



**MURRAY PARK SCHOOL**

<b>Title of Policy</b>	<b>Equal Opportunity Policy</b>
<b>Date of adoption</b>	<b>Spring 2021</b>
<b>Originator</b>	<b>Rebecca Somes</b>
<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Spring 2025</b>

## **Equal Opportunities Statement of Commitment**

The Governing Board and Murray Park School is committed to a policy of equality and aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex or sexual orientation. These grounds for potential discrimination are outlined in The Equality Act 2010.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes 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 that 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.

We aim to empower our pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy. All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equal opportunities policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination under The Equality Act 2010 can be direct or indirect and the Act also prohibits harassment and victimisation. The Governing Board of a school must not discriminate against:

- a child applying to be admitted to the school;
- existing pupils;
- job applicants; or,
- existing members of staff.

This again takes into consideration the grounds of their protected characteristic (e.g. age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex or sexual orientation) See Appendix A.

### **Aims and objectives**

The Governing Board and Murray Park School, through its Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (including The Equality Act 2010, The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations);
- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities;
- ensure that equality remains high on the school's strategic agenda;
- establish good people management practice and to set out a proactive agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response;
- achieve a staffing composition that reflects the composition of the wider community; and,
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil.

This will mean that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals. Complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and will be fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated either under the disciplinary or grievance procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

### **Policy and planning**

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered and recorded whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.

### **Appointments**

In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria.

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting will be done by more than one person and with the involvement of the Human Resources Department, where possible. Our recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market. Advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants will not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic, for example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of Headteacher, for example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments)
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process)

### **Family-friendly policies**

The Governing Board/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

### **HIV/AIDS**

The Governing Board/school recognises that people with HIV/AIDS suffer not only from the purely medical effects of the infection but may also experience prejudice and misunderstanding leading to unfair discrimination and victimisation. The governors/school therefore will ensure that people with HIV/AIDS do not experience unfair treatment in relation to employment, as pupils or as other members of the school community. The school and Governing Board will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment and pupil admissions set out in Appendix B.

## **Transsexual and gender reassignment**

The Sex Discrimination Act now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment.

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

The school will not discriminate against a pupil because of their transgender status. Schools will take special steps to meet the needs of Trans pupils without being accused of discriminating against staff/pupils who are not Trans.

Trans staff and pupils will be properly catered for and if necessary 'reasonable adjustments' will be made. They will be fully involved in the process of adapting provision to suit their needs, such as parental and students meetings, mentoring, etc.

## **Training and development**

Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors Training Programme. 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 pupils can make; and,
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions.

Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

## **Termination of employment**

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **Disabilities**

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact the Head Teacher to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Head Teacher or Line Manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access, such as adding ramps, ensuring the lift key is available at all times, moving classes to downstairs classrooms and changing the location of the fire drill assembly point.

## **Part-time and fixed-term work**

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **Pupils and the curriculum**

The school follows local authority and/or Governing Board pupil admission policies that do not permit sex, race or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. The Education Reform Act 1988 stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all pupils. Equality of opportunity should inform the whole of the curriculum and be reviewed regularly. Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This should be reflected in curriculum planning documentation.

## **Grouping of Students**

All tutor groups will be made up students from a cross-section of academic ability, social skills, and friendship groups. Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that there is a balance of gender.

When placing students into curriculum groups, students must be placed into groups which allows for the best opportunity for progress in that subject area. Consideration needs to be given to Health and Safety issues where appropriate.

## **Format for registers and class lists**

All students' names on tutor group registers will be presented in alphabetical order, regardless of gender. The same will be applied to teaching groups.

All registers should comply with data protection.

All staff and students should endeavour to correctly pronounce and spell names.

## **Monitoring, review and evaluation**

Governors have a duty to ensure that policies are regularly monitored and reviewed. Monitoring with respect to employment will be undertaken in the following areas on at least an annual basis by sex, race, disability, grade and subject area; composition of the school staff; recruitment trends; take up of training opportunities; promotion patterns; use of complaints procedure; use of grievance, disciplinary, harassment procedures; use of sanctions and take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements. Exit interviews can also provide further helpful information and feedback. Governors should ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

## **Breaches of this policy**

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate. There must be no victimisation or retaliation against employees who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

## Evidence of Progress made 2018-23:

- We achieved the Bronze Mental Health Award for Derby Schools.
- We achieved the Career Mark for careers advice and we are continuing to ensure that we meet the Gatsby benchmarks for Careers guidance.
- From September 2018 our data tracking systems enabled teachers to focus even more precisely on identifying and addressing gaps in progress between boys and girls.
- Think for the Future Mentors are employed to work with our most vulnerable pupils.
- The Peer Mentoring programme has been embedded and evaluated across all year groups.
- A sensory room was created in the Hub.
- Greater use is made of the student leadership group on particular equality related issues in school, including the refurbishment of toilets and uniform.
- The Alternative Provision centres, the Hub and the Careers Centre ensure that the needs of all students are met.
- Resilience-focused courses such as 'Time for Boys' and 'Time for Girls' continue to be delivered.
- The Equality and Diversity Working Party was set up in the academic year 2020-2021. The meetings are attended by teaching and non-teaching staff in addition to the senior prefects. Members of the Working Party organise equality and diversity events for the students.
- Members of staff and students take part in Diversity Week and the non-uniform day in June.
- The School is continuing to increase the number of visiting speakers to raise the importance of equality and diversity across the School.
- The School is providing further opportunities to discuss key issues in the news. The *What's in the news?* assemblies are led by different departments on a rota basis and focus on promoting equality and diversity.
- The Charter for Success, undertaken by each student, develops each student's cultural capital and promotes equality and diversity across the School.
- The School is continuing to increase the number of cultural trips, visits and extra-curricular activities.
- The new wall art in each Department area promotes equality and diversity in our school community.
- The Murray Park Parliament has been launched Summer 2023 to ensure students can express their opinions and affect change.
- The Murray Park Parliament coordinates activities in the local community and the running of in-school activities, such as, charity events.
- A new appointment of lead teacher Personal Development launched Summer 2023.

The Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty) statement is reviewed annually. The School has three key objectives:



1. To ensure that all students are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school
2. To provide an environment that welcomes, protects and respects diversity and equality
3. To provide regular training to all members of staff on the Equality Act 2010, equal opportunities and the protected characteristics.

**We have improved accessibility in the school by:**

- fitting a lift and three disabled toilets the new block;
- installing slopes rather than steps into the new block;
- providing additional disabled car parking by the main building; and,
- ensuring that our outdoor PE facilities continue to support the inclusion of students with limited mobility.

## Appendix A: Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement. Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures. There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

1. **Direct discrimination:** This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc.
2. **Indirect discrimination:** This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it.
3. **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.
4. **Harassment:** Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it. Harassment may involve any of the following:
  - physical contact or violence;
  - offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
  - exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
  - unfair work allocation;
  - unjust, excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
  - offensive signs or notices;
  - graffiti;
  - repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, pupil or member of staff who feels threatened or isolated because of such actions.

## **Appendix B: HIV/AIDS guidelines**

The governors and school will:

- ensure that job applicants who are deemed to be medically fit to perform the job for which they have applied are not denied an offer of work solely because they are HIV positive. In arriving at the decision, the school's normal recruitment criteria will be observed including the normal medical procedures;
- ensure, where possible, that resources are available to support employees or pupils with AIDS or other major health problems associated with HIV infection. The school's normal rules and procedures regarding ill health will apply in such cases. Equally, the school will make appropriate arrangements for the provision of counselling (i.e. by referral to external agencies);
- give positive consideration to applications for unpaid leave for those with responsibility for caring for people with AIDS-related conditions in accordance with carers' leave arrangements;
- treat any breaches of confidentiality as a serious matter to be dealt with in accordance with the normal disciplinary (or other appropriate) procedure; and,
- provide appropriate training in relation to AIDS in order to combat fears and prejudice and to enable the school community as a whole to function without risk to health.