



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Introduction

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.

Rationale

The College has 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.

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 recognise and help overcome those lasting and embedded patterns of advantage and disadvantage which are based on socially ascribed gender stereotypes and assumptions.

The Specific Duties

We welcome the responsibility to think and act more 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 our objectives as set out below.

- Equality of access to all areas of the whole College curriculum.
- Equality of access to extra-curriculum activities. Boys and girls are encouraged to participate equally in the full range of activities both inside and outside the classroom.
- Efforts are made to ensure that staff are alerted to the possibility of gender bias in both our teaching and learning materials and teaching styles.
- Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid sexual stereotyping and gender bias.
- Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to male and female pupils.
- Opportunities are given for pupils to work with teaching and non-teaching staff of both sexes.
- Teaching and other groupings, such as lunch queues, assembly lines, classroom seating and playground areas are organised on the basis of other criteria other than gender, for example age.
- Equality between the sexes is recognised when giving/delegating responsibility and noting the achievements of both staff and pupils.
- Discipline procedures – rewards and sanctions – are the same for both sexes.
- Pupils and staff are encouraged to value each other and build up and maintain co-operative relationships, such relationships being based on mutual respect for each other.
- Any differences involving gender which arise inside and outside the classroom are dealt with sensitively and are discussed with the pupils.
- All teaching posts and non-teaching posts are not sex specific. Both men and women are encouraged to teach all age groups and stages according to qualifications and experience.
- All members of staff have equal access to in-service training and posts of responsibility.
- Practices and approaches involving equal opportunity in terms of gender issues are regularly reviewed by the management of the College.

In order to develop our understanding of the gender equality issues in our functions and services, we:

- Collect and analyse school data and other gender equality relevant information.
- Consult all staff, pupils, parents and relevant local communities as appropriate.
- Review all our College policies and practices to assess the ways in which they might impact on gender equality.
- Ensure governors, staff, pupils, parents and others in our College are accountable and understand their responsibilities with regard to preventing discrimination and harassment and promoting gender equality.

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 College's Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. In addition:

The College governors are responsible for ensuring that the College prepares, publishes, implements, reports on and reviews a Gender Equality Policy and in particular the employment implications of meeting the Duty.

The Principal works with the Senior Management Team 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 College'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 policy.
- Visitors to the College, 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 College.

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, boys and girls within our College and wider community.

Single Sex Provision

Where we provide for one sex only, this is to help meet the different needs of boys and girls (men and women). This may arise out of Health and Safety and/or where there is an issue of physical intimacy or embarrassment

We do not offer different curriculum choices to boys and girls, and where there are curriculum options we ensure that these are not offered in such a way that boys and girls are steered into making choices based on gender stereotypes.

If requests for additional single sex activities, facilities or provision which appear to maintain or promote gender inequalities come from pupils, families or the community, these will be considered and legal advice sought.

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 the College's Anti-Bullying and harassment procedures, and the disciplinary procedures for staff.

Raising Awareness

This policy is available in the office, on our website.

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.