

# Equal Opportunities policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Review	P Vanni/C Farr	September 2016	✓
Reported	Education Committee	September 2016	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	December 2016	✓

*To next be reviewed/approved by governors on 26 March 2019*

To be published on the following:	
Staff Portal	✓
School website	✓



## **Introduction**

St Paul's Girls' School was founded in 1904 as one of the first purpose built schools for girls, promoting academic excellence within a liberal ethos, which remains our role today. St Paul's prides itself on providing a tolerant and mutually respectful environment in which the wishes of pupils and staff are considered in conjunction with the wellbeing of the whole community.

The School is committed to ensuring that its students and staff study and work in an environment that respects and values difference and diversity. Discrimination, bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the School and will be addressed under the appropriate policy as a serious matter.

## **Responsibility**

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and ensure that students do likewise.

The Governors, High Mistress and Senior Management Team have a particular responsibility to lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to this policy.

## **Pupils**

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

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

## **Admissions**

The School welcomes applications from any girl for entry at 11 or 16 regardless of their background. We are committed to ensuring that our admissions process is conducted in a way which is transparent and fair. It is our aim to identify and admit pupils of significant academic potential regardless of their current educational setting and family circumstances.

A well-developed bursary programme enables as many as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School regardless of their family's financial circumstances.

We also welcome applications from pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although there are currently limited facilities for the disabled the School will accommodate the requirements of candidates who have special educational needs and/or disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately.

We often accept pupils whose first language is not English, but in order to access the curriculum and benefit from the wide range of opportunities offered at the School, pupils need to be fluent in English. For this reason, our entrance process assumes that candidates are able readers, speakers and writers of English.

There is no uniform and parents should be aware that, whilst pupils may dress mainly as they choose, their general appearance and attire must be decent, appropriate for a day at work in school, not hinder social interaction or education and not pose any risk to their health or safety, or that of others.

Anonymised equality data is collected as part of the admissions process.

## **Developing Understanding**

Assemblies, PSHE, curriculum lessons and clubs and societies are all used to:

- Promote tolerance and respect for others
- 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 the School will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why the School will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

Staff receive information about the Equality Act 2010 as part of their induction. Training is available for staff on SEN and equality issues in education from time to time. Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to the assessment and other treatment of pupils.

## **Transgender**

We are a girls' school. As such, we will consider at the admissions stage, in adherence to our articles of association and charitable objects, only those prospective pupils who are legally defined as female. This includes any individual who has transitioned to female, and any individual who is legally recognized as female under the Gender Recognition Act (2004). While many in the school would have sympathy with the idea that gender is not binary, UK law presently recognizes only two genders, male and female, and St Paul's is a school free to educate only girls.

The School's approach to transgender issues is fully explained in the Gender Identity Student Protocol, which is available on request.

## **Addressing Concerns**

Pupils should report any concerns about equality issues to a member of staff. Complaints against other pupils will be investigated and addressed in accordance with the Behaviour policy. Discrimination, bullying and harassment of any kind are not tolerated in the School.

Complaints about the admissions process should be raised in accordance with the Admissions policy.

Parents of girls currently at the school may raise complaints formally with the School through the Complaints policy.

### *Other Relevant Policies*

- Admissions policy
- Learning Support policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- ICT Code of Conduct for Pupils
- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy

## **Staff**

The School is committed to promoting an environment where it can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skills and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010, ACAS codes of practice and the legislation on part-time and fixed-term workers.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, pupils and parents. All staff must treat colleagues with respect and not discriminate, harass or victimise other members of staff. The School will not tolerate any discriminatory acts or behaviour.

## **Discrimination**

Discrimination may occur deliberately or by accident. Direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment are covered by this policy and are defined as follows:

**Direct Discrimination** – treating somebody less favourably because of a protected characteristic; their association with somebody who has a protected characteristic eg a parent with a disabled child; or the perception that somebody has a protected characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination** – applying a criteria, provision or practice which places a group of people at a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic which cannot be objectively justified.

**Harassment** – when unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic causes a distressing, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

**Victimisation** – treating an employee unfairly who has made or supported a complaint about discrimination.

There are nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Whilst different terms and conditions and processes may apply for different groups of staff based on the requirements of the roles or statutory definitions, the School undertakes to ensure that employees and prospective employees are not discriminated against in particular in relation, but not limited to:

- Recruitment and selection
- Promotion, transfer & training opportunities
- Benefits, terms and conditions of employment
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Termination of employment including redundancies
- Conduct at work

We regularly review our policies and procedures taking the current requirements of equality legislation into account.

## **Recruitment**

The School is committed to ensuring that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position. The School has a comprehensive Staff Safer Recruitment and Selection policy which details the recruitment process and covers equality and diversity issues.

## **Disability Discrimination**

A disability is defined as any medical condition which has a substantial and long term effect on a person's ability to do normal day to day activities. Some conditions are covered as soon as they are diagnosed.

Members of staff are encouraged to notify the Human Resources Office if they have ongoing health issues which are causing difficulties at work or which are of concern generally. The School is often

able to provide assistance by considering reasonable adjustments to the workplace or duties. These are often simple to put in place but can make a significant difference.

### **Monitoring**

The School retains equality data covering age, nationality and gender for its staff and anonymised data including ethnicity for job applicants. Consultation with staff has indicated that further monitoring would not be welcome. The data is reported to governors from time to time and used to inform policy development.

### **Addressing Concerns**

Any concerns about equality related issues should be reported to the appropriate line manager or, if that is not appropriate, a member of the Senior Management Team. All issues relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying are taken extremely seriously in the School and complaints will be investigated in line with the Grievance Procedure for staff. Where appropriate the Disciplinary Procedure will be applied.

#### *Other Relevant Policies*

- Staff Safer Recruitment and Selection policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety policy and Instruction Notices

### **Availability of this policy**

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website <http://www.spgs.org/School-policies> or is available request from the School office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.