

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Pupils)

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1. Introduction to Policy

The Mill Hill School Foundation

Cobham Hall is one of The Mill Hill School Foundation (the 'Foundation') schools. The Foundation comprises seven independent mainstream Schools, which together educate girls and boys aged 3 to 18 years, namely the day schools of Grimsdell, Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School and Belmont, Mill Hill Preparatory School, Keble Prep and Lyonsdown School, and the boarding and day senior schools of Mill Hill School, Mill Hill International and Cobham Hall. The Foundation is a registered charity with a Christian ethos and welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, pupils, parents, applicants and governors from all different social and economic backgrounds, ethnicities and linguistic, religious and cultural traditions.

The Foundation's Position

Individuals with different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of the way Mill Hill School Foundation works. Prejudice of any kind has no place in our schools, and we will continue to work as hard as is needed to ensure that this is so. The Foundation values a diverse and inclusive community for pupils and employees as we believe diversity and inclusion improve the learning environment for everyone.

The Foundation supports the principle of inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities, and opposes discrimination against pupils or potential pupils on the basis of age, sex, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity (defined as Protected Characteristics). We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity and will actively challenge discrimination, should it ever arise. All policies and practices will conform to the principle of equality, diversity and inclusion in terms of admissions, selection, curriculum, co-curricular activity, discipline and behaviour.

The Executive team, supported by the Court of Governors have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality, good relations, diversity and inclusion across the Foundation, and to comply with the relevant education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the schools within the Foundation.

This Policy is concerned with equal opportunities for pupils and prospective pupils. The Foundation is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that pupils from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the Foundation's schools and enhance the learning experience for everyone. There is a separate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and a Dignity at Work policy for staff.

2. Application

1. This policy applies to all pupils and prospective pupils to the Foundation schools and visiting pupils participating in games or outreach programmes or other activities. This policy must be followed by all staff, governors, pupils, parents, visitors and volunteers.
2. All pupils are expected to act in accordance with this policy, to treat other pupils, staff and visitors with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against, harass or victimise other pupils, members of staff, or visitors.
3. Through the operation of this policy and other Foundation policies, the Foundation aims to:

- Communicate the commitment of the Foundation to the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in respect of pupils
- Promote equal treatment within the Foundation for all pupils
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes and for everyone to feel valued within the Foundation
- Facilitate pupil voice to promote inclusion
- Ensure that no one pupil is treated less favourably than any other pupil or is victimised on any ground listed below under forms of discrimination
- Make it clear and ensure that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable
- Take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty)
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the DfE Guidance 'Every Child Matters' (2003).
- Prepare pupils to be good citizens, living and working in a multi-ethnic society and to take up the responsibility of participation, and to treat all others as we would wish to be treated.
- Prevent and tackle the use of discriminatory or derogatory language and challenge extremist ideas as part of the Foundation's duty to protect individuals from being radicalised or drawn into terrorism.

3. Related Policies

This Policy must be read and applied in conjunction with all of the Foundation's (or each individual school's) policies, including the Admissions Policy; Expectations and Standards or Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy; Expulsion, Removal and Review Policy; School Rules and Uniform Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Disability Policy, Accessibility Plan and the Special Educational Needs Policy.

4. Responsibilities

All pupils are expected to comply with this policy and to treat others with dignity at all times without regard to their gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religious belief or age except where common decency and consideration dictate.

All pupils are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. Age-appropriate teaching of the principles underpinning this policy will be included in the curriculum for our youngest pupils in the Pre-Preparatory School as part of promoting positive behaviour and other policies.

Staff are expected to ensure this policy is understood and adhered to by pupils. The Court of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the Foundation's Equal Opportunities Policies for staff and pupils, and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Court of Governors has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating this policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review to the Heads of each of the Foundation Schools.

5. Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The Foundation must not unlawfully discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or prospective pupil:

- In relation to admissions;
 - In the way it provides education for pupils;
 - In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service; or
 - By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- a) Direct discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs where:
- i. Someone is treated less favourably because of one or more Protected Characteristics and is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one of the Protected Characteristics. For example, rejecting an applicant because they would not "fit in" because of their race or sexual orientation would be direct discrimination.
 - ii. Someone is less favourably treated because of their association with someone who has a Protected Characteristic. For example, an applicant may be treated less favourably because they have a disabled sibling.
 - iii. Someone is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic. For example, an applicant may be treated less favourably because they are believed to be (but may not actually be) homosexual.
- b) Indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to a provision, criterion or practice, applied to a group of people, which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of a Protected Characteristic, and it cannot be objectively justified. An example might be a school policy which negatively affects only women.
- c) Victimisation and harassment. Victimisation is when someone suffers less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination. Harassment is unwanted conduct due to Protected Characteristics with the purpose or effect of intimidating, degrading or humiliating an individual.

6. Admissions

Applicants. The Foundation accepts applications and admits pupils irrespective of their gender, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. The Foundation will treat every application in a fair, open-minded way.

Selection. Every application will be considered on its merits within the Foundation's criteria for selection on grounds of the pupil's ability and aptitude, but this will not be done as a way of excluding pupils with special educational needs and/or disability, subject to any admissions criteria as outlined in the SEND Policy.

Admissions Policy. The Foundation's Admissions Policy reflects the Foundation's approach towards equal opportunities with regards pupils and prospective pupils, and is consistent with this Policy.

7. Education and Associated Services

Equal Access. The Foundation will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

Positive Discrimination. The Foundation may afford pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with special educational needs and/or disability, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

Exclusions. The Foundation will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding him or her from the Foundation, or by subjecting him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs.

Teaching and Foundation materials. Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the Foundation's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias. Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to all pupils.

Pupil Interaction. All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the Foundation, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

8. Foundation Uniform

Uniform Policy. The Uniform Policy of each school within the Foundation is consistent with this Policy. Each school's policy on uniform applies equally rigorously to all pupils, irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

Symbols of Faith. Certain items of jewellery, such as a Cross or a Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves, may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the Foundation's existing school Uniform Policy principles (in regards to, for example, the school colours). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or his or her parents to the Head of the pupil's school, whose decision will be final, subject to the Complaints procedure as set out in the Foundation's Concerns and Complaints by Parents Policy.

9. Religious Belief

The Foundation's religious ethos, services and school timetable are set in accordance with the Christian tradition but the Foundation respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with

other faiths, or no faith, subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the Foundation Community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

The Governing Body, through the Heads of each Foundation 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.

10. Change of Name

Pupils who are undergoing a process of gender reassignment cannot legally apply to change their gender until they have reached the age of 18 and will remain registered at the Foundation in their legal name rather than their preferred name. However, a pupil's wish to be known by a different name, in line with their chosen gender identity, will be respected and all staff and pupils should be informed of the chosen name and pronoun.

For pupil examinations and public exam certificates, pupils will be required to use their legal name (i.e that which is on their birth certificate or passport) rather than their preferred name. This is because the Unique Pupil Number sent to exam boards is linked to and verified by legal names only.

11. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We are an inclusive Foundation which welcomes members of the Foundation Community with disabilities and special educational needs. Our approach to pupils and prospective pupils with SEND, including our approach to admissions, assessment and training for staff, and our disability accessibility plan are outlined in the SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan.

The Foundation will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether it can make any changes to help remove disadvantages which these may create for disabled users. Where possible and proportionate, the Foundation will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. Further detail can be found in the Foundation Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan.

As set out in the Foundation Disability Policy and Accessibility Plan and Educational Visits Policy, where reasonably practicable and taking into consideration the safety and comfort of all pupils, the Foundation will have regard to specific requests from pupils who require adjustments to enable them to take part in educational visits. Such adjustments will be discussed with the pupil (and if appropriate their parents) beforehand and considered on a case-by-case basis.

12. Breaches of the policy

Complaints. If a pupil or their parents believes that they may have been disadvantaged because of a Protected Characteristic, they should raise the matter with the Head of their/their child's school. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. The Foundation aims to resolve these complaints without recourse to its complaints procedure but if a pupil or parent is unhappy with the way that their Foundation School has dealt with an issue arising under this Policy they should refer to the Foundations Concerns and Complaints policy.

Disciplinary Action. Pupils who are in breach of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Foundation's behaviour or anti-bullying policies.

13. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Foundation acknowledges that pupils may want to keep information about their Protected Characteristics confidential. The Foundation will keep secure and confidential, information about the pupil's Protected Characteristic in accordance with its Data Protection Policy subject to any prevailing legal obligation to disclose a pupil's personal data, for example, where a court order requires disclosure or where the Foundation is obliged to disclose confidential information in accordance with its safeguarding duties.

In certain circumstances, the Foundation will, with the consent of the pupil, wish to share information with staff, students, and/or parents or guardians in the best interest of the pupil.

14. Review

The Foundation will review this policy on a biennial basis to ensure the Foundation and its schools meets the needs of Equal Opportunities legislation and other guidance in force at the time.

This Policy was approved by the Pastoral Committee of the Court of Governors in Feb 2022.