

Equal Opportunities Policy

Dover College



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Approved By:	KR	Date: August 2023
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Guiding Principles

The School is committed to delivering equality of opportunity for all members of the School Community (day pupils, boarders, staff, governors, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers).

The School recognises the value of having a diverse school community. Individuals are encouraged to recognise the benefits this brings to enriching the life of the school. Pupils are taught and encouraged to value each other, respect individuality and treat people fairly.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a Special Education Need or Disability (SEND) or because English is an additional language (EAL).

The staff will lead by example, encouraging pupils to develop positive attitudes and practices towards others. This will also be extensively covered in the PSHE and RSE schemes of work. The Equal Opportunities Policy is consistent with the School's other policies and procedures:

- Learning Support and Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Curriculum Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Gender Identity Policy

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective school community, including boarders. The policy aims to achieve the following:

- Share the commitment of the School as a place that promotes equal opportunities
- Promote equal treatment within the School of members of the School Community
- Create and maintain an open environment where individuality is celebrated and members of the School Community feel valued and free from discrimination
- Where reasonable the School will remove, or help to overcome, barriers for pupils where they already exist
- To make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled people at a substantial disadvantage
- To ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person or group listed above
- To clarify and monitor that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out 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. For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

Indirect discrimination occurs when 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.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to

be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a deaf pupil is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no suitable fire alarm and other options are not investigated.

Harassment

There are three types of harassment that are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010: Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic, sexual harassment and less favourable treatment of a pupil or group of pupils.

Harassment related to a relevant protected characteristic: : The relevant protected characteristics are disability, race and sex. Harassment occurs when a person engages in unwanted behaviour which is relevant to one of the relevant protected characteristics and which has the purpose or effect of: (a) violating a pupil's dignity; or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the pupil.

Sexual harassment: This occurs when a person engages in unwanted behaviour which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of: (a) violating a pupil's dignity; or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the pupil.

Less favourable treatment of a pupil because they submit to or reject sexual harassment or harassment related to sex.

Victimisation

In order to define victimisation, we must define "Protected Act".

A Protected Act is:

- Making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act 2010 as set out above)

or

- Helping someone else to make such a claim by giving evidence or information

or

- Making an allegation that the School or someone else has breached the Equality Act 2010

or

- Doing anything else in connection with the Equality Act 2010

Victimisation means treating someone badly because they have done a "protected act" (or because the School believes that a person has done or is going to do a protected act).

Treating a pupil less favourably because they have taken such an action will be unlawful victimisation.

Admission

Applicants: The School accepts applications from, and admits pupils irrespective of their Protected Characteristics (although subject to their age) and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered, subject to section 10, below. The School will treat every application in a fair, open-minded way.

Selection: Every application will be considered on its merits but this will not be done as a way of excluding pupils with a disability or special educational needs, providing that the school is able to provide support for these needs.

Admissions Policy: The School's Admissions Policy reflects the School's approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

Registration

Pupils' names should be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Pupils should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures, and to use the preferred names and pronouns.

Education and associated services

All pupils must have equal opportunity of access to the school's curriculum.

Equal access: Section 10 - The School will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and the curriculum (including sports and extra-curricular activities), irrespective of their Protected Characteristics (although subject to their age) and subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Staff must be constantly aware that their expectations affect the achievement, behaviour and status of each pupil. The curriculum must be balanced, objective and sensitive.

Positive action: The School may afford pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

Exclusions: The School will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding him or her from the School, or by subjecting him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs.

The curriculum and School materials: Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Variety should be evident in the morals, stories and information offered to children. Pupils should have access to accurate information about similarities and differences

Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias. The School's PSHE and RSE programme encourages respect for other people.

Pupil interaction: All pupils are encouraged to work and interact/play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes. The school will be proactive in responding to emerging issues and signs that discrimination and exclusion are taking place among pupils. For example, special assemblies or year-group activities aimed at encouraging pupils to be better informed, reflect, discuss, collaborate, question stereotypes and adopt positive attitudes towards all groups in society will be organised

Bullying

The School's Anti-bullying Policy contains more details about the School's anti-bullying practices.