



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **1. Policy statement**

- 1.1 The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff, to relations between staff members at all levels, and to the way in which staff treat visitors, parents, pupils, suppliers and former staff members. 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. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on School-related trips or events including social events.
- 1.2 We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, part time status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("**protected characteristics**").
- 1.3 All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff because of their protected characteristics. All managers/Heads of Department must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our 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.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and will be amended from time to time.
- 1.5 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels in the School.

### **2. Discrimination**

- 2.1 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former staff, job applicants, parents, including those of prospective pupils, pupils/prospective pupils, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with parents, pupils, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.
- 2.2 Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally and unintentionally/unconsciously.
- 2.3 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

#### **2.3.1**

**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.

### **2.3.2**

**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, the requirement for a role to be carried out on a full-time basis, although ostensibly neutral may well have a disproportionate effect on women who statistically are responsible for the provision of childcare. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified. We would take this opportunity to remind **all employees** at the School of our family leave, flexible working and paternity, maternity and adoption policies which set out the School's enhanced offering.

### **2.3.3**

**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 our Staff Handbook under "Dignity at Work".

### **2.3.4**

**Victimisation** is also prohibited. This is retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

### **2.3.5**

**Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

## **3. Recruitment and selection**

- 3.1 We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above.
- 3.2 Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. The School adopts a best practice approach to applications for flexible working. Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. It is a requirement for HR to review all advertisements for compliance with current legislation and best practice.
- 3.3 Applicants should not be asked about:
  - 3.3.1 health or disability before a job offer is made;
  - 3.3.2 past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy or plans to have children;
  - 3.3.3 matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment;

**without the approval of the HR Department** (who will first consider whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account).
- 3.4 We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation.

3.5 To ensure that this policy is operating effectively and to identify groups that may be disadvantaged or underrepresented, we may monitor applicants' protected characteristics 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 is removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

**4. Current staff**

4.1 All staff will be given appropriate access to training and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

4.2 We will ensure that any redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

4.3 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

4.4 We monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities.

4.5 We 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. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately.

4.6 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate. If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Line Manager and/or the HR Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The School may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. 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.

**5. Breaches of this policy**

5.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against or that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter with your Line Manager or the HR Department either informally or in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.

5.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

5.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal.

5.4 Any member of staff who witnesses anything which causes them to be concerned about discrimination under this policy even if it does not relate to their own treatment

should approach HR with a view to discussing the matter further. The School has a reasonable expectation to be advised of any behaviour which could result in liability under this policy.

**6. Related Policies:**

This policy is supported by the following other policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Grievance Policy (Academic and Support Staff)
- Capability and Disciplinary Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption policies.
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Domestic Incident Policy
- Code of Conduct

**HR Department**

Last Internal Review: February 2025

Last Governor Review: March 2025

Next Governor Review: March 2025