



QUEEN'S GATE  
SCHOOL

### Equal Opportunities Policy

<b>Owner(s)</b>	Principal
<b>Last review date</b>	August 2024
<b>Governor committee</b>	Pastoral
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## **This policy applies from Preliminary – KS5**

### **Section 1 – general**

#### **1.1 Policy statement**

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Queen's Gate School. We welcome pupils, parents, staff, governors, volunteers and other visitors with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world.

Queen's Gate School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("Protected Characteristics" under the Equality Act 2010). We believe that the educational experience for our pupils will be enriched if they are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are growing up.

#### **1.2 Definitions**

Discrimination means treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic:

- Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more Protected Characteristics (whether perceived or actual), or is treated less favourably due to their association with someone who has a Protected Characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at particular disadvantage due to a Protected Characteristic, and it cannot be objectively justified.

Victimisation means treating someone less favourably because they have asserted their legal rights in relation to a Protected Characteristic or helped someone else to do so.

Harassment includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Protected Characteristics are defined in the Equality Act 2010 as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

#### **1.3 General responsibilities**

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting

discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Principal.

All staff, but particularly those in leadership/management roles, have a responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and ensure that they adhere to the policy and promote Equal Opportunities wherever applicable in their line of work.

All parents are expected to support the School's ethos towards promoting Equal Opportunities, including accepting the School's right to take action should they or their daughter be found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment based on a Protected Characteristic.

If any member of the School community believes there has been a breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy, they are encouraged to raise their concerns immediately. This may be done through the School's Complaints or Grievance Procedures, or as an informal conversation. All reports will be investigated seriously and, where possible, confidentiality will be maintained.

#### **1.4 Application**

This policies applies inside the School and outside the School when on work-related trips and/or social events. This policy may also apply to communications between pupils, staff and/or parents, should any messages include discriminatory language or constitute harassment based on a Protected Characteristic. Please see the relevant sections in the Anti-Bullying Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Parent Contract.

#### **1.5 Arrangements for Disability**

The School recognises that, in the context of our daily business and at any time, a disabled person may:

- Work at the School, in any capacity (full-time, temporarily)
- Visit the School, in any capacity
- Attend the School as a pupil
- Attend the School on behalf of a contractor or other third party to provide services to the School
- Call at the School as a messenger or member of the public

A person is regarded as being disabled if they are regarded as such for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. In summary, this states that a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial, adverse and long-term effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The expression 'disability' may include those who are disfigured and/or are impaired in their mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, or in their speech, hearing, eyesight, memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand, or in their perception of the risk of physical danger, or those with AIDS, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

If a member of the School community is or becomes disabled, they are encouraged to advise the School so that appropriate support can be put in place.

A disability will not in itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for the position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made 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.

It is our policy to make reasonable adjustments to our services, premises and equipment to achieve the above, and encourage anyone with a disability to contact the Principal or Bursar to discuss their needs. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Consideration of provision of specialist equipment
- Job redesign
- Flexible hours

The costs of any adjustment(s) will not be passed on to the disabled person. It may sometimes be that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, in which case the School will explain their reasons and seek to find an alternative solution. Once an adjustment has been made, its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assessing its ongoing efficacy. The School will monitor the features of our premises to consider whether they place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage and, where necessary, will take reasonable steps to address.

Pursuant to the above, the School has conducted a disability audit with a view to identifying those aspects of our services, premises and equipment where disability discrimination is possible. This has resulted in the Accessibility Policy and Plan.

## **1.6 Regulatory Framework**

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's obligations under the:-

- Equality Act 2010.
- Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:-

- Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2014).
- Working Together with Safeguarding Children (July 2018).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021).

## **Section 2: Pupils**

We concentrate on educating the individual girl, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish.

### **2.1 Application**

This policy applies to all those at Queen's Gate who have contact/interaction with pupils.

## **2.2 Responsibilities**

In addition to the general responsibilities detailed above (1.3), all staff are expected to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat pupils with dignity at all times and not discriminate against or harass them in any way.

All pupils are expected to abide by the School's Code of Conduct (Appendix 1) in terms of their behaviour towards others. If a pupil is believed to have breached this Code of Conduct in an act that relates to a Protected Characteristics, this will be dealt with under the procedures laid out in the Anti-Bullying and Exclusion Policies. Pupils should be aware that a breach of the Code of Conduct and/or Anti-Bullying Policy through an act relating to a Protected Characteristic is likely to carry a more significant sanction.

## **2.3 Admissions**

The School treats every application in a fair, open-minded and equal way, in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. Although we are an academically selective school, each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the School's criteria based on an applicant's ability and aptitude. The School accepts applications from all prospective pupils, irrespective of any Protected Characteristics.

Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect that child's performance in the admissions process and/or their ability to participate fully in the education provided by the School so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared to other children. The School will not offer a place to a child with a disability if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

## **2.4 English as an additional language**

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of our School, pupils should have an acceptable level of fluency in both written and spoken English. However, tuition in English as an Additional Language ("EAL") can be arranged at the parents' expense.

## **2.5 Requests for variation in dress code**

Our School is founded on Christian principles, although it is non-denominational. We do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief and we can offer the opportunity for non-Christians to practise their own faiths. However, parents should be aware that all pupils at our School are required to follow a dress code. The Principal will consider written requests from parents for variations in the dress code on religious and cultural grounds that are consistent with the School's ethos and its policy on health and safety.

## **2.6 Pupils with a disability**

The School has an on-going duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure that they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils, including during the admissions process (see above).

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make in order to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other pupils. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School.

The School has an Accessibility Plan in place, which is available from the Principal's office. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

## **2.7 Bullying**

The issue of bullying motivated by prejudice is a particularly sensitive issue. We ensure that all forms of bullying (whether motivated by prejudice or otherwise) are taken seriously and dealt with equally and firmly. We are alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny and homophobia and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled. Staff have an important role to play in modelling positive behaviours.

The Department for Education has published specific guidance on bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying and bullying related to sexual orientation, transgender, disability, race and religion. This is available on GOV.UK and is reflected in our Anti-Bullying Policy

## **2.8 Entitlement to enter, live and study in the United Kingdom**

The School is required by law to ensure that all pupils are entitled to live and study in the U.K. Assumptions about immigration should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective pupils, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before they start at the School, to satisfy current immigration legislation.

## **Section 3: Staff, volunteers, governors**

Queen's Gate School is an equal opportunities employer. The School is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all staff, volunteers, governors and those applying for any of these roles. We aim to provide a working environment in which all individuals are able to make the best use of their skills, free from discrimination, victimisation and/or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

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, the School is committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area. Accordingly, we do not discriminate against staff, volunteers or governors on the basis of Protected Characteristics.

No member of staff will be subject to discrimination, victimisation and/or harassment due to their or another's Protected Characteristic.

### **3.1 Application**

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including:

- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Operational staff
- Peripatetic staff
- Other employees (including part-time and fixed-term)
- Consultants
- Contractors
- Trainees
- Casual workers
- Agency Staff
- Volunteers

This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with the above individuals, and to relations between staff at all levels. This includes:

- Job advertisements
- Recruitment and selection
- Training and development
- Appraisals
- Opportunities for promotion
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Pay and benefits
- Conduct at work
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Termination of employment

### **3.2 Responsibilities**

In addition to the general responsibilities detailed above (1.3), staff involved in management and recruitment are required to adhere rigorously to this policy, and to contact the Principal should they wish for any additional training or further information.

### **3.3 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 the individual's knowledge, skills, experience and character and the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

We aim to ensure that no applicant suffers discrimination because of any Protected Characteristics. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their individual merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are reviewed for each advertisement published to ensure they are relevant and appropriate to the job, and are not disproportionate. Shortlisting of applicants is always conducted by more than one person.

Job advertisements avoid stereotyping or wording that may discourage groups with a particular Protected Characteristic from applying.

Job applicants will not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic; e.g. applicants will not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

On occasion, the School may approve the use of lawful exemptions to recruit someone with a particular Protected Characteristic; e.g. where the job can only be done by a woman. Where this is the case, the advertisement will specify the exemption that applies.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, with certain exceptions which may be used at the Principal's discretion:

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

For certain roles, job offers may be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

### **3.8 Entitlement to enter, live and work in the United Kingdom**

The School is required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All employees, regardless of nationality, will be required to produce original documents (such as a passport)



before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the Principal's PA or UK Visas and Immigration.

On occasion, Queen's Gate may employ an individual whose visa the School will be required to sponsor. For these employees, the School will be required to keep relevant documents, track and record their attendance, keep their contact details up to date and report to UKVI if there are any concerns.

### **3.9 Monitoring**

To ensure this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our School, we monitor applicants' Protected Characteristics as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary, and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment.

The information is removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format, solely for the purposes stated in this policy.

### **3.10 Staff training**

Staff training needs will be identified through regular performance management. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the School. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Our terms and conditions of employment, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all Staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles barring access to them.

### **3.11 Employment procedures**

The School will ensure that all employment procedures, including disciplinary and redundancy, are carried out in a way that is fair and objective, and not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

#### **Related Policies:**

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Employee Manual
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding POLICY
- SEND
- SMSC & FBV Policy