



EQUALITIES POLICY

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CONTENTS

1	Induction	3
2	Aims	3
3	Scope	4
4	Disability	4
5	Gender	4
6	Teaching and Learning	4
7	Responsibilities	5
8	Monitoring	5
9	Breaches of Policy	5
10	Availability	5
11	Ratification	5

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 consolidates existing legislation on sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age bringing together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one Single Act. It removes inconsistencies and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The aim of the Equality Act is to strengthen the law, fight discrimination in all its forms and help to make equality a reality for everyone.

Wexham School is committed to promoting fairness and equality in everything that the school does, acknowledging the diversity of all people who make up our school community. Equality involves a fair environment in which everyone can participate and is given the opportunity to achieve. Diversity recognises and values differences between individuals and groups to create a positive and inclusive culture for the benefit of the community of Wexham School.

We believe that every member of the school community has the right to be treated with dignity, understanding, tolerance, respect and fairness and to be in an environment free from abuse, offensive behaviour, prejudice and unfair discrimination. In seeking to eliminate direct or indirect, unfair discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment the Wexham School will actively promote policies and procedures aimed at realising the full potential of every individual. We will endeavour to maximise resources to ensure that opportunities are open to all. It is the objective of Wexham School to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

Unfair discrimination may include harassment, stereotyping, prejudice, bullying and victimisation. This may be direct, where a person is treated less favourably than others would be in similar circumstances, or indirect, where a requirement is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionate effect on the members of one group because a considerably smaller number of members of that group can comply with it. This applies whether intentional or not. Unfair discrimination may include actual or perceived grounds. It also covers and protects a person who is friends with or associates with somebody who is covered by a particular ground. Direct discrimination is unlawful unless it can be objectively justified. Indirect discrimination is unlawful unless it can be justified for reasons unrelated to the issue in question. Unfair discrimination will not be tolerated and may constitute a serious disciplinary offence. In extreme cases it may involve a criminal act which will be reported to the police.

This Policy does not mean that everyone will be treated equally. Different people may be treated in different ways depending on their requirements.

This Policy and any related procedures will be easily accessible and well publicised. This policy intends to comply with all statutes and regulations and present and future legislation will override this policy if appropriate.

Aims

We want to foster mutual tolerance and our aim is for everyone to feel valued within the School. By actively promoting equal opportunities and not discriminating either directly or indirectly against anyone on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, beliefs, sexuality or gender the school can ensure that:

- All students have opportunities to achieve their potential
- Expectations of all students are high
- All students have access to and can make full use of, the school's facilities and resources
- It reflects the community it serves and responds to its needs
- All students are prepared for life in a diverse and multi-ethnic society
- All students understand the meaning of prejudice, how discrimination occurs and how to take a stand against these
- It has a positive ethos and environment
- Racist and discriminatory incidents are dealt with effectively
- Inclusion issues are taken seriously and are considered in all aspects of school life

Scope

This Policy applies to all aspects of school life. This includes:

- Staff recruitment, staff promotion and staff training
- The curriculum, teaching and learning and class room practice
- Student admissions and attendance
- Students' attainment and progress
- Student behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Students' personal development and pastoral care
- Membership of the Governing Body
- Partnerships with parents/carers and communities

It is intended to apply to the whole school community including visitors when appropriate. Wexham School will promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination, in particular, with regard to:-

- Sexual orientation, gender or gender reassignment
- Marital status or being in a civil partnership
- Age
- Race including nationality, ethnic origin, creed or colour.

The School will have due regard to the need to:-

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
- Promote racial equality
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

Disability

The School will have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs even if this requires more favourable treatment.
- Directly discriminate if it can be justified and reasonable adjustments are not possible.

Gender

The School will have due regard to the need to:

- Promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination.
- Consider genuine, appropriate occupational requirements such as gender, when employing.

Teaching and Learning

Wexham School stresses the importance of equality as a dimension of teaching and learning and requires:-

- Education that combats unfair discrimination that may be caused by intolerance or ignorance.
- Education that values diversity and promotes understanding and respect. In particular, to highlight that we may misinterpret or fail to understand those who are different because of our own cultural conventions.
- Fairness that is demonstrated by effective communication.
- Prevention of stereotyping, lack of awareness and to promote encouragement of positive attitudes towards the differences between individuals.
- To endeavour to provide equal access to the curriculum for all students.
- To use, equitably, the resources of the School and to employ teaching methods and styles that take account of needs of students with different backgrounds and Learning Styles.
- That our school is educationally inclusive and recognises that each student has a voice and we listen and respond appropriately.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will ensure that the School complies with the appropriate legislation and that this Policy and any related procedures are implemented.

The Headteacher will implement this Policy and any related procedures, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities. The Headteacher or his/her nominee will report annually to the Governing Body on the operation and effectiveness of this Policy and in particular on the Single Equality Scheme, its Action Plan and the Accessibility Plan.

All staff with management roles have additional responsibility ensuring the Wexham School's commitment to equality is reflected in:

- The attitudes and behaviour of staff whom the school has employed.
- Arranging appropriate training.
- Their willingness to acknowledge and tackle examples of unacceptable behaviour.

All staff must:

- Deal with incidents, knowing how to identify failure to provide equality of opportunity, fair treatment and unfair discrimination.
- Lead by example with their attitude and behaviour.
- Be willing to acknowledge and encourage good practice from members of staff they line manage.

All staff will undertake appropriate training.

All students must recognise their responsibility in upholding the principles of fairness and equality.

Parents/Carers, visitors and contractors should, where appropriate, be made aware of this policy.

All members of the School community must recognise that each individual has to uphold the law and the principles of fairness and equality.

Monitoring

Wexham School recognises that genuine equality can only be achieved by monitoring what is actually happening and then using this information to improve future action. Appropriate procedures will be established for the assessment of this Policy. This is particularly relevant in considering the impact on the attainment levels of students according to their race.

Breaches of the Policy

All persons who do not comply with this policy may be liable to disciplinary action and/or a complaint being dealt with under the Complaints Policy of Wexham School. Complaints will be treated with discretion and confidence, wherever possible but anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Any concern relating to this policy should be raised with the Headteacher.

Availability

This Policy will be available to parents/carers on request and will be published on the School's website. Access to staff will be via the School's website.

Ratification

The Policy will be discussed every three years and ratified by the Governing Body.