



Equal Opportunities Policy

General Statement

West House School and Nursery is committed to securing equality of opportunity through the creation of an environment free from prejudice and discrimination in which individuals are treated on the sole basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Pupils, staff, parents and Governors are expected to share and contribute to this commitment.

This policy was formally adopted by the Board of Governors of School in September 2006 after due consultation with the staff. Since that time it has been reviewed biannually. It is the intention of the Board of Governors that it should be reviewed annually.

It accords with national legislation and the equal opportunity policies of the LEA and is a general statement of the commitment to Equal Opportunities. (For specific detail see also the Disability and Discrimination Policy, Promotion of Racial Equality Policy and Performance Management Policy).

Aims

This school recognises that direct and indirect discrimination might take place and therefore sees the need for a positive and effective Equal Opportunities Policy. The school will:

- Promote the concept of equality of opportunity throughout the organisation, both for those adults within the community of the school and for all pupils.
- Seek to develop an understanding of, and promotion of, human equality and equal opportunities.
- Promote good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups and communities.
- Enable pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships with others.

The Legal Background

The main statutory provisions covering discrimination are the following:

Equal Pay Act 1970
Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
Race Relations Act 1976
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
Race Relations Act 1976 (General Statutory Duty: Code of Practice) Regulations
2002

Also relevant are:

Employment Rights Act 1996
Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983
Human Rights Act 1998
Employment Relations Act 1999
Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
The Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality

The School's values, aims and objectives all accord with the equal treatment of people promoted by these laws and regulations, and the rights enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998.

Responsibilities

The Headmaster has responsibility for the Equal Opportunities Policy, and for delegating responsibilities and tasks to other staff, and for ensuring that the policy is known and understood by staff, pupils and parents.

The Headmaster must also present general reports, statistics and incident reports to the Board of Governors as agreed.

The Senior Management Team and Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring equal opportunities in the curriculum.

All staff are responsible for following the policy and reporting incidents of unequal treatment to an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.

Employment of Staff

Appointments

- Advertisements and job specifications will all carry a statement that this School is an Equal Opportunities employer, and welcomes applications from all posts from appropriately qualified persons regardless of sex, race, religion, disability or age.
- Application forms for jobs, where used, will include a question about equal opportunities - or interview questions will do so, for example, how will the applicant contribute to the policy?
- People with disabilities will be offered facilities at interviews to enable them to demonstrate their suitability for employment.

- Candidates for vacant posts will be assessed against relevant criteria only, i.e. skills, qualifications and experience in selection for recruitment. These will form the person specification.
- The school will keep all job applications for a period of two years. It will record information about the sex, ethnic background, disability and age of short-listed candidates for appointments, and actual appointments.
- The school will inform the Board of Governors on a termly basis, or whenever the governors request the figures, of information relating to appointments made.

Staff Development

- All employees have equal chances of training, career development and promotion.
- All recruits to the organisation will be offered induction training which will include a reference to the organisation's equal opportunities policy.
- Staff development opportunities will be monitored and figures presented to the governors on a termly basis.
- People becoming disabled while in employment will be given positive help to retain their jobs or to be considered for redeployment if that is necessary.

Pupils

- Pupils have equal access to the National Curriculum programmes of study throughout each Key Stage, and non-compulsory courses, according to aptitude and ability.
- The school is committed to full educational inclusion (see SEN policy).
- All subjects will have equality of opportunity at their core and make explicit references within schemes of work.
- School and subject development plans will act to improve the learning of pupils according to this analysis.
- The Policy on Pupil Behaviour and the School Code of Conduct clearly and explicitly forbid the verbalisation or vocalisation of discrimination on the grounds of race, culture, religious, gender, sexuality and ability/disability.

- Positive attitudes and awareness development for equality of opportunity is specifically taught through the PSHE at a level appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils.
- All subjects will have equality of opportunity at their core and make explicit references within schemes of work

Racist or Homophobic Bullying

- All staff have a legal duty not to bully or otherwise harass other staff.
- Where staff come across incidents involving racist or homophobic bullying they must report these to the appropriate member of the Senior Management Team (using the 'Incident of Discrimination or Harassment' form).
- The Headmaster will carry out a thorough investigation of any allegation and will report any incidents of racist or homophobic bullying among the staff to the Board of Governors once per term along with the action taken.
- All incidents of racist or homophobic bullying amongst pupils will be taken seriously, and must be dealt with appropriately and reported to the appropriate Member of the Senior Management Team, in line with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

Administration

Venues for meetings will take account of the needs of all participants. Venues for teaching and learning will take into account the particular needs of the learners and teachers/teaching assistants.

Documents

Language used in documents will reflect and promote equal opportunities and font style and size will take account of the full range of readers where appropriate.

The school will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that access to documentation will include alternative formats where necessary and that all information can be accessed by parents, pupils, and staff.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be annually reviewed and improved and developed as appropriate within the policy review (see also the Disability and Discrimination Policy, Promotion of Racial Equality Policy and Performance Management Policy).

Date: September 2009
Next Review: September 2011