



# DANES HILL SCHOOL

## STAFF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

<b>Author/Reviewer responsible:</b>	HR Director	<b>Date of review:</b>	August 2025
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	People Governance & Risk Committee	<b>Date of authorisation:</b>	12.11.2025
		<b>Date of next review:</b>	September 2026

### Summary of changes

<b>August 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removal of dignity at work and harassment to separate policy (Staff Anti-Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy)</li><li>• Section 4 Inclusion of definition of forms of discrimination</li><li>• Section 6 – clarity about how staff complaints are dealt with</li><li>• Section 7- Recruitment &amp; Selection updates</li><li>• Section 8 – detail about when questions about health and disability may be asked during recruitment</li><li>• Section 10 – detail about training and development</li></ul>
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## **Contents**

1. Context
2. Scope
3. Policy statement
4. Curriculum
5. Pupil Complaints and Incidents
6. Employment
7. Recruitment and selection
8. Employees and job applicants with disabilities
9. Implementation
10. Raising concerns about discrimination
11. Responsibilities
12. Related documents

1. Legal context	<p>1.1. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly against any existing or potential pupil, parent or staff member on the grounds of race, colour, disability, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation ('protected characteristics'). It is also unlawful to directly discriminate against a pupil, parent or staff member based on a perception that he or she has a particular protected characteristic.</p> <p>1.2. The Equality Act also covers harassment, where bullying and forms of unwanted conduct relate to a protected characteristic (see separate Staff Anti Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy).</p>
2. Scope	<p>2.1. This policy covers all staff members, workers, contractors and volunteers at the School, as well as Vernon Educational Trust governors. Any reference to Staff in this policy applies to all of these affected groups, as appropriate. The core principles in the policy apply equally to treatment of pupils and potential pupils, but these are set out in more detail in the Pupil Equal Opportunities policy.</p> <p>2.2. All School policies and practices will be applied with observance of these principles.</p> <p>2.3. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and may be amended at any time.</p>
3. Policy statement	<p>3.1. Vernon Educational Trust (known as Danes Hill School – the "School") is an equal opportunities employer.</p> <p>3.2. 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 relevant legislation and codes of practice, the governors are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which reasonably represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age and disability (together known as '<b>Protected Characteristics</b>').</p> <p>3.3. To this end the School will regularly review the operation of 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.</p> <p>3.4. The School ethos aims to provide equality of provision for all, a rejection of unfair discrimination and a positive attitude to a pluralist society. The School is committed to the principles of human equality, acceptance and valuing all members of the community.</p> <p>3.5. All members of the School community will be made aware of their individual responsibility to abide by this policy and to report instances to an appropriate person if they feel the policy has been infringed.</p>
4. Forms of discrimination	<p>4.1. Unfair discrimination may be direct or indirect and may occur intentionally or unintentionally.</p> <p>4.2. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. For example,</p>

	<p>rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.</p> <p>4.3. 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.</p> <p>4.4. 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. For further information, please refer to the Staff Anti-Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy</p> <p>4.5. Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.</p>
5. Curriculum	<p>5.1. The School aims to provide a caring and supportive environment for learning and this is reflected in each person's actions as part of the School community. Departments and pastoral teams undertake to ensure that the ethos of equal opportunities is adhered to in all School matters and to report instances where this policy is not being implemented.</p> <p>5.2. All staff must be aware of this commitment and of their individual responsibility to report matters to ensure adequate monitoring of this policy.</p>
6. Pupil Complaints and Incidents	<p>6.1. Any pupil complaints or incidents that have an element of racism must be recorded in the incident log book which is held by the Head's Personal Assistant. The Head will delegate an appropriate member of staff to investigate any incident and the action to be taken will be decided in consultation between this person and the Head. The log book will be reviewed annually by the governors.</p> <p>6.2. Staff complaints are dealt with under the Staff Grievance Procedure, and trends, including those related to protected characteristics, monitored by the People Governance &amp; Risk Committee of the governors.</p>
7. Employment	<p>7.1. 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:</p> <p>7.1.1. Recruitment and selection.</p> <p>7.1.2. Promotion, transfer and training opportunities.</p> <p>7.1.3. Benefits, remuneration, terms and conditions of employment.</p> <p>7.1.4. Grievance and disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>7.1.5. Termination of employment including redundancies.</p> <p>7.1.6. Conduct at work.</p> <p>7.2. Procedures are also in place to ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to the admission and assessment of pupils.</p> <p>7.3. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply to the way in which staff must treat other members of the school community, including colleagues, visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.</p>

<p>8. Recruitment and selection</p>	<p>8.1. The recruitment and selection process (set out in the Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedure) is governed by principles of fair selection with no discrimination based on protected characteristics, 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.</p> <p>8.2. The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the main selection criterion but the ability to work with others and to be trained, together with individual potential will be taken into account.</p> <p>8.3. All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.</p> <p>8.4. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.</p> <p>8.5. Appointments will be confirmed on satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks, as set out within Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant legislation concerning employment in schools.</p> <p>8.6. Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using of wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristics from applying. The school will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.</p> <p>8.7. Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with the HR Director's approval, such as:</p> <p>8.7.1. Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments)</p> <p>8.7.2. Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or to identify any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.</p> <p>8.7.3. Equal opportunity monitoring (which is anonymised, will be separated from the main application and will not form part of the decision-making process)</p>
<p>9. Employees and job applicants with disabilities</p>	<p>9.1. If a member of staff has or develops a disability, the school will make reasonable adjustments and offer appropriate support to help them in their day-to-day work at the school.</p> <p>9.2. All staff are encouraged to speak to the HR Director or their line manager about any condition that may affect their work, so they can be supported, and to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The School may wish to consult with a medical adviser about possible adjustments, and the staff member would be asked to give consent to a report being produced about the state of their health and ability to perform their duties. The School will try to accommodate individual needs within reason, and if an adjustment would not be reasonable will explain the reasons and try to find an alternative solution if possible.</p> <p>9.3. A disability will not of itself justify the non-appointment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written</p>

	tests are used, alternative arrangements may be made for visually impaired applicants.
10. Training and development	<p>10.1. Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff appraisals, in line with the School's Investing in Our Staff Policy. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The school will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff.</p> <p>10.2. Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.</p> <p>10.3. The School's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they promote equal opportunities for all.</p>
11. Implementation	<p>11.1. The School, with the assistance of all Staff, will:</p> <p>11.1.1. Break down barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members realising their full potential or accessing benefit.</p> <p>11.1.2. Advertise suitable vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.</p> <p>11.1.3. Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.</p> <p>11.1.4. Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed and trained on this policy.</p> <p>11.1.5. Monitor the composition of the School and the effects of its recruitment practices.</p> <p>11.1.6. Examine and review existing procedures to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation.</p> <p>11.1.7. Ensure that the language used in official communications reflects our inclusive School culture.</p> <p>11.2. The School will comply both with the spirit as well as the letter of legislation. The existence of law cannot in itself ensure that any policy of fair and equal treatment will work effectively - it is up to management staff and the wider staff community to promote equality for everyone. Individual staff, therefore, at all levels, are responsible for ensuring that their own conduct, in the exercise of the School's affairs, is consistent with this policy.</p> <p>11.3. Unfair discrimination may be linked to harassment and dignity at work, and the School's Staff Code of Conduct sets out clear guidance on treating other members of the School community with respect. The School's approach to dealing with harassment at work is set out in the Staff Anti-Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy.</p>
12. Raising concerns	<p>12.1. The School takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which may be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases</p>

<p>about discrimination</p>	<p>of unfair discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.</p> <p>12.2. Any member of staff may raise a concern related to discrimination based on a protected characteristic informally with their line manager or the HR Director, or formally through the Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.</p> <p>12.3. There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about unfair discrimination.</p> <p>12.4. Discrimination by third parties such as contractors or parents which is related to a protected characteristic will not be tolerated by the School and proactive steps are taken to prevent it from occurring, and to deal immediately with any reported matters.</p> <p>12.5. The School supports the principle and use of monitoring to ensure the effective operation of the policy. All monitoring will respect the confidentiality of the individuals concerned.</p> <p>12.6. In order to achieve effective implementation of the policy, the School will ensure that this policy and procedure is brought to the attention of all staff. The School will identify any scope for the provision of training and encouragement to assist in overcoming barriers to progression and appointment.</p>
<p>Responsibilities</p>	<p>12.7. It is the responsibility of all members of the School to abide by and promote the School policy on Equal Opportunities. Senior managers and staff all have a responsibility to play a part in ensuring fairness and equality for all.</p> <p>12.8. The responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Head, who will ensure that suitable underpinning arrangements exist within all areas of the School.</p> <p>12.9. The HR team will monitor the implementation of the policy and review ways to promote equality of opportunity throughout the School.</p> <p>12.10. The HR Director will ensure that appropriate training will be made available to all members of staff to ensure that they are kept fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities and discrimination.</p> <p>Managers and supervisors at all levels are expected to set an example in non-discriminatory behaviour and to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that staff act in accordance with this policy.</p>
<p>13. Related documents</p>	<p>13.1. Staff Anti-Harassment and Dignity at Work Policy</p> <p>13.2. Staff Disciplinary Procedure</p> <p>13.3. Staff Grievance Procedure</p> <p>13.4. Staff Code of Conduct</p> <p>13.5. Incident Log Book</p> <p>13.6. Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedure</p> <p>13.7. Inclusive Education and Equal Opportunities Policy</p> <p>13.8. Equality Act 2010</p> <p>13.9. Human Rights Act 1998</p>