



## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Accessibility Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Financial Assistance (Bursary and Hardship Awards) Policy
- SENDA Policy

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Farnborough Hill where all members of the School community can be expected to be treated with respect and dignity. Our mission is to educate the whole person, and to provide a friendly and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish. Farnborough Hill recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes all forms of discrimination.

Farnborough Hill is committed to the equal treatment of all its pupils and staff regardless of an individual's age, disability, gender/gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race (including ethnic or national origin, nationality or colour) religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation. Together these are defined as *Protected Characteristics* in the Equality Act 2010.

The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme, and through the supportive school culture and through the School's policies.

The School is committed to providing equality of opportunity. The School regards this policy as a commitment to make full use of the talents and resources of all members of the School community, and to provide a healthy environment which will encourage good and productive working relations within the School. All members of staff have a part to play in achieving this, and the Senior Leadership Team, and Governors, strive to ensure that individuals are made aware of their personal responsibility to observe and support the *Equal Opportunities Policy*.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS

As a Catholic school, however, our *Admissions Policy* gives priority to Roman Catholic children, when we are over-subscribed. We also give priority to sisters. In all other respects, pupils at Farnborough Hill are treated equally as soon as they become members of the Farnborough Hill community.

Farnborough Hill is an academically selective school where the educational experience of pupils is enriched by being exposed to a wide range of cultural experiences whilst they are developing. Applications from candidates with a diverse range of backgrounds is, therefore, welcomed as this enriches our school community and forms a sound basis for

preparing our pupils for life in today's world. Whilst we welcome applications from pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, prospective parents and wheelchair users need to be aware that our Grade 1 listed buildings and steep site make some disabilities (e.g. wheelchair use) particularly challenging and access is currently not available to all areas of the School. We continue to work to address this; please see *Accessibility Plan*.

Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for many more pupils, who meet the School's admission criteria, to attend the School. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website (*Financial Assistance (Bursary and Hardship Awards) Policy*) or obtained from the Bursar's Office.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Head, the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Year, School Chaplain and Matron play an active role in monitoring the implementation of Farnborough Hill's *Equal Opportunities Policy*.

All opportunities (e.g. Assemblies, Form time, PSHEE, RE, Drama, English and other academic lessons) are used to:

- foster an ethos of mutual respect where everyone is valued and no one receives less favourable treatment, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- provide a curriculum that enables all pupils to achieve their full potential by having equal access to the range of educational opportunities on offer
- support pupils to develop an understanding of their faith and ensure that all pupils understand and respect the beliefs and practices of other world faiths and cultures. Bias should be recognised
- respect and celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of members of the School community
- prepare pupils for life in a diverse society and world
- understand why, and how, offensive language and behaviour are dealt with
- understand why any incidents are dealt with promptly and in a sensitive manner

In addition, it is important that:

- disabled pupils are not treated less favourably and every effort is made to ensure that pupils, parents and members of staff are not disadvantaged as a result of any disability. However, it needs to be recognised that the physical layout of the building may restrict the movement of individuals with particular disabilities (e.g. wheelchair use)
- all reasonable adjustments are made to prevent putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage in matters of admission and education
- all incidents of prejudice and discrimination are treated seriously and dealt with appropriately, according to existing procedures and sanctions (See *Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies*)
- all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve
- provision for those with particular needs due to religious, dietary, language and cultural needs is made, in consultation with the parents

Discrimination and/or harassment in all its forms are unlawful and unacceptable; our *Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies* describe clearly the behaviour that is expected from each individual, and is acceptable. All staff are familiar with this *Equal Opportunities Policy* and the disciplinary consequences of not supporting and implementing it.

To be successful, this *Equal Opportunities Policy* requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

### **Monitoring**

Farnborough Hill monitors this *Equal Opportunities Policy* regularly and Governors are kept up-to-date as is deemed relevant. As part of that process, all parents who accept places at the School for their child are asked to complete an Ethnic Background form. Such statistics are submitted, anonymously, to the DfE (Department for Education) as part of the annual school census. We hope that all parents will feel able to participate in this ethnic monitoring.

### **English as an Additional Language**

Pupils with English as an Additional Language (**EAL**) will receive additional learning support if necessary (currently none provided). The School will consult with the pupil and the parents as appropriate; fees for which are additional to the main school fees.

### **Mass, Assembly, Form Prayers, Retreats and Religious Education Lessons**

All pupils attend Mass, assembly, Form prayers, retreats and Religious Education lessons. The Catholic foundation of the School unites all members of the School community. The School aims not to exclude pupils and nor does the School expect any pupil to be excluded by herself or by a parent. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of their own faith and language(s) within the diverse setting of the School.

Feast days, fasting and times for prayers are respected and pupils are helped to integrate particular faith needs within the context of their school routines. Faith backgrounds and cultural backgrounds are recognised as important aspects of pupil identity and acknowledged and honoured accordingly.

### **Requests for Variations in the School Uniform**

Although Farnborough Hill is a Catholic school with Christian roots, we welcome pupils of all faiths and no faith. However, parents should be aware that all pupils at Farnborough Hill are required to wear the designated school uniform until the end of Year 11. The Head will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the School's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Head will normally arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request, trying hard to accommodate them if at all possible.

### **Complaints**

It is hoped that parents and pupils will not have any complaints about the operation of this *Equal Opportunities Policy*; however, copies of the School's *Complaints Policy and Procedure* can be found on the School website.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF**

The School, in its employments practices, will avoid any unlawful discrimination against its employees, in particular, in relation to their actual or perceived protected characteristics or the fact that they are part-time or full-time employees. Employees and applicants for employment will not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified for operational purposes or because of the School's adherence to the Catholic faith. The School will, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice.

The School will seek to identify and act upon any unfair or unlawful discrimination which denies an individual an opportunity on any of the criteria mentioned above. Existing staff and job applicants have the right to complain about unlawful discrimination through the appropriate procedures which are set out in the *Complaints Procedure for Staff* and the *Grievance Procedure* available in the *Staff Policy Handbook*.

All members of staff are asked:

- to co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity
- to report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices to their line-manager
- not to persuade or attempt to persuade others to practise unlawful discrimination
- not to victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination
- not to harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, gender, or any of the protected characteristics
- not to lobby job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying or taking up a post

### **Disability**

- A person will be described as having a disability when he/she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a post at the School. The School will consider making reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of a disability. For example, where written tests are used, reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that the information is presented in an accessible format for visually impaired applicants.
- Before an applicant is judged, because of a reason related to a disability, to have failed to meet the requirements of a job description and person specification, or to have been less suitable than other applicants, full consideration will be given to whether a reasonable adjustment can be made which will counteract any disadvantage.
- The School will consider making such reasonable adjustments to working arrangements or school premises to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his/her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign, retraining and flexible hours.
- The School recognises the importance of taking pro-active measures to remove barriers to disabled people from the working environment. This will benefit not only disabled members of staff but also any visitors with disabilities.
- Where before, or during, the course of employment with the School an employee knows or believes that he/she might be disabled, he/she should discuss this with the Bursar in the first instance so that the School can consider reasonable adjustments to aid the employee in his/her employment. If an employee is disabled and recognises a need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to his/her working arrangements or the School premises, he/she should discuss this with the School. The employee's own expertise concerning his/her disability will be recognised.
- Where the School does not have the relevant expertise to resolve a problem, an outside specialist may be consulted and the employee may be required to give his/her consent to a report being produced about his/her state of health and ability to perform his/her duties.
- Once an adjustment has been made, its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

## **Dignity at Work**

- No employee should engage in any behaviour or conduct which might amount to harassment of another person at work. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant dismissal.
- Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct, aimed at a particular person or at a person who is associated with the person making the complaint, which is of a sexual nature, or other conduct, based on someone's actual or perceived disability, age, race, religion and/or gender, sexual orientation or because of a person's gender re-assignment, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment at work. It may also take the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on his/her disability, appearance or other personal characteristics which is perceived as affecting his/her dignity at work. Harassment includes not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes also suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter. Harassment may include bullying, intimidatory behaviour, persistent teasing or constant unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks, unfair allocation of work and responsibilities, or exclusion from normal work place conversation. It may be directed towards one individual or a group. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave. In addition, behaviour might still amount to harassment even if it is not directed at a specific individual.
- If an employee considers that he/she has been the recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment, either by another member of staff or by a third party associated with the School, the employee should try to resolve the problem informally with the other person, either face to face or in writing, if possible. If this is not appropriate or has been tried but unsuccessfully, the employee should raise a grievance in accordance with the *Grievance Procedure*. All such grievances will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence. Breach of that confidence, by either party or the person dealing with the grievance, will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence. Both during the investigation of the complaint and afterwards (whatever the outcome), consideration will be given to ensuring that the employee and the alleged harasser are not required to work together against the employee's wishes.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team, or Head of Department, will assist the employee, at any stage of the harassment procedure, either by acting as an intermediary, devising a means of putting an end to the harassment, or assisting the employee in presenting a complaint.
- A false or malicious allegation will be treated as a disciplinary offence. Retaliation against a member of staff who complains of harassment can be expected to lead to disciplinary action.

## **Complaints/Alleged Breaches**

Any member of staff wishing to raise a complaint should do so in line with the *Grievance Procedure*, available in the *Staff Policy Handbook*.

This policy is in accordance with the guidelines and requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head/Bursar in January each year.

The next review is due in January 2019.