
Queen Elizabeth's School

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

(incorporating the Race and Disability Equality and Community Cohesion policies)

POLICY STATEMENT

Queen Elizabeth's School believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff and students from all different backgrounds and enables them to achieve their full potential: to contribute fully, and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the School.

To this end, the School acknowledges the following basic principles for all members and prospective members of its community:

- to be treated with respect and dignity;
- to be welcomed and valued;
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices; and
- to receive encouragement to reach their full potential.

These values carry with them responsibilities and the School requires all members of the community to act in accordance with them in all their dealings.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Governing Body have responsibility for ensuring that the School operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the School. However, each member of the School community is also responsible for preventing unfair discrimination which is within their control to prevent.

PURPOSE

The Race and Disability Equality policies are now incorporated in this single Equal Opportunities Policy which covers all six equality strands - race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief. The purpose of the Equal Opportunities Policy is to:

- create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance;
- offer everyone the same opportunities to appreciate and fulfil their potential;
- educate students to value the rich diversity of the world and society; and
- educate against all forms of prejudice and discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, citizenship, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, religion, creed, disability, political persuasion, spent criminal convictions or other inappropriate ground.

OUR METHODS

We will:

- work towards explicit standards of equal opportunities in practice;
- attend both to the formal, readily measurable dimensions of the policy (structures, systems, strategies) and to more subtle and intangible dimensions (such as organisational culture and staff confidence);
- undertake prompt and structured audit of all critical incidents; and
- review our performance against this framework annually and make our results available to the Governing Body.

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GUIDELINES

Our Environment:

- The School is committed to securing equality of opportunity through an environment in which individuals, both staff and students, are treated on the sole basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- Queen Elizabeth's School is academically selective and we believe that the educational experience can only be enhanced if children are exposed to as wide a range of enrichment experiences as possible whilst they are developing both within school and the wider community.

Management and Coordination:

- A member of the Leadership Team is assigned as coordinator for Equal Opportunities.
- Policy making is informed by our commitment to equal opportunities for all.
- Staff, Students and Governors are consulted about equal opportunity developments and planning.
- The School is committed to developing and maintaining a working environment which encourages all members of staff to contribute fully to the life and work of the School, and which is supportive of the dignity and the self-esteem of individuals.
- The School handles offence caused on the grounds of gender, mental or physical ability, social background, religion, culture, race, colour and sexuality in a consistent and constructive manner.

An Equal Opportunities Employer:

Queen Elizabeth's School aims to ensure equalities underpin all aspects of employment policy and practice. We aim to:

- be an equal opportunities employer committed to a policy of equal access to employment opportunities, training and development, at all levels of the organisation;
- recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the expertise and demands of our community and ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are in place to attract the best applicants to the School; and
- subject to operational requirements, give reasonable consideration to members of staff whose personal circumstances change and will attempt to accommodate these by varying working arrangements, retraining or redeployment.

Teaching and Learning:

- All staff create an environment where all pupils can contribute fully and feel valued.
- Teaching takes account of pupils' cultural background, linguistic needs and different learning styles.
- Cultural traditions are valued and made meaningful to pupils.
- Learning experiences are structured to enable pupils to make connections with their own lives.
- Pupils are encouraged to challenge stereotypes and to develop the skills necessary to detect bias and challenge discrimination.

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Curriculum and Planning:

- All students have equal access to a broad range and balanced curriculum. If on rare occasions students are disapplied from aspects of the National Curriculum, this is as a result of careful consideration of the student's educational needs, and is the result of consultation with the student and his parents.
- All students have equal access to resources and activities. Any inequalities likely to be the result of financial disadvantage we try to address through our efforts to provide extra funding for trips for students in financial need.
- All Departments consider the issue of avoiding stereotypes when purchasing resources.
- When creating our own resources to use with students, we use inclusive language, and avoid language and images which might reinforce stereotypes.
- The curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to encourage thoughtful responses to and positive attitudes towards diversity. Pupils are given opportunities to explore concepts and issues relating to identity and equality.
- There is a diverse school curriculum, providing encounters with other cultures and contributing to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. Extra curricular activities and events cater for the interests and capabilities of all pupils.
- We encourage students to deal assertively with discrimination wherever they encounter it. These themes are covered within the PSHEE provision.

Pupil's Personal Development and Pastoral Care:

- The aim of the pastoral system is to support boys as they progress through the School, helping them develop socially, morally and academically. It aims to promote socially responsible behaviour, emotional well-being, respect for others and mutual tolerance, maintaining the standards of a civilised community.
- Pastoral support takes account of religious and ethnic diversity and the experiences and needs of particular groups.

Behaviour, Discipline and Exclusions:

- Procedures for disciplining pupils and managing behaviour are fair and equitable to all pupils.
- All staff operate consistent systems of rewards and sanctions.
- Exclusions are monitored to establish patterns and trends.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE LAW

The policy relates to the following legislation or as subsequently amended.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006)

- These regulations have been introduced to ensure age equality within recruitment, selection, promotion, training and development, redundancy and retirement practices. This means that it is essential for organisations not to recruit, select, promote, develop, nor make individuals redundant on the basis of age. In terms of retirement practices, mandatory retirement ages below 65 years will be outlawed, those under the age of 65 may retire early if they wish, and should those individuals over the age of 65 wish to continue working, they have the right to request this. The School has ensured that this legislation is reflected throughout the organisation and is inherent within its policies and procedures.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (2003)

- These regulations stipulate that it is unlawful for someone to be treated less favourably in the workplace because of their sexual orientation, their perceived sexual orientation or because they associate with someone of a particular sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is defined as either having a sexual attraction towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of both sexes. The implications of these Regulations are for the School to ensure it does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of their sexual orientation.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations (2003)

- In a similar way to the above, it is unlawful to treat employees or job workers less favourably because they follow, are perceived to follow or do not follow a particular (or any) religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) - RRAA

- The RRAA came into force in April 2001 and amended the Race Relations Act 1976. The amended act takes equality requirements one step further under the law than other earlier Equal Opportunities legislation. This is because it places a positive duty on organisations to promote equality as well as ensuring employment practices are non-discriminatory.
- Organisations must ensure that racial equality is a fundamental part of strategic planning and management processes. Steps must be taken to ensure all systems and procedures comply with the legislation and action must be taken to engender change where necessary.

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Human Rights Act (1998)

- The Human Rights Act came into force on 2nd October 2000, and covers 16 basic human rights. These range from freedom from torture and killing to individual rights in everyday life. The Act also covers the right not to be treated differently because of your race, religion, sex, political views or any other status, unless it can be objectively justified.

Disability Discrimination Act (1995, extended 2005) - DDA

- The DDA applies to anyone who has a physical, sensory or mental impairment, which has a substantial long term and adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. It is against the law for an employer to treat a disabled person less favourably than an able bodied person because of their disability, unless this can be justified. This applies to all employment matters (including recruitment, training, promotion and dismissal).
- Discriminatory employment practice will not be justified based on past or previous disabilities e.g. a person who has a history of mental illness. In 2005, a new Disability Discrimination Act came into force, which extends the existing provisions in the DDA 1995. In particular, those who have HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are now covered by the DDA from the moment they are diagnosed. In order to help a disabled person compete on equal terms with an able bodied person, employers will have to look at what changes they could make to the workplace or to the way the work is done as a means of negating or limiting the affect of the disability or providing for it by making any changes that are reasonable. Employers are able to take into account how much the changes will cost and how much they will help, when considering what is reasonable.
- Employers are still able to recruit or promote the best person for the job based on an assessment of the skills/abilities of candidates when reasonable adjustments or modifications have been made. Employers are not expected to make any changes which would break health and safety laws.

Sex Discrimination Act (1975, amended 1986, extended 1999) and Equal Pay Act (1970)

- These Acts require that employers do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, between men and women, or married and unmarried people, in recruitment or in any other way in their treatment of employees.
- Equal treatment, in respect of pay, terms of contract and employment, must be given to men and women doing the same or broadly similar work.
- The Sex Discrimination Act also granted individuals a right of direct access to employment tribunals for legal remedies for unlawful discrimination and established the Equal Opportunities Commission to help enforce the legislation and promote equal opportunities and provide information and advice.
- In 1999, the Sex Discrimination Act was extended to make it unlawful to discriminate against an employee intending to, undergoing or having undergone, gender reassignment. (Gender reassignment is defined as a process undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex).

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Rehabilitation of Offenders Acts (1974)

- The aim of this Act is to make working life easier for those who have been convicted of a criminal offence.
- An ex-offender after a period of rehabilitation has no need to disclose a previous conviction unless his or her sentence exceeded 2.5 years of imprisonment.
- Once a conviction becomes 'spent' an employer cannot refuse to employ, dismiss or otherwise discriminate against an ex-offender on the grounds of a previous conviction.
- However certain posts are exempt from the Act. Examples of these include medical, nursing and midwifery posts, any posts that involve contact with vulnerable people, as well as all posts requiring admission to professional register. In these cases spent convictions have to be disclosed.
- If any convictions are disclosed they are not necessarily a bar to employing that person; the relevance of the offence to the duties of the job must be considered at the short-listing stage. The aim of this Act is to make working life easier for those who have been convicted of a criminal offence.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

- The School recognises and accepts responsibility as an employer for providing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy environment for its employees, students and visitors.

The **Equalities Act 2010** when it comes into force will harmonise discrimination law and strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

LINKED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

- The School Development Plan
- The School Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Assessment for Learning Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Investigation Procedure
- Curriculum Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Information and Communication Technology Policy
- INSET Policy
- Religious Education Policy
- Sex and Relationships Education Policy
- SEN Policy
- Staff Appeals Procedure