



17a - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1.1 Aims and Objectives

Duke of Kent School supports the principles of equal opportunities and is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all in the School community and meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010. We oppose discrimination on the basis of age, sex, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity (protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010). No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. Respect for all and tolerance of difference are central to the ethos of this community and the School will work to ensure that equality underpins its development.

This policy applies to all sections of the School including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

We believe that each individual in our community should have the opportunity to achieve his or her potential and should be valued by all other members of the community. If a pupil is to experience a rich educational experience, it will be necessary to enable exposure to a wide range of cultural experiences and opportunities. Our SMSC Policy (Social, Moral, Spiritual, Cultural) places particular emphasis on ensuring such breadth of experience.

We welcome applications from pupils with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for effective participation in their adult lives. The School actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other School policies, including Policy on Education and Welfare Provision for Pupils for Whom English is an Additional Language and Policy on Education and Welfare Provision for Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs/EHC, PSHE programme, Safeguarding, the Anti-Bullying Strategy and our Statement on Fundamental British Values.

A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from staff, pupils, parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable. Our Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies set out clear procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

The School takes its responsibilities under the 2010 Equality Act extremely seriously. In the event of any breach of this policy, any member of the community should inform the Head as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken.

1.2 Practices to Promote Equal Opportunities

Admissions: We aim to be as inclusive as possible in our admissions process and welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities; we refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Bursaries are offered in order to open access for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the Bursar's Office.

Diversity: The School celebrates diversity and recognises that the entire community is enriched by the various languages, customs, cultures and religious beliefs of pupils, parents and staff; all who wish to do so are encouraged to share their experiences of other languages, customs and cultures. Pupils are actively encouraged to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, with the aim of furthering tolerance between different cultural traditions.

Meeting religious, dietary, language or cultural needs: The School is committed to, and experienced in, meeting the requirements of pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs. In practice this might mean that a pupil has dietary requirements which the Catering Manager would accommodate through provision of alternative menu choices, or the provision of a room for prayer for pupils requiring such accommodation. If any pupil, parent or member of staff recognises or anticipates such a need, it should be drawn to the attention of the Head, who will gather information and make or supervise arrangements as necessary. In the event that a pupil absence is necessitated by cultural or religious holidays, parents should notify the Head that such absence is required in writing, as with any request for absence.

Religious Observance: The School welcomes children and staff from all religious backgrounds, and none, and seeks to develop in each child an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life. Admissions are equally open to pupils of any faith, and none.

Collective acts of worship are Christian, in the Anglican tradition, in keeping with the Christian heritage of the School; practices such as giving thanks following meals in the Pre-prep and Prep School. While children learn about a variety of different religious traditions through various curricular subjects, the festivals and ceremonies celebrated are those of the Christian tradition.

Parents who wish their children to be excused from participation in acts of worship, or pupils who wish to be excused, are welcome to contact the Head.

Uniform and Dress: Parents should be aware that all pupils at Duke of Kent School are required to wear a uniform until Year 10, and that a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 11. The Head will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the school's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Head may take expert advice, and will normally arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request. While the uniforms are presented as distinct in character for boys and girls, parents or pupils are welcome to choose to wear any items of clothing on the uniform list. Exceptions from the published lists should be discussed with the Head.

Curriculum: In planning their delivery of the curriculum, teaching staff at Duke of Kent School should consider how their teaching will further the School's stated aim: the pursuit of equal opportunities for all. It is the intention of the School to ensure that, wherever possible, all activities offered and resources made available are open equally to all pupils.

Gender segregation: Duke of Kent School is a fully co-educational school and as such supports students of all genders equally and fairly and without prejudice

At Duke of Kent School there is no gender segregation in the classroom.

Duke of Kent School is pro-active in eliminating gender discrimination of any kind.

- Staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities in this respect.
- In 2021 Duke of Kent School changed the House names to non-gender-specific names (birds of prey) which was a specific project within the Strategic Plan (2019-2022)
- Duke of Kent School has set up a 'Gender Forum' to allow the student voice to be heard with regard to any concerns over gender equality.

Segregation may only occur:

- During sensitive PSHE discussions.

- When there are sensitive Pastoral concerns
- In the changing rooms and toilets
- In the playing of sport.*

*Where there is segregation Duke of Kent School ensures that provision is in place for equivalent opportunities in the playing of sport.

All staff working with pupils, in accordance with the School's aims and ethos, are reminded to make use of assemblies, discussions and activities in and beyond the curriculum to:

- Promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the school community.
- Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- Encourage pupils to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act.
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be acknowledged and discussed.
- Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

SEN and Disability: Duke of Kent School aims to ensure that pupils with identified learning needs and disability, with or without an EHCP or Statement of SEN, have equal access to every aspect of School life and to all activities offered. Teachers practise differentiation and other appropriate strategies, under the guidance of the Head of Learning Development (SENCO), to enable all pupils to access the curriculum. Where necessary, the curriculum can be modified as a 'reasonable adjustment' after discussion between a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the pupil and the parents, in order to maximise the pupil's access to the curriculum.

1.3 Monitoring Mechanisms and Future Planning

Duke of Kent School will monitor its equal opportunities policy regularly and will present reports to the Governors in order to ensure its effectiveness.

Departments monitor their practices in the areas of equal opportunities and compile examples of topics, texts and activities which have had a positive effect in promoting diversity and equal opportunities. This will be monitored on an annual basis by the Deputy Head; the Senior Leadership Team will review the findings and disseminate best practice through the School.

1.4 Equal Opportunities in the Workplace

Duke of Kent School is committed to developing as a community in which all experience equal opportunities. The principles described here also apply to staff recruitment, promotion and training. A separate policy related to equal opportunities in the workplace is to be found in the School's Employment Manual.

1.6 Conclusion:

Duke of Kent School has a firm commitment to equal opportunities and aims to ensure that all can achieve their personal potential in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance.

Person responsible for this policy: The Head

Reviewed: September 2021

Next Review: September 2022