



Elstree School

*Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years
Foundation Stage*

Equal Opportunities Policy

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Person responsible for Policy: **SCA** Responsible Governor: **Jane Lyons**

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I. Purpose & School Statement

The purpose of the Policy is to communicate to the School community its commitment to equal opportunities being an integral feature of all aspects of the life of the School.

The School considers itself a community in which each individual's needs are to be recognised and each of its members' talents and aptitudes should be fostered. It is as a living and caring community that the School is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for children, parents and staff.

The School will not discriminate against anyone on grounds of their racial or ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, cultural background, HIV status, political affiliation, linguistic background, SEN or sexual orientation, marital status, age, trade union membership, domestic circumstances, religious beliefs, SEN or, where practicable, disabilities. The School will take every possible step to ensure that members of the School community are treated equally and fairly in all aspects of School life.

This policy extends to the School's **recruitment and admissions procedures**.

The School is committed to promoting dignity and respect in all aspects of School life in which individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued.

The School welcomes its duty not to be discriminatory in its practices. As set out in the School's Ethos and Aims, Disability and Pastoral Care and Anti-Bullying policies, the care for each child is central to the School's aims and provision. Furthermore, the School understands the contribution that education can make in encouraging positive and questioning attitudes toward

Equal Opportunities in the context of the wider community and recognises that:

- Developing understanding of the views and rights of groups to which we do not ourselves belong is an important part of learning to live in society.
- The School's curriculum is enhanced by children learning to understand and respect differences of gender, race, religion, age, ability and disability and social disadvantage.

The School undertakes, therefore:

- To promote the self-esteem and to foster the social and emotional growth of each child throughout School life and in particular through the School's pastoral system and PSHEE curriculum.
- To endeavour to ensure that the children have full entitlement to a broad and balanced programme and opportunities.
- To provide, through the behaviour of the staff, towards each other and towards children, an example that will encourage children to grow up conscious of the importance of equal opportunities and respect for others.
- To respect the cultural and ethnic diversity of children, parents and staff, welcoming the enrichment of the environment which this brings, and to foster positive attitudes towards our multi-cultural society.
- To recognise and value differing religious belief systems within the teaching of religious studies, and to make staff and pupils aware of relevant religious festivals and of any implications they may have for certain pupils.
- To make use of opportunities within the life of the School to increase religious awareness and tolerance and to forge links with the wider community to promote an understanding of and respect for others.

As set out in the Accessibility Policy, the School will make every effort to ensure that no child, parent or member of staff is disadvantaged as a result of their disability, although it needs to be recognised that the

physical layout of the site and buildings may restrict the movement of individuals with particular difficulties with mobility.

As set out in the Pastoral Care and Anti-Bullying policies, racist or sexist language and behaviour, and other acts of intolerance are not accepted. Intervention is made through Circle Time and time with the class teacher (Home Farm) and through Form Tutors' periods, the Honour Code, the 'Good Behaviour Guide' (A2J Code) and relevant pamphlets relating to positive behaviour (Elstree).

The School recognises the value to children of having both male and female role models. However, vacant posts are always filled by the best applicant, irrespective of gender.

The School's Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD) coordinator is Mrs Sarah Attwood. She has oversight for all matters relating to the provision of LDD and can be contacted at Elstree School. There is naturally a member of her department providing learning support as required at Home Farm.

The continuing development of our community and of the equality of opportunity, on which it is based, requires the co-operation and commitment of all concerned and we trust that all parents will wish to give their full support to the School in this vital aspect of its life.

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed. Any child, parent or member of staff who considers that there has been a breach of this policy should inform the Headmaster who will investigate the matter and take action, as appropriate.

2. Application

The Policy applies to:

- School Governors,
- Potential, current and past parents,
- Potential, current and past students,
- Visitors,
- Staff of Contractors,
- Potential, current and past staff both permanent full time and part time,
- Staff supplied by an agency/contractor,
- Individuals who are engaged by parents but work on the School premises,
- Individuals who provide services on the School premises albeit they may be employed by a third party or are 'self-employed'.
- Consultants,
- Freelancers,
- Other individuals who come into contact with the School.

3. Discrimination

The law on discrimination is particularly complex. Briefly, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, age, trade union membership, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, political affiliation or disability.

Discrimination can take many forms:

Direct Discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably from other(s) in the same circumstances due to a particular characteristic as identified above.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice which although applied equally to everyone is such that a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it and which cannot be justified.

Harassment and Bullying occurs when someone is subjected to unwanted conduct that violates that person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all the circumstances and the perception of the victim.

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues because they have taken action to assert their legal rights or have assisted a colleague in that regard.

4. Basic principles

Every member of the School community is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of their national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, age, trade union membership, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, political affiliation or disability.

A good education for pupils is possible only if equal opportunities practices are an integral feature of all aspects of the life of the School.

Equal Opportunities practices should be evident in

- the formal curriculum (the programme of lessons);
- the informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities); and
- the 'hidden' curriculum (the ethos of the School, the quality of personal relationships etc.).

All members of the School community should be aware of the equal opportunities policy of the School.

Equal opportunities issues should be seen as inter-related and as applying to all aspects of School life. This should be kept in mind when reading the points outlined below, which cover the main areas.

5. Religion

The School acknowledges that members of the School community come from diverse backgrounds: some have no religious faith; others are committed to a greater or lesser extent to a variety of religions. The School seeks to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of and respect for the beliefs and practices of others and will not tolerate any form of discrimination by reference to religion.

With regard to the teaching of RS the School considers that the role of the teacher is that of educator and not that of evangelist. The School will not seek to make pupils religious, but to teach them about religion.

6. Culture, Class and Race

The School acknowledges that members of the School community come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and will endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a School and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony.

The School recognises the inequalities of opportunity which exist within society for individuals and groups and are determined to take positive action to enable individual members of the School community to raise their self-esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life.

The School understands the need to be different without being excluded.

The School will allow members of the School community to wear special forms of dress where these are an essential part of their religious or cultural background - Sikhs' turbans, Muslim girls' headscarves etc.

The School values the history, experience and contribution of our multicultural community and seeks to express this in the curriculum and life of the School: all members of the School community should feel that their language or dialect is valued and that bilingualism is regarded as advantageous. The School tries to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views.

The School is committed to the principle of equal treatment in all aspects of School life and will not tolerate racist behaviour in any form.

7. Gender

The School accepts that there are gender inequalities in society which impose limits, particularly on girls' expectations and behaviour, so the School will constantly examine its curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality.

The School is committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. All pupils experience subjects previously considered to be suitable for a single sex e.g. rugby, netball, cooking, woodwork etc.

The School will try to ensure:

- that teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes,
- that all pupils have opportunities for working with pupils of both sexes,
- that it breaks down traditional sex stereotypes (for example by not asking boys to move furniture while girls tidy up),
- that pupils have opportunities for examining their own pre-conceived ideas of gender-roles,
- that pupils are encouraged to pursue less conventional subjects and interests (for example, girls to read more non-fiction and boys more fiction; girls to develop mechanical interests, boys creative skills),
- that, wherever possible, classes have equal numbers of boys and girls.

The School is committed to the principle of equal treatment in all aspects of School life and will not tolerate any form of discrimination by reference to gender.

8. Sexuality

The School makes no assumptions about the sexuality of any members of the School community and will not tolerate any form of discrimination by reference to a person's sexuality.

9. Disability

The School will promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards disabled members of the School community in all aspects of School life.

The School welcomes pupils with special needs. It undertakes to assess and meet the needs of all pupils as far as they are able. It aims to create a happy and educationally exciting environment in which all pupils can prosper.

The School will foster an environment where disabled members of the School community can flourish.

The School will try to ensure that disabled members of the School community are facilitated in participating in the life of the School to the fullest possible extent.

10. School-life balance

The School acknowledges that members of the School community may need to achieve a School-life balance to enable them to meet their responsibilities outside of School due to family or domestic circumstances including caring for young children or dependent adults. Whenever possible the School undertakes to meet the needs of members of the School community in achieving a home and School life balance including work and not treat them less favourably as a result.

11. Age

Age related discrimination generally consists of unequal treatment against people based on their chronological age. This can include unfair treatment linked to a specific age or within an age range. It can also include categories such as 'old', 'young' or the perceived age of a person that someone may be associated with, for, example, the carer of an older person.

This School believes that all members of its community have the right to equality of opportunity and acknowledges that irrespective of age, they make a significant and valuable contribution to the School community.

12. Food

13.1 It is the Food Policy of the School to ensure the provision of a healthy balanced diet which allows for a balance of different foods and drink that sustain the wellbeing of the individual which may vary between individuals for medical or disability reasons or from different cultural, religious and social backgrounds. See the separate **Food Policy** for further information and procedures.

13. Responsibility of the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster, Governors and the Bursar

The Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster, Governors and the Bursar are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures relating to equal opportunities are implemented and that appropriate support and information are provided to facilitate their being up to date and their effective implementation.

The implementation of the equal opportunities policy and procedures includes:

- (a) understanding the nature of any unlawful discrimination and its effects on the educational and employment environment;
- (b) involvement in the resolution of discrimination complaints in the School or workplace, as required.

14. Complaints Procedure

Parents

In the event a parent believes that they or their children have experienced discrimination they should report the matter following the steps detailed in the **Complaints Policy for Parents**.

Pupils

In the event a pupil believes that they have experienced discrimination they should report the matter to a Housemaster of Form Tutor. If the discrimination relates to harassment or bullying then they should report the matter following the steps in the School **Anti-Bullying Policy**.

Staff

In the event a member of School staff believes that they have experienced discrimination they should report it to the Deputy Headmaster or Bursar. If the discrimination relates to harassment or bullying they should report the matter following the steps in the School **Harassment Policy**.

Other individuals who come into contact with the School

In the event any individual who comes into contact with the School believes they have experienced discrimination as a result of their contact with the School should report it to the Headmaster or Bursar.

The School will take all complaints of discrimination seriously and investigate it fully and confidentially. Any member of the School community making a complaint and any witness to alleged discrimination shall not to be victimised or unfairly treated in any way as a consequence of making the complaint or offering any evidence.

15. Contractors, agencies, consultants, freelancers and/or third parties

Where the School services are provided by external contractors, agencies, consultants, freelancers or third parties on the basis of a specification set by the School, these contractors, agencies, consultants, freelancers or third parties are responsible for adhering to this policy whilst providing services on behalf of the School.

The School will monitor the performance of contractors, agencies, consultants, freelancers and/or third parties and take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviours. However, if any issues become apparent with regards to equality in relation to any contractor, agency, contractor, freelancer or third party, these will be taken very seriously by the School and raised in the strongest possible terms with the contractor, agency or third party.

16. Whistleblowing

Any member of the School community who has concerns that the conduct of the School or a member of its community is against this policy should raise it following the steps in the School **Whistleblowing Policy**.