



MILTON ABBEY

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Policy Contact:	Tracey Edwards
Approved by:	Croners

Purpose of the policy

1. **School's position:** The School is committed to ensuring equality and celebrating diversity and opposes discrimination on the basis of sex, marital or civil partnership status, any gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, part time or fixed term employment, age or offending background. As an employer committed to equality and diversity, the School will take every possible step to ensure that employees are treated equally and fairly in respect of these matters. All policies and practices will conform to the principle of equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career development, discipline, redundancy and dismissal. Our staff and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes.

To whom does this policy apply?

2. **Application:** This policy applies to the Schools' employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to former employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not our employees, but who work at the School (collectively **workers**).
3. **Worker's duties:** All workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, the School may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of staff and therefore shall not tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.

Personnel responsible

4. **Overall responsibility:** 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 Head of Operations.
5. **Management:** Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.
6. **Questions about this policy:** All members of staff 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. If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Head of Operations.

Forms of discrimination

7. **Types:** Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
8. **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds set out in paragraph 1 above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race could be direct discrimination.

9. **Indirect discrimination:** Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If this criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.
10. **Victimisation and harassment:** Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment (see the School's anti-harassment and bullying policy).

Recruitment and selection

11. **School's position:** The School aims to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in paragraph 1 above. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and that sufficiently diverse sectors of the community are reached. Job selection criteria are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

12. **The School's position:** Staff training needs shall be identified through regular staff appraisals. All workers will be given an equal opportunity and access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation. All promotion decisions shall be made on the basis of merit.
13. **Terms and conditions:** Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are available to all workers who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

Disability discrimination

14. **Informing the School:** If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment with us, you are encouraged to tell us about your condition. This is to enable us to support you as much as possible.
15. **Reasonable adjustments:** You may also wish to advise your Line Manager or the Head of Operations of any reasonable adjustments to your working conditions or the duties of your job which you consider to be necessary, or which would assist you in the performance of your duties. Your Line Manager or the Head of Operations may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate the suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments.
16. **Access:** The School shall monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled users of the premises at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises.

Fixed-term employees

17. **Monitoring:** We will monitor our use of fixed-term employees and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress within the School to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Part-time workers

18. **Monitoring:** The School will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will also ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the School's flexible working policy.

Breaches of the policy

19. **Complaints:** If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed in paragraph 1 above, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's grievance procedure. If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed in paragraph 1, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's anti-harassment and bullying policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.
20. **False allegations:** These procedures apply during and after termination of your employment. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the disciplinary and dismissal procedure.
21. **Disciplinary action:** If, after investigation, you are proven to have bullied or harassed any other worker on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability, age or offending background or otherwise acted in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The School will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.
22. **Management:** The School is committed to providing relevant training for all staff on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.