School. The school is aware of the constraints of the stairs in both the Lower and Senior School. In the case of long term physical disability, the school will make reasonable adjustments to support the learning of the individual. The School will make reasonable adjustments to enable access to suitable working accommodation for individuals who have physical disabilities.

*Where a pupil has a physical disability which impacts their ability to move around the school building, a personal 'Risk Assessment for Access to the Physical Environment' will be written and this will be shared with the pupil, the parent and school staff. There may also be the requirement for a 'Personal care needs plan' and/or a 'Personal emergency evacuation plan' to be written.*

## **Learning Disabilities and Abilities**

The school aims to promote inclusion and access to the curriculum, whilst embracing diversity and caring for the needs of the individual.

The school does not discriminate against pupils with disabilities or special educational needs in the education it provides, and takes all reasonable steps to ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. For further information please refer to the SEN Policy.

The school has a policy for More Able and Talented pupils and every department is expected to provide activities and support to enable pupils with particular abilities in their areas to learn and progress.

## **Religion and belief (including non-belief)**

The school aims to ensure that every member of our community respects and values the religions and beliefs of others (including non-belief). All pupils receive instruction in different world religions during the course of their studies at school, and tolerance and understanding of a wide variety of recognised religions and religious philosophies is promoted and encouraged. The school will make reasonable adjustments to enable staff and pupils to participate fully in times of religious observance, be suitably catered for at school, and to enable pupils to fully access the curriculum.

## **Age**

The school is aware of its duty to its staff under the terms of the Equality Act (2010).

## **Marriage and civil partnership**

The school is aware of its duty to its staff under the terms of the Equality Act (2010).

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**Useful websites:**

The Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Equality Act 2010: what do I need to know?

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/individual-rights1?view=Binary>