

## Gender Equality Policy

### Legislative Context

The Equality Act (2006) amended the requirements of the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). It added to the duty to eliminate sexual discrimination and sexual harassment, the duty to promote gender equality.

### Social Context

We understand that despite thirty years of individual legal rights to sex equality there is still widespread discrimination and persistent gender inequality. Both sexes suffer from the stereotyping of their roles and needs, and such stereotyping has to be understood, challenged and overcome.

### The General Duty

In accordance with our school's values, we welcome the statutory Gender Equality Duty. In compliance with the General Duty, we have due regard for the need to, and works to:

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination
- Eliminate sexual harassment
- Promote gender equality

By unlawful sexual discrimination we mean treating one person less favourably than another on grounds of sex or gender. We understand that this could be done directly but that it could also occur indirectly. Indirect discrimination means that a particular policy or practice may impact more negatively on one gender than on the other or may favour one gender to the disadvantage of the other.

By sexual harassment we refer to behaviour or remarks based on a person's sex or gender, perceived to be unpleasant, threatening, offensive or demeaning to the dignity and self-esteem of the recipient or subject. We see such behaviour as also damaging to the perpetrator. (refer further: our school's Behaviour/Anti-Bullying policies)

We understand 'sex' to refer to the **biological** differences between males and females and 'gender' to refer to the wider **social** roles and responsibilities which structure our lives. By promoting gender equality our intention is to recognize and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

We understand that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat girls and boys, and women and men differently, if that action is aimed at overcoming previous, current or possible future disadvantage.

We will take steps to counteract the effects of any past discrimination in staff recruitment. Where we are uncertain whether there is a genuine occupational requirement for preference to be given to the employment of someone of a particular gender we will seek specialist advice.

We understand the three parts of the duty to be different, but that they should normally support each other. However, we are aware that achieving one may not lead to achieving all three.

In taking due regard we will exercise the principles of proportionality and relevance. By this we mean that the weight we give to gender equality will be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. The greater the relevance of a function to gender equality, the greater regard we will pay to it.

### **The Specific Duties**

We welcome the responsibility to think and act strategically about gender equality. To meet the specific duties and guided by the Code of Practice prepared by the Equal Opportunities Commission, we have prepared, published and implemented, and will maintain, within the plans and work we do objectives relevant to this issue.

We are working to develop our understanding of the major gender equality issues in our school's functions and services. In order to do this, we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information, including data about our local area
- Consult all staff, pupils, parents and relevant local communities
- Review all our school policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our school are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality
- Ensure that there are no situations of gender pay gap

We will:

- Set out the results of reviews, consultations and impact assessments
- Report on progress annually and set further objectives where necessary
- Review and revise the Policy at least every three years

### **Responsibilities**

All governors, staff, volunteers, pupils and their families need to develop an appropriate understanding of, and act in accordance with, the school's Gender Equality Policy. In addition:

**The school governors** are responsible for ensuring that the School prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews a Gender Equality Policy (including possible budget implications), and in particular the employment implications of meeting their duty.

**The Headteacher works with the SLT** to ensure that:

- the Policy is implemented staff recruitment, training opportunities and conditions promote gender equality
- all staff, pupils and their parents are consulted regarding, and are aware of the school's responsibilities to meet, the Gender Equality Duty

- existing and planned policies are assessed for the ways in which they impact on gender equality
- curriculum planning, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities take account of the need to promote gender equality
- incidents of sexual/gender bullying or harassment are dealt with according to our Behaviour/Anti-Bullying policy
- visitors to the school, or those who use the premises, are aware of the Gender Equality policy

**All staff** have a responsibility to deal with incidents of sexual harassment or bullying; help eliminate unlawful discrimination; prepare and/or help deliver a curriculum, learning and teaching methods, classroom organisation and assessment procedures, behaviour management, school journeys and extended school activities (including work with parents) that take account of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality.

**Pupils and parents** have a proportionate responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the policy, as do **visitors** to the school.

We believe that, even having the Equal pay Act of 1970 and the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, there is still widespread discrimination and gender inequality in society. We believe that having this gender equality policy and action plan will:

- support us in our decision-making and policy development
- give us a clearer understanding of the needs of staff, pupils and their families
- enable us to provide better quality services which meet varied needs
- help us target our resources more effectively
- help promote increased confidence in our school
- make more effective use of our workforce

We recognise that both sexes can suffer from sexual stereotyping and that sometimes the same policies and practices can impact differently on men and women and boys and girls. We will make appropriate adjustments if this is found to be the case with any of our policies and practices.

We also recognise that girls and boys, and women and men, can experience different forms of discrimination depending on, among other things, their ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, age or disability and we will take this complexity into consideration.

In these ways we will strive to improve the situation for, and the relationships between, men and women and boys and girls within our school and wider community.

### **Breaches of the Gender Equality Policy**

We understand that eliminating gender discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality is in part an education function and a matter of cultural change. Where possible, breaches of the policy will be dealt with in a manner appropriate to the level of the breach, and with the intention of bringing about the relevant changes. More serious breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying and harassment procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

Where safeguarding issues based on sex and gender come to the attention of the school these will be dealt with according to our child protection procedures.

**Consultation; publishing; staff, pupils and parent development**

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with governors, staff and pupils, These consultations have contributed to developing the awareness among governors, staff, pupils and parents of the ongoing need to eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination and harassment and to promote gender equality.

Copies of this policy are available on our website and in staff/department policy folders.

We will continue to develop awareness of what constitutes unlawful gender discrimination and harassment, and of the need to eliminate this and to promote gender equality.