



# **SUTTON COLDFIELD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY** **(Incorporating Public Sector Equality Duty Statement)**

**DATE: MARCH 2022**  
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# Equality and Diversity Policy

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## **Everyone is entitled to be treated fairly and without prejudice in every aspect of school life**

### **1 Terms of Reference**

- 1.1 For all staff (including trainees, part-time, fixed-term employees, casual workers and agency staff) students and governors employed or appointed by the Governing Board of the School.
- 1.2 Definitions:  
 “Headteacher” also refers to any other title used to identify the Headteacher, where appropriate, or other senior manager delegated to deal with the matter by the Headteacher.
- “Companion” refers to a person chosen by the employee to accompany them, who shall be a trade union representative or a workplace colleague.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and it may be amended at any time following consultation. Elements of this procedure may be varied as appropriate in any case.

### **2 Equal Opportunities Statement of Commitment**

- 2.1 Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls (“we”) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff, job applicants and students. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 2.2 The Governing Board will take allegations of discrimination seriously and address them promptly and confidentially, where possible.
- 2.3 All staff and students have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, as well as not to discriminate against or harass others, regardless of their status. For further details please refer to the Behaviour for Learning Policy (for students and staff) and Staff Code of Conduct Policy (for staff only).
- 2.4 We do not discriminate against staff and students on the basis of race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or nationality origin) age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion, faith or belief (Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics). Discrimination based on any of these protected characteristics is against the law.
- 2.5 All staff are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. In certain circumstances, the Governing Board could be held to be vicariously liable for the actions of their employees. Employees should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in School or on School-related business. (Our Statement under Public Sector Equality Duty is attached as Appendix A).

### **3 Scope and Purpose of the Policy**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with employees and to relations between employees at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- 3.2. We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. Please see the following for specific information on our approach to these issues.

## 4 How can you be Discriminated Against?

- 4.1 Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- 4.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.
- 4.3 Indirect discrimination is where there is a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not justified.
- 4.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- 4.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

## 5 Aims and objectives

- 5.1 We aim to carry out our legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation:
- Reinforce the school's position as a provider of high-quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities for all staff;
  - ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda;
  - achieve a staffing composition that is more reflective of the composition of the wider community;
  - ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every student;
  - ensure that students and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;
  - eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
  - ensure that complaints, or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy, will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure, (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary, grievance or anti-harassment procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

## 6 Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

- 6.1 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff that should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them. All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Deputy Headteacher – Student and Staff Development has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training which embodies the values of this Equality and Diversity policy.

- 6.2 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups

## **7 Discipline and Termination of Employment**

- 7.1 We will ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action. We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly, or indirectly, discriminatory.

## **8 Disability Discrimination**

- 8.1 If any member of the school community is disabled, becomes disabled, or has any significant health issues, we encourage them to inform us about their condition so that we can support them as appropriate.
- 8.2 If a member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they should speak to the HR team to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The HR team may wish to consult with the member of staff and their medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate the relevant needs. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 8.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff.

## **9 Fixed-term employees, Casual and Agency Workers**

- 9.1 We monitor our use of fixed-term employees, casual and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

## **10 Part-time work**

We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy.

## **11 Breaches of this Policy**

- 11.1 If anyone believes that they may have been discriminated against, they are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.

- 11.2 Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.
- 11.3 False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.4 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

## **12 Students and the curriculum**

- 12.1 The school follows local authority student admission policies. The school's aim is to provide for all students according to their needs, irrespective of ability or ethnic origin. The Education Reform Act 1988 stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. Lesson content and resources are reviewed regularly with a view to identifying bias, providing a variety of sources including positive examples of different protected characteristics.

## **13 Behaviour**

- 13.1 We treat any form of harassment as unacceptable.
- 13.2 We deal sensitively with inappropriate behaviour, including language, whether intended or not.
- 13.3 We promote the use of positive images avoiding stereotypes.
- 13.4 We ensure everyone knows that any complaint will be listened to sympathetically and be dealt with in a supportive and consistent manner.
- 13.5 Abuse can take both physical and verbal forms. Verbal attacks such as name-calling and racist, transphobic, homophobic or sexist jokes undermine and demean individuals. No member of staff should ignore such incidents and should follow school procedures in reporting such incidents. Steps are taken to explain fully to those perpetrating this behaviour that abuse will not be tolerated. Support will be provided for those involved. The pastoral system empowers students to deal effectively and assertively with such incidents.

## **14 Organisation and Administration**

- 14.1 This policy is available to all on the school website.
- 14.2 All new members of the community will be familiarised with the Equality and Diversity policy as part of their respective induction processes.
- 14.3 The equality and diversity dimension of the school's ethos, vision and philosophy will be shared through such opportunities as induction evenings, options evenings, meetings of the student body, form tutor times and assemblies.
- 14.4 All staff should look for ways of promoting and sharing examples of good practice and identifying how and where we may enrich the experience of all students.
- 14.5 The school will endeavour to ensure that all parents have access to clear and appropriate channels of communication and relevant information.
- 14.6 Equality and diversity should be considered within the context of agenda items, where appropriate.

## **15 Who is Responsible for this Policy?**

- 15.1 The Governing Board has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy and the Deputy Headteacher – Student and Staff Development has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- 15.2 All employees are personally responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. In certain circumstances, the Governing Board could be held to be vicariously liable for the actions of their employees. Employees should be aware that they may be personally liable if they are found to have discriminated against another person whilst in School or on School-related business.
- 15.3 This policy is regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team. It was drafted and approved in March 2022 and in accordance with the relevant legislation at that time. Should there be any legislative changes then the policy will be amended accordingly. We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives. Staff are invited to comment on this policy, suggesting ways in which it might be improved, by contacting the Headteacher.

## Appendix A:

### Public Sector Equality Duty Statement

This document describes how the Governing Board of Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls intends to fulfil its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to its workforce.

We will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

**We will collect and use equality information to help us to:**

#### Identify key issues

- Understand the impact of our policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics and thereby evaluate them more effectively.
- Assess whether any unlawful discrimination occurs when any of our functions are carried out.
- Identify what the key equality issues are for our organisation.

#### Assess performance

- Benchmark our performance and processes against those of similar organisations, nationally or locally.

#### Take Action

- Consider taking steps to meet the needs of staff who share relevant protected characteristics.
- Identify if there are any actions we can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of our activities on equality.
- Develop equality objectives to meet the specific duties.
- Have due regards to the aims of the general equality duty by ensuring that staff have appropriate information for decision making.

**We will work towards developing an equality profile of staff to help us understand key equality issues in our workforce. We note that it is useful to collect and consider information about:**

- Recruitment and promotion
- Numbers of part time and full time staff
- Pay and Remuneration
- Training
- Return to work of staff on maternity/paternity /adoption, or fostering leave
- Return to work of disabled employees following sick leave related to their disability
- Appraisals
- Grievances ( including about harassment)
- Disciplinary action (including about harassment)
- Dismissals and other reasons for leaving

We collect and use enough workforce information to effectively meet the general equality duty. Where relevant and proportionate, we will publish on our website some information about the impact of our employment functions on people with different protected characteristics in order to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty.

#### Equality Objectives

Our Equality Objectives reflect the school's priorities and draw upon available data and other evidence. Careful analysis of this is undertaken in order to ensure that we are working to achieve improved outcomes for different groups.



From 2022, our Equality Objectives are:

1. To use performance data to monitor student achievement and respond to variations between groups of learners who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
2. To improve accessibility to the school site by ensuring that any new building works ensures full access for any disability. We will also continue to make other adjustments on a case by case basis, in order to meet the needs of individual students.
3. To collect voluntary data and monitor our work force so that we have a clear picture of any equality issues affecting our workforce and so that we may endeavour to ensure that the body of staff is more reflective of the local community.

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Name of policy/activity/project:

Equal Opportunities Policy

Is this a new or an existing policy/activity/project?

Existing policy updated

Scope/timescales for project or activity (including review date):

Approved March 2022. To be reviewed: March 2024

Policy/project lead and Author of Equality Impact Assessment:

Miss C.Flannery, Deputy Headteacher

Outline of main aims of this activity/policy/project:

To provide guidelines for all members of the school community about the school's policy on equal opportunities and to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty

Who will benefit/be affected by this policy/activity?

Students and staff of Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls

If an existing policy/activity, do you have any data of use by or impact on different groups which may raise concerns over an equality impact?

No concerns

Does the activity have the potential to impact differently on groups due to a protected characteristic (eg race/ethnicity, gender, transgender, disability, religion & belief, age, sexual orientation, maternity/paternity) for:

(a) Students and members of the community? (e.g. The Governing Board, students, contractors, visitors, hirers of the premises, agency staff, suppliers etc.). Which groups are likely to be affected?

No

(b) Employees?

No

Does this activity make a positive contribution to the School's general or specific duties under the Equality Act 2010? If yes, please detail.

Yes – the Policy applies to all members of the school community equally

Having reviewed the potential impact of the policy/activity listed above, **I believe a full impact assessment is required / NOT required** (delete as applicable with justification below)

**Full impact assessment is not required**

Justification: The policy is of equal benefit to all students, regardless of gender, race, religion, maternity/paternity, sexual orientation etc.

Name : Miss C. Flannery.....

Date : March 2022.....