



## **URSULINE HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Wimbledon**

# **Equalities Diversity Policy**

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# Equalities Policy

## 1. Principles

The Equality Act, of which most provisions came into force on 1st October 2010, brings together all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors need to follow. The Act therefore replaces and incorporates for example, The Sex Discrimination Act (1975), The Race Relations Act (1976) and The Disability Discrimination Act (1995). Ursuline High School recognises its statutory duties to promote community cohesion and equality in relation to gender (sex and reassignment), age, marital status, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This is reflected in our Mission Statement to foster respect for all.

The policy is compliant with the Equalities Act of 2010.

In fulfilling these obligations, we are guided by seven principles.

1. We see all pupils and staff as of equal value and should not experience discrimination, whether or not they are **disabled**, whatever their **ethnicity/race**, **religious affiliation**, **age**, **Martial status**, **pregnant or on maternity leave** and whichever their **gender or sexual orientation**.
2. Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them in the same way. Our Policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate, but are differentiated, as appropriate, to take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kind of barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to **disability** (so that reasonable adjustments are made), **ethnicity/race** (so that different cultural backgrounds and experience of prejudice are recognized), **sexual orientation** and **gender** (so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, women and men are recognized).
3. We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:
  - a) Positive attitudes towards **disabled people**, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
  - b) Positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of **ethnicity/race**, culture, **religious affiliation**, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
  - c) Mutual respect and good relations between the **genders** and an absence of sexual harassment.

4. Policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, marital status, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and whichever their gender and sexual orientation.
5. In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between disabled and non-disabled people, people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, girls and boys, women and men.
6. People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones.
7. We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life of disabled people as well as non-disabled, people of a wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, all genders and sexual orientation, all ages and people who are married, not married or in civil partnerships.

We recognise that the actions resulting from a policy are what make a difference. The seven principles listed above will inform the **School Development Plan**.

We keep each curriculum subject or area under review in order to ensure that teaching and learning reflect the seven principles above.

We ensure that the seven principles apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

- Pupil progress, attainment and assessment
- Pupil personal development, welfare and well-being
- Teaching styles and strategies
- Admissions and attendance
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents
- Working with the wider community

Ursuline High School is opposed to all forms of prejudice including prejudices around disability and special educational needs, prejudices around racism, prejudices that are directed towards religious groups and communities, and prejudices reflecting sexism and homophobia.

Clear guidance is given to teaching and support staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with.

Incidents involving racial prejudice and bullying are recorded and reported annually to the Local Authority.

## **2. Legislation and Guidance**

### **Background to the Equality Duty**

#### ***Equality Act***

For the purposes of the Act:

**Equality is having equal opportunities and rights. It means being treated fairly and not being put at a disadvantage.** It also means being able, and supported, to reach your potential.

**Inequality** is when people aren't given equal opportunities and right. They might be treated unfairly and experience discrimination.

(Source: EHRC)

#### ***The Provision of the Act***

The Act applies to all schools and all people covered by the schools provision including:

- prospective students (in relation to admissions arrangements),
- students at the school,
- former students (if there is a continuing relationship based on them having been at the school),
- teaching and support staff,
- Parents and governors.

#### ***Protected Characteristics***

All activities that take place as part of the life of the school must protect people from discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics relevant to students and adults in the school community:

- **disability**
- **pregnancy and maternity**
- **race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality**
- **religion or belief or no religion**
- **sex**
- **sexual orientation**

The additional protected characteristics for adults include:

- **Age**
- **Marriage or civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)**
- **Gender reassignment**

## ***The Public Sector Equality Duty***

Since 2011 all public bodies including schools have been bound by what is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Specifically schools have a general duty and two specific duties.

### ***The General Duty***

- In the General Duty a school must have *due regard* for the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the act
- advance quality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it which includes removing or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a protected characteristic and encouraging people who have a protected characteristic to participate fully in any activities
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it which includes tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

### ***Due regard***

Having due regard includes:

- demonstrating knowledge of the Equality Act and Duty
- be timeless in approach – new policies and practices should be considered in respect of the Equality Duty before they are introduced
- involve real regard in decision making rather than ‘box ticking’
- involve acquiring sufficient information
- not involve delegation of the duty
- involve continual record keeping and review in relationship to the duty.

### ***The Specific Duties***

The specific duties of a school are to:

- Publish in accessible manner equality information which demonstrated compliance with the duty (6th April 2012 and at least annually thereafter).
- information relating to the school community who are affected by the schools policies and practices who share protected characteristics
- information that demonstrated the schools due regard or engagement with the general duty

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities.**

### ***The Governing Body***

- is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- A member of the Governing Body has an oversight brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher**

- is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.
- Will monitor the success in achieving the objectives and report back to the governors.

### **The Senior Leadership Team**

- are responsible for day-to-day procedures which promote equality and community cohesion for all students and staff.

### **All staff**

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping in the curriculum
- Support pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work

### **Students**

- Students will be made aware of how it applies to them through assemblies and Diverse Society and will be given opportunities to raise their concerns / issues.

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and Governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and parents.

We respect the beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development.

We collect and analyse data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate. In particular we collect, analyse and use data related to achievement, broken down as appropriate according to disabilities and special educational needs; ethnicity, language, gender and disadvantage.

## **4.Complaints Procedure**

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

## **5. Ursuline school Equality targets**

1. To ensure the wellbeing of any student undergoing gender reassignment.
2. To actively promote opportunities for girls to gain and build confidence when choosing careers in STEM subjects.
3. To continue to ensure students from ethnic minority backgrounds make outstanding progress at KS4.