

Equal Opportunities policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
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Reported	Education Committee	February 2021	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	March 2021	✓
To be published on the following:			
Staff Portal	✓		
School website	✓		



1. Introduction

1.1 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 an inclusive and mutually respectful environment in which the wishes of students and staff are considered in conjunction with the wellbeing of the whole community.

1.2 The school is committed to a policy of inclusion that sees the diverse population of its staff, students and governors as one of its greatest strengths. In order to ensure that everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion and equality of opportunity be at the heart of the School's ethos. This policy applies equally to staff, students, parents and visitors to the School. It aims to ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief. The School adopts a zero-tolerance policy in relation to discrimination on the basis of any protected characteristic. Necessary action will be taken as appropriate.

1.3 Any behaviour, comments or attitudes (including "banter") that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

1.4 We aim to empower our students to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community.

2. Responsibility

2.1 St Paul's Girls' School aims to:

- provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of Keeping Children Safe in Education¹.
- provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- prepare students for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide and promote positive non-stereotyping information about the diversity of our society
- actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage and ensure we learn from these experiences
- embed inclusion through all our activities.

2.2 To achieve these aims we will:

- involve members of the SPGS community in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- publish and share our policies and progress with the whole community;
- collect and analyse data to monitor potential disadvantage or barriers to thriving;
- provide for students' diverse needs to overcome any potential barriers to learning and ensure all can participate fully;
- make provision in the wider school curriculum to promote and celebrate diversity;
- operate a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour;
- educate and empower our students to be agents of change and inclusive leaders;
- work in partnership with families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination and inequality.

2.3 Inclusion cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community.

2.4 The Governors and Senior Management Team have responsibility for ensuring that the School operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the

¹ [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/616222/Keeping-children-safe-in-education-2018.pdf)

School. However, each member of the School community is responsible for preventing discrimination, embracing diversity and upholding equality of opportunity.

3. The School Governors

3.1 It is the School Governors' responsibility to:

- positively role model inclusive behaviour and practice through compliance with their own inclusion objectives;
- ensure that the school complies with equality legislation;
- ensure that the school's policy, procedures and actions are monitored for effectiveness;
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy.

4. The High Mistress

4.1 It is the High Mistress' responsibility to:

- ensure implementation of this policy and its procedures;
- ensure that all staff are sufficiently trained in and playing their role in creating an inclusive culture;
- actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice;
- have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimization or harassment positively;
- ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with this policy.

5. All Staff

5.1 It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- positively role-model inclusive behaviour and practice;
- actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying, including banter;
- actively provide and promote an inclusive curriculum, identify and challenge inequality, bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture;
- commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

6. All students

6.1 It is the responsibility of students to:

- positively role model inclusive behaviours;
- comply with the code of conduct and behaviour policy;
- address uncomfortable and difficult conversations with courage, empathy, emotional intelligence, respect and desire to seek resolution;
- are accountable for becoming agents of change and using their own privilege for societal good.

7. The Legal Framework

7.1 The legal and local framework for this policy is:

- Equality Act 2010
- DfE Guidance on Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Duty to Promote Community Cohesion, Education and Inspections Act 2006

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

- Age
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

- Sexual orientation

Discrimination can take the following forms:

Direct Discrimination - This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than others because of their (or a family members) actual or perceived protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination - This occurs by applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic, and which cannot be justified as a proportionate or unpreventable way of achieving a legitimate aim.

Victimisation - This occurs where an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies equally to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.

Discrimination by association - This occurs if people in your life, like family members, have protected characteristics and you are treated unfairly because of that.

Harassment - This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose *OR* effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

8. Related School documents

8.1 All school policies and handbooks will take note of the relevant aspects of Equal Opportunities. Those with particular relevance are:

- Accessibility Policy
- Admissions' Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints' Procedure
- Department Handbooks
- Student Planners
- Gender Identity Protocol (student)
- Recruitment Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- Staff Handbook

9. Implementation

9.1 The implementation of this policy and embedding Inclusion into the St Paul's Girls' School culture is led by the Deputy Head, Director of People and Diversity.

9.2 Key components of implementation include:

10. Training and Development

10.1 The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training.

10.2 The school will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status;
- provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs;
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and students can make;
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions to discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote inclusive behaviour generally.

10.3 Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between heads

of department and their teams, as well as links between management and departments and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the PDR process.

11. Inclusion within the Academic life of the School

11.1 No student should be made to feel uncomfortable because they differ from the majority, e.g. in ethnic or social background, in being gifted, being from financial disadvantage, having English as an additional language or a special educational need and/or disability.

11.2 Classroom arrangement - the following will be sensitively monitored:

1. Seating arrangements and friendship groups (directed seating and grouping is often very helpful)
2. Grouping and leadership of groups for joint work
3. Access to equipment such as electronic equipment e.g. iPads, mini whiteboards etc.

11.3 Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities will be given assistance to achieve their potential by differentiation of tasks and additional support where appropriate.

12. Curriculum

12.1 Where possible, relevant aspects of the curriculum will aim to:

1. Normalise diversity in the content and examples utilised;
2. Stress the contribution of all kinds of individuals and cultures;
3. Reinforce the importance of embracing difference, and of equality of opportunity as a desirable aim.

12.2 Resources will be monitored for possible bias, reinforcing stereotypes and/or ethnocentric or phallogocentric elements.

13. Displays/Public Events

13.1 This policy will be kept in mind when deciding on students chosen to represent the school for public events, or to supply work for display.

14. Pastoral Care - Form Tutors and Heads of Year

14.1 The following areas will be monitored by those responsible:

1. Friendship groups - no individual or group should be isolated as belonging to a minority;
2. Rewards and sanctions - should be applied with consistency and impartiality;
3. Co-curricular involvements - all students have access to a range of involvements;
4. Positions of responsibility - should be awarded to those best qualified, on the grounds of personal qualities only. The Head Girl Team will be appointed following a democratic process in which the views of the members of the Senior School and staff are consulted.

15. Links with the wider community

15.1 All visitors to the school whether in a teaching function or as visitors/casual users of school premises will be expected to act in accordance with the principles of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion.

15.2 All members of the school community will be expected to act in accordance with the principles of this policy when in contact with others, outside the school, e.g.

- Students on work experience, at competitions or on visits;
- Contractors within the school;
- Staff dealing with visitors or at conferences.

15.3 Students may need support to cope with bias encountered in the wider society; coping strategies will be discussed in PSHE and other lessons as appropriate.

16. Infringements - Procedures

16.1 Students

- Minor incidents should be dealt with immediately and informally, where possible taking the opportunity for a teaching or tutorial discussion.
- More serious or consistent problems should be reported through CPOMS to the Deputy Head, Director of Pastoral Care (see Behaviour and Discipline Policy in Staff Handbook).

16.2 Staff

Any staff infringing the guidelines of this policy should be reported. (See relevant Grievance Procedures in staff contracts and the Complaints' Procedures in Staff Handbook).

16.3 Visitors and Parents

Any visitors or parents infringing the guidelines of this policy should be reported to the Deputy Head, Director of People and Diversity.

17. Monitoring - results and destinations

17.1 In order to identify where bias may be playing a role in decisions or outcomes, a number of areas will be routinely monitored. These include:

- Anonymised student application and admissions data;
- Bursary application and admissions data;
- Anonymised staff recruitment data;
- Examination results;
- Destinations after 16+ and 18+.

17.2 This will be done within the GDPR and confidentiality of personal information protocols and will be reported in such a way that does not identify any individuals.

18. Staff Recruitment

18.1 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.

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

19. Recruitment

19.1 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.

20. Disability Discrimination

20.1 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.

20.2 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.

21. Monitoring

21.1 The School retains equality data covering age, nationality and gender for its staff and anonymised data including ethnicity for job applicants. The data is reported to governors from time to time and used to inform policy development.

22. Addressing Concerns

22.1 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.

23. 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.