



PART ONE: **SECTION B – GENERAL**

B4) EQUAL OPPORTUNITES

Having regard to the Equality Act of 2010 that replaces the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act of 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies:

*Accessibility Plan
Admissions Policy
Recruitment Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy*

This policy is applicable to all children and personnel in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At RGS Dodderhill, everyone is treated as an individual, regardless of their gender, religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation, social group or disability.

The need for an effective, evolving Equal Opportunities Policy is crucial and the guidelines in this policy need to be put into practice on a daily basis in all areas of a child's experience i.e. in the provision of equipment and in the planning of activities.

Legal Framework

Staff must remember that Equal Opportunities is enshrined in many different Acts of Parliament, and that it is our legal duty to support its cause. It is important that staff consider their own speech and pre-conceived attitudes in relation to Equal Opportunities. The designated member of staff responsible for Equal opportunities is the Headmistress.

Areas of Equal Opportunities

Equal Opportunities encompass many areas of life and staff should be mindful that the list below is an evolving one, but "protected characteristics" listed in the Equality Act 2010 include:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.



CHILDREN

Children come from a variety of ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and social backgrounds and the cultural diversity that this brings is much valued.

Curriculum

All children have equal access to the curriculum and the educational opportunities that are offered by the School and EYFS. E.g. where pupils are withdrawn for individual music lessons or learning support they do not lose access to a particular subject every week.

Learning difficulties or disabilities

When applying to the School, parents are asked to disclose whether their child has a health / medical condition, disability, allergy or learning difficulty. If a disclosure is made, parents will be asked to provide further details to inform how the School could support the child's individual needs.

In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil, the school may take advice and require such assessments, as it deems appropriate. Where it is practicable to make reasonable adjustments based upon the information given and advice received, to enable a prospective pupil to take up a place at RGS Dodderhill, the school is committed to providing these reasonable adjustments. For example, if a child requires additional support with examinations, such as extra time or a scribe / reader, this will be considered in accordance with Examination regulations. Where a child becomes disabled the school will, where possible, make reasonable adjustments to remove the disadvantages faced by the child.

Support is provided for all children with learning difficulties or disabilities to ensure that they have equality of access to all that is offered at Dodderhill in the EYFS and the School. We have regard to the SEN Code of Practice. Where the school agrees to arrange additional services for a pupil, such as learning support for dyslexia, or to provide specialist auxiliary aids and equipment, parents will be charged for this separately.

The School, centred on a listed building, is on a steeply sloping site and much of the access to and between areas is by steps and stairs. The School does not discriminate on grounds of disability but physical access to parts of the school means that it is not easily accessible for those with certain disabilities. Wherever practicable, the School will make reasonable adjustments to the timetable to allow pupils with restricted mobility to attend lessons in accessible parts of the School.

STAFF

Dodderhill School is an equal opportunities employer.

In order to promote an environment within which the school can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skill and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, we are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation,



pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age, and disability (together known as “Protected Characteristics”).

To this end, we shall regularly review the operation of our recruitment, promotion, training and development policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, in particular but not only, in relation 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
- Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to admission and assessment of students.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

Implementation

The School with the assistance of the staff will:

- Break down any barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members realising their full potential or accessing benefit
- Advertise vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.
- Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed and trained on this Policy.
- Monitor the composition of the School and the effects of its recruitment practices.
- Existing procedures are reviewed and examined to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation



- Language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy

Recruitment and Selection

The staffing process is governed by the school's principles of non discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between, on the one hand, the individual's knowledge and skills, experience and character and, on the other hand, the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

- The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the major selection criterion but the ability both to work with others and to be trained, coupled with individual potential will be taken into account.
- All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.
- Carefully selected and validated skills and/or psychometric tests may be used as part of the selection process and will be administered by a trained tester.
- Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of satisfactory references and DBS checks and/or satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

Disability

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

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Head of Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Head of Department may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments and you may be required to give your consent to a report being produced about your state of health and ability to perform your duties. 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. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

The School will make such adjustments to work arrangements or School premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign, flexible hours. Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, he or she should discuss this requirement with the Bursar.



Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination

This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an *genuine occupational requirement (GOR)*. The (GOR) must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination

This is where a provision, criterion or practice, for example a policy, which affects everyone equally, has a disparate impact on a greater proportion of people of one group with a protected characteristic compared with people who do not share that characteristic. Indirect discrimination may occur when it cannot be shown that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Associative discrimination

This is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (excluding marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity).

Perceptive discrimination

This is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have (excluding marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity).

Victimisation

This occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he or she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need for a complainant to compare his or her treatment with someone who has not made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act 2010. For example, if a blind employee raises a grievance that the employer is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and is then systematically excluded from all meetings; such behaviour could amount to victimisation.

Dignity at Work and Harassment

You should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant dismissal.

Harassment may take the form of unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant Protected



Characteristic which is perceived as affecting an employee's dignity at work. It may also take the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on their appearance or other personal characteristics which is perceived as affecting their dignity at work. It is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter. Harassment may include bullying, intimidatory behaviour, persistent teasing or constant unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks, unfair allocation of work and responsibilities, or exclusion from normal work place conversation. It may be directed towards one individual or a group. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Procedure

If you consider that you have been the recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment, it is open to you to try to resolve the problem informally with the other person, either face to face or in writing. If this is not appropriate or has not been successful, you may raise a grievance in accordance with the procedure in this Handbook. All such grievances will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence as far as reasonably practicable to progress the complaint. Both during the investigation of the complaint and afterwards (whatever the outcome), consideration will be given to ensuring that you and the alleged harasser are not required to work together against your wishes.

If you consider that you have been subject to discrimination of any form, you should inform the Headmistress.

The School will seek to ensure that you are not in any way penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has stopped.

False or malicious allegations will be treated as a disciplinary offence. Retaliation against a member of staff who complains of harassment can be expected to lead to disciplinary action.