



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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1. Intention of the Equal Opportunities policy

This policy outlines what equality of opportunity means within Queen Mary's School, what is meant by discrimination and harassment, what sort of behaviours and attitudes Queen Mary's wishes to promote, and also what procedures and actions can be taken if a member of, or adjacent to, our community feels that have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed. The policy also aims to explain the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing for those with particular needs related to the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy. The School seeks to encourage greater awareness of its aims, policies and procedures in relation to equal opportunities and will provide information and training as required.

2. Basic Principles

Through recognising and addressing the unique spirit of each child, we aim to inspire in our pupils a capacity and enthusiasm to learn arising out of respect and care for fellow human beings and for oneself.

Queen Mary's School believes that equality of opportunity is vital in order that all pupils and employees have a fair and equal chance of developing their abilities, realising their expectations and to make full and effective use of their potential. It is Queen Mary's aim to curate an environment free from discrimination and harassment where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and with respect.

A good education for all pupils is possible only if equal opportunities practices are an integral feature of all aspects of the life of the school. Equal opportunities issues should be seen as interrelated and they should be evident in:

- the formal curriculum (the programme of lessons)
- the informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities)
- the 'hidden' curriculum (the ethos of the school, the quality of personal relationships etc.)

Queen Mary's School recognises that discrimination exists and is committed to ensuring that such behaviour and attitudes are eliminated.

Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy (pupils) or Disciplinary Procedure (employees). Discrimination or harassment by parents/carers, other family members or external individuals engaged by the school will not be tolerated and will be dealt with by the Head on a case by case basis.

Every member of Queen Mary's school is regarded as of equal worth and importance. It is unlawful for any school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil, employee or prospective employee by treating them less favourably because of their (or any of their associates'):

- Sex (please refer to Admission Policy for further guidance)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

3. Legislation

Queen Mary's School Equal Opportunities policy is written under the requirements of the [Equality Act \(2010\)](#), and draws upon the DfE guidance [The Equality Act 2010 and schools \(2014\)](#).

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the school for any unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a [criminal offence](#). Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, students or visitors are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Policy. Conduct of this type will often be gross misconduct which can lead to dismissal without notice

4. Roles and Responsibility for the Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy

Collective responsibility for inclusion and equality is held by all members of the Queen Mary's school community, however, it is the role of the Head, Mrs Carole Cameron, supported by the Deputy Head, Mrs Debbie Hannam Walpole and the Governing Body, to implement the school's policy on Equal Opportunities and provide leadership in its development. The responsible governor for Inclusion is Nina Gunson.

The Governing Body will:

- Help to raise awareness of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion issues at governing board meetings
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities policy and provision within the school and update the governing board on this
- Work with the Head to determine the strategic development of the Equal Opportunities policy and provision in the school

The Head will:

- Determine the strategic development of the Equal Opportunities policy and provision within the school
- Have overall responsibility for the operational provision and development of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the school

All Staff and Teachers will:

- Take responsibility for the Inclusion of every pupil in their class
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are in place to overcome disadvantage and endeavour to anticipate pupil's individual needs
- Ensure that they are aware of and follow this policy

Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Regularly reviewing schemes of work and resources to ensure that they are equitable, inclusive and diverse
- Ensuring that the curriculum provided enables all pupils, regardless of their protected characteristic status, to achieve appropriate and aspirational attainment targets

5. Inclusion

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law. Individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are at the heart of Queen Mary's School.

At Queen Mary's School we support and value the abilities of all our pupils. It is our duty to provide equal opportunities for every pupil in our care, in a safe and fully equipped learning environment which caters to the needs of every child as an individual. We are committed to inclusion within the school curriculum and participation in all aspects of school life. Queen Mary's School adopts a 'whole school ethos' and all staff work to ensure the inclusion of all pupils. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils fulfil their potential and achieve optimal educational outcomes.

Inclusion is a right to be included. We believe in the principle that inclusion is a fundamental right for all children. We proactively seek to ensure that every child:

- Has equal chance to learn and develop
- Has the opportunity to participate equally
- Is given opportunity to communicate in their preferred format
- Has their individual needs known and met
- Feels safe and know they belong
- Is valued as a unique individual
- Feels strong and confident about their identity

6. Admissions

Treating every child as an individual is important to us and Queen Mary's School welcomes applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. We welcome all children who can make the most of the opportunities that we offer, and who can flourish in the caring environment of Queen Mary's School, providing the School can meet their needs.

The school is non-selective. Queen Mary's school is co-educational in years Reception, 1 and 2 (EYFS and Key Stage 1) and a [single sex setting](#) in years 3 to 11 (Key Stages 2, 3 and 4). Please see the Admissions Policy for further information. The admission arrangements for all pupils attending Queen Mary's School are in accordance with national legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their, or their parents' race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or any disability. Candidates will also be treated equally in respect of their parents' age, gender or marital or civil partnership status.

Queen Mary's School is inclusive and welcomes applicants with disabilities and special educational needs. The School's facilities, physical and otherwise, for candidates with physical and/or complex disabilities are limited but the School will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral and responsibilities under equality legislation in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately. The School will make any reasonable additional or alternative arrangements to ensure that the School's admission procedures are accessible to disabled children.

In rare instances a young person's ability, aptitude, special educational needs, disability or attendance may be deemed incompatible with the efficient education of other pupils, and when there are no reasonable steps that can be taken to prevent this incompatibility a place will not be offered.

7. Recruitment and Training

Queen Mary's School aims to support the creation of an environment that will eliminate unlawful, direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. Queen Mary's School will:

- Ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on grounds of ethnic origin, colour, disability, creed, marital status, nationality, race, religion, culture, sex, gender or sexual orientation
- Have regard to equal terms for men and women in employment in accordance with the [EC Equal Treatment Directive](#)
- Have regard to sex discrimination (gender reassignment) regulations which prevent discrimination against transsexual people in employment and vocational training
- Eradicate racial, religious or sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of disability and sexual orientation
- Value, celebrate and learn from the cultural diversity of its staff

To achieve the above the school will use the following guidelines in recruitment and when considering professional development for existing staff:

- Posts will be routinely advertised
- All those involved in recruitment and selection will be aware of what they should do to avoid discrimination and ensure equality good practice through the recruitment and selection process.
- Advertisements and job specifications will all carry a statement that this school is an Equal Opportunities employer, and welcomes applications for all posts from appropriately qualified persons regardless of sex, race, religion, disability or age
- People with disabilities will be offered facilities at interviews to enable them to demonstrate their suitability for employment
- Candidates for vacant posts will be assessed against relevant criteria only, i.e. skills, qualifications and experience in selection for recruitment
- Access to opportunities for professional development will be monitored on equality grounds
- All staff will be made aware of equalities policies and practices
- Employment policy and procedures will be reviewed regularly to check conformity with legislation and impact
- People becoming disabled while in employment will be given positive help to retain their jobs or to be considered for redeployment if that is necessary and feasible

At Queen Mary's we recognise the need to train all our staff on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion issues, and have funding available to support this professional development. The Head, with the Senior Leadership Team, ensures that training opportunities are matched to school development priorities.

8. Disability and Special Educational Needs

The Equality Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has *'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'*.

8.1 Pupils

The definition of a disability in the Equality Act has some overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014), but not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and vice versa. 'Disabled pupils' could include, for example, those with physical disabilities, health issues, including mental health needs, or learning needs if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.

Queen Mary's school supports students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and works closely with individuals to ensure that they are able to access the breadth of opportunities at the school. There will be no discrimination against pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) joining or remaining at the school, provided that Queen Mary's is able to fully meet their needs. All pupils will have equal opportunity to access the curriculum and extracurricular life of the school. Please note that Queen Mary's is not a specialist provider for SEND.

On rare occasions, certain activities may not be accessible if we feel that this poses a Health & Safety risk to the individual or if it would place other members of the community at risk. At these points a discussion will be had with the student and the family involved. We work closely with the individual and the family to support a positive educational experience.

For further information, please see the School's Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

8.2 Staff

The Equality Act imposes a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments in cases where working arrangements or physical features of premises cause substantial disadvantage for a person with a disability. Queen Mary's School will provide the necessary equipment and facilities for employees, applicants and interviewees with disabilities to enable them to participate successfully in the workplace.

Queen Mary's School will provide job applicants with details of the vacant job, i.e. job description, person specification, application form and information about the school, in alternative formats. We will also make suitable provisions and reasonable adjustments for interviews and where successful candidates are appointed.

If an employee suffers an injury or illness which affects their ability to do the job, Queen Mary's School will provide paid disability leave (which will not be counted as sick leave), offer counselling and support and facilitate any adjustments necessary to enable the employee to return to work. This may include a reallocation of duties, flexibility of working hours and adjustments to equipment. Full consultation on the most suitable arrangements will be held with the employee, their line manager, and the Bursar.

An employer discriminates against a disabled employee if it treats the employee 'unfavourably' because of something arising from the employee's disability and that treatment cannot be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For this type of discrimination to occur, the employer has to know, or reasonably be expected to know, that the employee has the disability in

question. Therefore, Queen Mary's School requests that all staff with diagnosed and confirmed disabilities notify HR as soon as possible after their diagnosis to enable us to support them fully. At times we may ask members of staff to seek additional information and consultation with specialists to ensure that we can fully support them to fulfill their role successfully, and ensure that their needs are understood by those working closely with them. Any actions are agreed with the individual with the disability.

9. Age

9.1 Pupils

Queen Mary's School is open to students aged between 4 and 16 years. Typically, students will study within the year in line with the year of their birth. Education 'Out of Year' will be considered in special circumstances. Please refer to the Admissions Policy for further information.

At times there will be opportunities open to specific age groups in line with their stages within the curriculum. This may be due to a range of reasons including but not limited to:

- The courses that they are studying
- Needs / opportunities specific to their point in their educational career or age groups
- Health & Safety
- The ability to offer the opportunity to all students may not be feasible

9.2 Staff

Queen Mary's School employs staff from across the age range and they are selected for their skills and attributes as a person. Discrimination by age in the selection of successful candidates for a job is unacceptable. We support members of staff wanting to continue working beyond their retirement age and adopt the good practice that employment after this age should be reviewed on an annual basis.

10. Sex

10.1 Pupils

Queen Mary's school is co-educational in years Reception, 1 and 2 (EYFS and Key Stage 1) and a [single sex setting](#) in years 3 to 11 (Key Stages 2, 3 and 4). Please see the Admissions Policy for further information. We do not differentiate between the sexes in respect of our school uniform.

As a school, we accept that there are sex-based inequalities in our society which impose limits, particularly on girls' expectations and behaviour. Queen Mary's School critically examines its curriculum, procedures and materials for sex-based bias or inequality. Queen Mary's School encourages pupils to be aware of the rigid sex stereotypes presented by, for example, the media. We ensure that our resources positively present the achievements of people of all sexes. The range of subjects and extra curricular activities offered are demonstrably gender neutral.

10.2 Staff

Staff of all sexes are welcomed at Queen Mary's School. At times, members of staff may be approached based upon their sex to support on trips / residential visits or other activities to ensure that the correct levels of appropriate supervision are in place.

11. Gender

Queen Mary's School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for the benefit of all and reflecting the diversity of the children, staff and parents served by the school. Queen Mary's School respects individuality and embraces diversity.

Queen Mary's School recognises that Trans people should be proactively protected from discrimination and harassment at all times, not solely when they are transitioning. Queen Mary's School acknowledges that both the Equality Act 2010 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004 are clear that gender reassignment need not involve any medical intervention.

As well as ensuring that pupils and staff of all genders are fully supported, Queen Mary's School will demonstrate our commitment to gender equality by:

- Ensuring that the curriculum for pupils and CPD for staff are inclusive of trans people
- Marking important dates for the trans community, such as Trans Day of Visibility
- Including trans people in publicity and marketing materials
- Ensuring that all forms and surveys are inclusive of Trans people, including non-binary people, for both staff and clients
- Including gender equality as a core part of the school's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion agenda and development plan
- Investigating fully all complaints of harassment, victimisation or discrimination on the grounds of gender identity, gender history, Trans status or gender expression

11.1 Pupils

Legislation that informs the participation of Trans pupils in schools include the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. The legislation states that a school must not discriminate against a student because of their Transgender status. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Indirect discrimination occurs when provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but puts a person with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage, and it cannot be justified as a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim.

Queen Mary's School will support Transgender and gender questioning pupils. We recognise every child as an individual and respond to their needs on a case by case basis. For more detailed information, please see the School's Transgender Equality Policy.

11.2 Staff

Queen Mary's School is committed to equality of opportunity for Trans people throughout recruitment and employment, including supporting Trans employees through any transitioning process. If an employee states that they are intending to transition at work, their line manager, in conjunction with other appropriate colleagues, should aim to make this process as smooth as possible. Managers should be aware that it can be an extremely difficult step for someone to approach their manager about transitioning. They are likely to worry about the response and Queen Mary's school is committed to reassuring all staff that they will be supported and respected. The transition process will always be led by the individual concerned.

Queen Mary's School will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the basis of a person's gender identity, gender expression or Trans status. Queen Mary's School seeks to provide a supportive environment for Trans staff and to create a culture and environment where Trans staff are able to thrive and are well supported during any process of transition.

People who have already transitioned have no obligation to disclose their gender history. Job applicants and interviewees will not be asked their gender during the recruitment process – it is not a relevant criterion in selection. There is also no obligation for a Transgender person to disclose that they are Trans as a condition of employment. If they choose to disclose, this is not in itself a reason for not offering employment, and non-disclosure or subsequent disclosure is not grounds for dismissal. Appointing officers who become aware that an applicant is Trans will maintain full confidentiality in relation to this.

12. Sexual Orientation

As a school, we make no assumptions about the sexuality of any members of our community.

12.1 Pupils

Queen Mary's School is committed to supporting students from the LGBTQ+ communities and, as sexual orientation continues to evolve, we will support all students as they explore their sexuality and the challenges that they may face in the process of doing this.

In our curricula, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. We acknowledge heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and other orientations with equity. Pupils' questions are answered, as they arise, as honestly and factually as possible and without judgment. In teaching about sexual orientation teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education. For further information, please see the School's PSHE and RSE Policy.

12.2 Staff

Queen Mary's School supports staff from the LGBTQ+ communities and, as sexual orientation continues to evolve, we will continue to support staff. Queen Mary's School does not require employees or applicants to disclose their sexual orientation.

13. Race

Race includes:

- Colour
- Nationality
- Ethnic or national origins

Queen Mary's School acknowledges that members of the school come from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect.. We understand the need to be different without being excluded. We value the history, experience and contribution of our multicultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and life of our school: we try to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views. Queen Mary's is committed to making appropriate arrangements with a view to eliminating unlawful racist discrimination, and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Queen Mary's school recognises the inequalities of opportunity which exist within society for certain 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.

13.1 Pupils

As an inclusive school, we support a number of International students every year to be an active part of the school's community and engage with the opportunities we offer. Students joining the school with English as an Additional Language are supported to enable them to engage with learning and to reduce any impact having English as a second language may have on their outcomes and their overall success. Queen Mary's school permits modifications to the uniform for pupils where these are an essential part of their cultural background. Queen Mary's school will actively seek the involvement of our pupils' parents with regard to our commitment to developing mutual respect.

13.2 Staff

The Queen Mary's staff body consists of members of staff from across the world and diversity is welcomed.

14. Religion or Belief

Queen Mary's is a Christian community that values, nurtures and respects every individual. A place where all are challenged to do their best, serve others, show compassion and act with integrity

We acknowledge that members of the school, both pupils and staff 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 other people.

Where appropriate, pupils and staff are encouraged to share their religious celebrations with the school. Queen Mary's school, as a Christian community will, as a whole school, celebrate Christmas, Shrove Tuesday and Easter. Eucharist is offered by the school chaplain. We also perform a Nativity and hold Carol concerts and other important ceremonies at local churches / Cathedrals. Pupils and staff from non-Christian beliefs are able to ask not to be involved, on the grounds of religion or belief, if they so wish. These requests should be directed to the Head, Mrs Carole Cameron.

14.1 Pupils

A wide range of religions and beliefs, including topical issues, are addressed within the curriculum in all Key Stages (please see the RS and PSHE policies for further information). Parents can request for their child not to participate in particular lessons if they feel that this is not in line with their respective belief or religion. These requests should be directed to the Assistant Head: Teaching and Learning, Mrs Susan Casey.

In rare circumstances in which there may be a reason whereby we feel that we cannot offer an opportunity – e.g. restricted medical consent due to religious beliefs on a high physical risk visit, then this will be discussed closely with the family and all opportunities explored to allow the engagement to occur, before this opportunity is disallowed.

Where amendments to the school dress code are requested on religious grounds then these will be considered fairly and accepted where there is just cause.

15. Pregnancy and Maternity

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is when a person is treated unfairly because they are pregnant, breastfeeding or because they have recently given birth. Maternity covers the period of 26 weeks after birth.

15.1 Pupils

All necessary safeguarding procedures will be followed in the event that the pupil is under the age of 16.

Pupils or prospective pupils will not be excluded from the school or refused admission because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. Where necessary, provision will be made to accommodate adjustments to accessing education related to pregnancy or maternity status. Additionally, a student who is breastfeeding will be protected from less favourable treatment.

Queen Mary's school will undertake an individual risk assessment when they are informed that a pupil is pregnant, has given birth in the past six months or is breastfeeding. A flexible approach to facilitating the continued participation of the pupil in school life will be taken. Queen Mary's is committed to ensuring a non-judgmental and sensitive approach when supporting and working with a student or applicant on these matters. Where necessary, relevant members of staff should signpost pupils and their parents/carers to appropriate sources of advice and explore, in consultation with the pupil and their family a flexible approach to the student's programme of study.

15.2 Staff

A pregnant member of staff has a statutory right to take time off to attend ante-natal appointments, start their maternity leave any day from 11 weeks before their due date and at the end of their maternity leave return to the job, or a similar one, that they were originally employed to do and on the same or no less favourable terms and conditions.

A member of staff who is pregnant, recently given birth or breastfeeding will not be demoted, overlooked for training or promotion or otherwise unfavourably treated because of their pregnancy/maternity status. Applicants for positions of employment at Queen Mary's school will not be discriminated against on the grounds of their pregnancy, maternity, paternity or breastfeeding status.

Queen Mary's school will undertake an individual risk assessment when they are informed that an employee is pregnant, has given birth in the past six months or is breastfeeding.

16. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Staff with all relationship statuses are welcomed at Queen Mary's School.

17. Criteria for evaluating the success of the policy

In order to make consistent, continuous progress in relation to Equality of Opportunity at Queen Mary's School, the School encourages feedback from staff, parents and pupils. This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team. Particular targets may be set against which the success of various aspects of the policy may be measured. The evaluation of the success of the policy may take into account the following indicators:

- The views of the parents/carers
- The views of the pupils
- The views of the staff body
- Monitoring of classroom practice by the Senior Leadership Team and the prevalence of inclusive and diverse materials and resources
- For individual pupils: an increase in confidence, integration and independence
- For cohorts: the success of pupils in internal and external examinations
- School self-evaluation, including the levels of participation of pupils in school activities and destinations at transition point.
- Monitoring of the procedures and practice by the Governor responsible for Inclusion
- The School Improvement plan

18. Arrangements for Complaints

Should a pupil, employee or other member of the school community believe they have experienced harassment, bullying or discrimination then they may either attempt to resolve the matter informally or invoke the formal complaint procedure. All cases will be taken seriously, dealt with quickly and treated with the utmost confidence.

- Initially, if advice is informally sought or concerns need to be expressed, direct contact should be made by a pupil (or the parents/carers of a pupil) with their Tutor and employees should make direct contact with their line manager, who will endeavour to resolve any difficulties
- If further assistance is required pupils (parents/carers) or employees should then request an appointment to discuss the problem with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- In the case of the most serious complaints an appointment should be made to discuss the matter with the Head, Mrs Carole Cameron. It may also be necessary to speak to Mr Tom Fielden, Chair of Governors or Mrs Nina Gunson, Governor responsible for Inclusion.
- Any formal complaints should follow the separate Complaints Policy routines as detailed on the website
- It must be stressed that every effort would be made to resolve the situation satisfactorily within the school

Mrs V Kemp
Head of Learning Support

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Next Review Due: September 2023