

Equality and Diversity Policy

More Than Ed | Independent School

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Responsible Person: Charlotte Hopkins

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1. Context

We are a welcoming school where everyone is valued highly, and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A flexible and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all young people to maximise their potential, regardless of any protected characteristic.

We aim to promote equality, tackle any form of discrimination, and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of our work. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement, and we promote positive relationships with parents, partners and the wider community.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- provide a secure environment in which young people can flourish and achieve;
- provide a learning environment where all individuals see themselves reflected and feel a sense of belonging;
- prepare young people for life in a diverse society, in which they can see their place in the local, regional, national and international community;
- include and value the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity;
- provide positive, non-stereotyping information about different groups of people;
- plan systematically to improve our understanding and promotion of diversity, actively challenging discrimination and disadvantage; and
- make inclusion a thread that runs through all our activities.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all young people, job applicants and employees receive fair treatment regardless of any protected characteristic. We adhere to all equality legislation and ensure that we are fair, objective, transparent and free from discrimination in all of our systems, processes, procedures, activities and decisions. Unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated.

3. Legal Framework

This policy reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which consolidated and replaced earlier equality legislation (including the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a protected characteristic. The nine protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;

- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

As an independent school, More Than Ed also has regard to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which require the school to actively promote respect for other people and to ensure that the principles of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

4. Policy Statement

In delivering this policy, the school will:

- involve all stakeholders in the development, review, evaluation and impact assessment of relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures;
- publish and share our policies and impact assessments with stakeholders;
- use all available information to set suitable learning challenges for everyone, and respond to students' diverse needs and overcome any potential barriers to learning;
- ensure that the wider curriculum makes explicit and implicit provision to promote and celebrate diversity; and
- have high expectations of behaviour that demonstrates respect for others.

5. Managing Diversity

We are committed to improving the diversity of our workforce and to employment practices that ensure diversity and a flexible approach. We will:

- create work and learning environments free from unfair discrimination, that enable staff and students to contribute fully and benefit from the life of our school;
- be aware of the diverse needs of young people and employees and support them appropriately and fairly;
- offer relevant and appropriate staff development and training opportunities;
- develop and uphold best-practice structures, policies and procedures that treat people on the basis of their abilities, merit and potential;
- recognise that people have different and multiple needs and identities, and make reasonable adjustments for them;
- encourage consultation and participation to inform decision-making;
- work in partnership with external agencies to identify and apply best practice;
- embed and promote equality of opportunity in our plans, publications and communications;
- deal fairly and promptly with any discriminatory issue raised, providing a clear system of referral; and
- treat colleagues and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and promote diversity in the workplace.

6. Implementation

To implement this policy effectively, we will ensure that:

- job applicants and employees are treated in accordance with this and related policies;
- any employment requirements or conditions are justifiable and reasonable;
- all employment policies, procedures and practices are reviewed and impact-assessed regularly to ensure they remain non-discriminatory;
- managers involved in implementing the school's employment policies receive appropriate training, including in diversity and in recruitment and selection;
- reasonable adjustments are made in the workplace to help people with disabilities achieve their full potential; and
- employees receive training during induction and at other appropriate times to ensure awareness and understanding of this policy and of diversity in general.

7. Equality and Diversity Definitions

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination takes place when a person is treated less favourably than another in the same circumstances because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination means applying a provision, criterion or practice that puts people who share a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and that cannot be objectively justified.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have made, or supported, a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

8. Harassment

We are committed to providing a work and learning environment free from unlawful harassment. Harassment related to any protected characteristic is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Harassment is normally characterised by more than one incident of unacceptable behaviour, particularly where it recurs after the recipient has made clear it is unwelcome, although a single sufficiently serious incident may constitute harassment. It is for each individual to determine what behaviour they find unacceptable; if the person subjected to the behaviour finds it unacceptable and feels harmed by it, this constitutes harassment. Anyone who believes they have been harassed should report it to Charlotte Hopkins as soon as possible after the incident.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. It can range from verbal or written conduct, derogatory

jokes, comments or unwanted advances, through to unwanted physical contact and, in the most serious cases, sexual assault. It also includes displaying pornographic or sexually offensive material, and any retaliation for reporting harassment. All employees and students have the right to an environment free from sexual harassment.

Racial harassment

Racial harassment is a hostile or offensive act or expression by a person or group of one ethnic origin against a person or group of another, or incitement to commit such an act, on racial grounds. The defining feature is that the behaviour is offensive or intimidating to the recipient and would be regarded as racial harassment by any reasonable person.

9. Bullying

Bullying is any unsolicited or unwelcome act that humiliates, intimidates or undermines the individual involved, and that is aimed at making that person feel worthless. It is a gradual wearing-down process. We will not condone the bullying of any employee or student, and we are committed to grievance and disciplinary procedures that provide appropriate redress.

10. Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. We make reasonable adjustments to support disabled students, employees and visitors.

11. Responsibilities

All leaders have a responsibility to:

- ensure the non-discriminatory treatment of all young people, job applicants and employees, and promote equality of opportunity;
- identify and remove discriminatory attitudes and practices within the school;
- raise awareness of this policy through induction and regular training updates;
- deal fairly and promptly with any discriminatory issue raised; and
- be aware of the diverse needs of employees and support them appropriately and fairly.

All employees have a responsibility to:

- support this vision and uphold the principles of equality of opportunity;
- treat colleagues, students and stakeholders with dignity and respect;
- have due regard to equality in the work they do and the decisions they make; and
- promote diversity in the school. Anyone who experiences or witnesses harassment should act at once and will have the full support of the school.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, unless new legislation is introduced that needs to be reflected within it sooner. The school carries out impact assessments on its policies to ensure they comply with legislation and adhere to the spirit of this policy.

13. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's other policies, including:

- Accessibility Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour and Relational Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy and Staff Grievance procedures

14. Legislation and Guidance

In drawing up this policy, the school has had regard to the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)