



Equal Opportunities Policy

Rationale

Edgbaston High School, in line with the Equality Act 2010, aims to create the conditions whereby pupils and staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits and potential regardless of their race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, age or marriage or civil partnership.

The Equal Opportunities Policy seeks to eradicate any unfair and discriminatory practices in the school and to encourage a diverse community to which all individuals may contribute as fully as possible. **See appendix 1 for definitions of discrimination and protected characteristics.**

The Policy applies to all connected with the school - pupils, staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents in school, governors and visitors to the school - and is subject to regular review and evaluation. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable; our behaviour and anti-bullying policies contains clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination.

A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from all members of the community including parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Linked Policies:

Disability Policy including Accessibility Plan
Gender Identity Protocol
Admissions Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy
Risk Assessment Policy
Recruitment Selection Disclosure Policy
Behaviour Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
EAL Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

Objectives

- To ensure that no-one is discriminated against, be they staff or pupil, on the grounds of race, age, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity or paternity, marriage or civil partnership.
- To promote the principles of fairness and justice for all by challenging stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.
- To strive constantly to remove any forms of indirect discrimination or unconscious bias that may form barriers to learning or progression.

Success Criteria

- Recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve and progress.
- Pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- Diversity of our community is celebrated and respected.

Methodology

1. Implementation

Use is made of assemblies, speakers, external providers, PSHEE, RS, Drama, English, tutorial time and other lessons to:

- Promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the school community.
- Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures.
- Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

The school welcomes applications for admission from any girl regardless of background. We have a separate Admissions Policy.

As a girls' school we will consider at the admission stage only those prospective pupils who are legally defined as female, in adherence to our articles of association and our Charitable objects. This includes any individual who has transitioned to female, and any individual who is recognised as female under the Gender Recognition Act (2004).

The school recognises the need to create an environment that is accessible to all and as such will provide gender neutral rest rooms and work with transgender students to ensure that their needs are met in a predominantly female environment. Staff will receive regular training and guidance on LGBTQ+ issues to ensure our school ethos is being upheld.

Cases when the cultural traditions of a girl's religion are in conflict with the school's uniform rules, it will be dealt with sensitively and respectfully and within the school's uniform code. This is also the case with transgender children.

The school has a Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan which is updated biannually, all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate disabled pupils and staff. The school also has a Special Educational Needs and EAL Policy which are updated biannually and are available on our website.

It is the Head Teacher's role to implement the school's equal opportunities policy and she is supported by the Governing Body in so doing. The Head Teacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities. The Head Teacher responds to all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due seriousness. There are a number of ways that individuals can report incidents and these will always be investigated.

The class teacher plays a very important role in ensuring that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and that no child is discriminated against. When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and provide material that is accessible and non-discriminatory. When designing schemes of work, this policy is used for guidance, both in the choice of topics to study and in how to approach

sensitive issues. For example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made to developments in this country's history; in geography topics, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world. Our curriculum is regularly reviewed and pupil voice is an important element. The school encourages pupils to suggest ways to further enhance how we celebrate and recognise diverse cultural contributions.

All our teachers challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. Serious incidents are passed on to the Pastoral Deputy in Senior School, the Pastoral Deputy in the Prep School, and to the DSL in Pre-Prep. Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

2. Monitoring

Edgbaston High School for Girls monitors its equal opportunities policy regularly. As part of that process, all parents who accept places at the school for their child complete an anonymous ethnic monitoring form. The form uses the same ethnic categories as the Government uses in the national census. When the completed forms arrive at the school, they are separated from any other material that might identify the individual child. The data is logged onto a computer spreadsheet by year of both entrance examination and entry.

Under no circumstances would we link our ethnic monitoring data with our pupil administration records.

All staff appointments are monitored in the same way.

It is the responsibility of the school's Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities Policy. The Governing Body does this by:

- seeking to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at school. The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities
- taking into consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils
- monitoring policies, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated and that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school
- Welcoming all applications to join the school, whatever background or disability a child may have.

Evaluation

The Deputy Head is responsible for reviewing this policy and ensuring that, as legislation changes with regard to this area, the policy is accurate.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there is a change in legislation.

Approved by the Headmistress: CAMacro

Approved by School Council

Approved by Council: _____ Date: 29/11/21

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Appendix 1

3. Protected Characteristics

There are seven protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 which apply to the provision of education in school.

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex (single sex schools are allowed to apply an admission procedure to admit pupils of one sex)
- Sexual orientation.

And two which apply in addition to staff employed

- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

4. Discrimination

Types: Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. It also covers harassment and victimisation. These terms are defined in the Equality Act 2010, and below is a summary of the defined terms.

Direct discrimination: Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination.

Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

Indirect discrimination: Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.

Harassment discrimination: Harassment occurs where an individual is subject to unwanted conduct concerning a protected characteristic (as above) and which is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive for the individual. For example, racial comments directed towards one of the pupils or a staff member would be considered harassment.

Victimisation discrimination: Victimisation occurs where an individual is subject to a detriment because he or she has done a 'protected act' – which includes bringing legal proceedings or giving evidence in support of legal proceedings, under the Equality Act. For example, disciplining a pupil or staff member because they had brought proceedings under the Equality Act would amount to victimisation.

Unconscious bias, also known as implicit bias, is what happens when we act on subconscious, deeply ingrained biases, stereotypes, and attitudes formed from our inherent human cognition, experiences, upbringing, and environment.

If you act on your gut instincts, kneejerk reactions, or assumptions, there's a chance you're opening yourself up to unconscious bias. This can mean people affected by your actions might be unfairly discriminated against or favoured without you even realising, even if you don't believe in stereotypes. It might be in the form of unconscious gender or racial bias, or a range of other types of bias.

Unconscious biases are different to conscious, or explicit, biases, which are intentionally discriminative. We are fully aware of these and how they influence our decision making, which is why they're outlawed in the workplace by laws like the Equality Act 2010.