



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Rationale

At Monkshouse School we aim to provide equality of opportunity for all children whatever their age, ability, gender, race or background. We want all our pupils to achieve their full potential during their time with us. As such, we work to ensure that our expectations, attitudes, and practices – in particular those relating to gender – do not prevent any child from reaching their potential.

We recognise that a child's self-perception can be influenced by his/her environment and so we aim to enhance our children's self-esteem and self-confidence by positively working to reduce any gender bias and promoting equality of opportunity.

At the same time, we are aware that as children mature and their relationships with peers of both sexes develop their perception of sex roles alters. We also recognise that such perceptions are influenced by other factors including home, peer group and the media.

Monkshouse School recognises the benefits of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. We are committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the school community and to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. In the provision of equal opportunities, we recognise and accept our responsibilities under the law and oppose discrimination on the basis of:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation and, (in the case of adults in the school community)
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Age

These are referred to as the **protected characteristics**. We also oppose unlawful discrimination and bullying on the basis that a person has a special educational need or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

We aim to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunity and comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Aims of the policy

Through the application of the policy we aim to:

- Communicate the commitment of the school to the promotion of equal opportunities and ensure that staff and children understand that discrimination against any person on any grounds in the protected characteristics list is unacceptable.
- Ensure the principles and practices of equal opportunities apply to all members of the school community.
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination.
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone feels valued and supported.
- Ensure that all pupils reach their full potential
- Remove, or help to overcome barriers to pupils where they exist.
- Educate, develop and prepare children for life whatever their sex, colour, culture, gender or ability.
- Provide an environment in which children/staff feel safe enough to express/question views.
- Evidence equal opportunities in:
The formal curriculum (lessons)
The informal curriculum (extra-curricular)
The hidden curriculum (ethos and relationships)

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- Admissions
- Safer Recruitment
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Anti-Bullying
- SEND
- Accessibility Plan

In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty we will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those without
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

Forms of discrimination

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

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as detailed. It also occurs when a person is treated less

favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity).

Indirect Discrimination

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. If the criteria cannot be objectively justified they would be indirectly discriminatory.

Discrimination arising from disability

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a person with a disability is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be proportionate means of achieving an aim.

Policy and Practice

Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person at Monkshouse School will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.

Parents should be aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities. All cases of discrimination or prejudice should be taken seriously and dealt with, as appropriate, according to existing sanction procedures. A record of incidents will be kept.

Adults

If in the case of a discrimination / harassment complaint is brought against another staff member, the Headteacher will investigate the allegation fully with the support of EPM after notifying the Chair of Governors. In the case of the Headteacher being named, the Chair of Governors will take on this responsibility, working with Human Resources.

If in the case of a discrimination/harassment complaint is made by a parent against a teacher or vice versa, the Headteacher of the school will investigate with the support of the Chair of Governors working with EPM.

Admission

The school follows LCC admissions policy and no pupil is discriminated against on the grounds of their protected characteristics.

Gender

As a School we constantly examine our curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality.

All children have equal opportunity within, and equal access to, all areas of the curriculum.

All children are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of gender bias in both our teaching and learning materials and our teaching styles.

Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid sexual stereotypes and gender bias.

Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to boys and girls.

All children are encouraged to work and play freely with others of both sexes.

Opportunities are given for children to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of both sexes.

Teaching and other groupings, such as dinner queues, assembly seating, lines for dismissal and classroom seating are organised on the basis of criteria other than gender, for example, age, ability, friendship.

Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and children.

Discipline procedures – notably rewards and sanctions – are the same for both sexes

Our school uniform policy reflects equality of opportunity for all children. Should any Reasonable Adjustments need to be made for example in the case of pupils with a disability, these should be referred to the Headteacher who will give due consideration to safety and welfare and the school's existing uniform policy. If parents/carers are unhappy with any decision they should make reference to the school's complaints policy.

Culture, Class and Race

Monkshouse School acknowledges that members of the school come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a school and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony.

Monkshouse School recognises the inequalities of opportunity which exist within society for individuals and groups and are determined to take positive action to enable every individual to raise his/her self-esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life.

We understand the need to be different without being excluded.

We are happy for pupils to wear special forms of dress where these are an essential part of their religious or cultural background.

We value the history, experience and contribution of our multi-cultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and life of our school.

We try to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views: a prime cause of prejudice is ignorance and misunderstanding.

We will not tolerate racist behaviour in any form.

Religion

We acknowledge that members of the School come from diverse backgrounds: some have no religious faith; others are committed to a greater or lesser extent to a variety of religions. We seek to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of and respect for the beliefs and practices of others.

We teach about a range of religions at the school.

Pupils with English as an additional language

Pupils with EAL will receive additional learning support if necessary. Linguistic diversity is positively recognized and staff and children should feel their natural language is valued. The school employs TAs able to speak the range of languages we have in school in order to ensure good communication and understanding between home and school.

Resources

Monkshouse School's aim is to provide for all children according to their needs, irrespective of sex, ability or ethnic origin. Resources should reflect cultural and racial backgrounds of children to support positive self-imagery. Efforts are made to recognize, and be aware of, the possibility of bias, so that this can be eliminated in both teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotype and bias.

Relationships

Relationships between staff, children and management should be such that any member of the School acting in a manner contrary to the spirit of this policy is made aware of the unacceptable nature of his/her behaviour. This should be done in a supportive manner to encourage change and reinforce the principles of this policy.

When it is uncomfortable or inappropriate to address the issue between staff then the Leadership Team must be made aware of the incident and supervisors address the incident with the staff or child involved through supervision. In extreme circumstances formal procedures may be taken by the Head Teacher of the school in line with School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Positive action

We may afford pupils of a particular racial group or pupils with a disability or special educational need access to additional education or training to meet their needs e.g. additional language activities for pupils whose first language is not English.

Bullying

We will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason (see Anti-Bullying/Cyber Bullying Policy).

Pupils with SEND

Refer to SEND Policy

Exclusions

We will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding him/her from school or by subjecting him/her to any other detriment on the grounds of his/her Protected Characteristics.

Equal opportunities employer

Employment

This policy applies to all aspects of employment from the advertisement of jobs, recruitment, career development, counselling, training, promotion, grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Applicants

We accept applications from, and recruit staff irrespective of their Protected Characteristics and will not discriminate on these grounds. Every application will be treated in a fair, open-minded way. Our safer recruitment policy reflects this approach.

Equal access

We will afford all staff equal access to all benefits, services, facilities and opportunities for development irrespective of their Protected Characteristics, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

Disabilities and reasonable adjustments

We have an on-going duty to make reasonable adjustments for individuals with a disability in respect of both employment and the education and associated services provided to ensure that such staff and pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other staff and pupils.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Making arrangements for an individual in a wheelchair to attend an interview
- Allowing children with specific SEND requirements additional time to complete a test
- Providing test papers in larger print for a child with visual impairment
- Arranging a variety of accessible sports activities

The Headteacher should be notified if you are aware, or suspect, that you or your child has a disability. Written reports and all relevant information should be shared with the school so appropriate support and adjustments can be made. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. We will have due regard to any request to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.

Access

We will monitor the physical features of the premises to consider whether users of the premises with a disability are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible, and proportionate, we will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. The school has an Accessibility Plan which is reviewed annually.

Responsibilities

All members of the school community are expected to comply with this policy.

The Governing Body has responsibility for the effective operation of the policy. The Headteacher has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

Those working at a management level have a responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the school with regard to equal opportunities

Monitoring

We monitor achievement, exclusions and bullying incidents against gender, race, disability and special educational need.

We also monitor staff appointments to ensure no-one applying for a post is discriminated against.

Review

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually, or earlier if considered necessary.

Reporting Incidents of discrimination

Complaints

If you feel that your child has received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, or you feel this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the school's Complaints Procedure, available on the school website.

We will treat seriously and investigate every complaint and report and disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the School Community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.