

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Reviewed By	Director of Projects
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Contents

Contents	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Aims and objectives	3
3. Statutory and regulatory framework	3
4. Scope and responsibilities	3
5. Protected Characteristics.....	4
6. Forms of discrimination	4
Equal opportunities for pupils.....	4
8. Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability.....	5
9. The Equality Act 2010.....	6
10. Bullying.....	7
11. School uniform.....	7
12. Religious beliefs	8

13.	Pupils with English as an Additional Language.....	8
14.	Provision for pupils with religious, dietary or cultural needs.....	8
15.	Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination.....	8
	Equal opportunities for applicants for employment.....	8
	Equal opportunities for staff.....	9
18.	Disabilities and reasonable adjustments.....	9
19.	Fixed-term employees.....	9
20.	Part-time employees.....	9
21.	Staff complaints.....	9
22.	False allegations.....	10
23.	Disciplinary action.....	10
24.	Monitoring and review.....	10

I. Introduction

I.1 North London Collegiate School (the School) is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of its community. The School will not discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, social background, special educational needs, part time or fixed term employment. The School endeavours to create an environment in which pupils and staff give due respect to other people and their work or ideas.

I.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following which are available on the School [website](#):

- Accessibility Plan (internal document)
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Strategy
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff (internal document)
- Complaints Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy (internal document)
- Disability Policy (internal document)
- Disciplinary Policy (internal document)
- Flexible Working Policy (internal document)
- Grievance Procedure (internal document)
- Wellbeing Policy
- Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

I.3 This policy applies to the whole School from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to sixth form.

I.4 This policy is available on the School website.

I.5 Copies of the above policies are held at the Senior School Office for consultation by parents. You may also email the School at Office@nlcs.org.uk to request hard copies which can be made available in large print or other accessible format of required.

2. Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the school community.
- 2.2 The School aims to ensure that all policies, procedures and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices amongst pupils through staff leading by example, the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme, the supportive School culture and through the School's policies.
- 2.3 The School is a committed equal opportunities employer and will take every possible step to ensure that employees are treated equally and fairly in respect of these matters. All policies, procedures and practices will conform with the principle of equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career development, discipline, redundancy and dismissal. 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.

3. Statutory and regulatory framework

3.1 This policy has regard to the following:

- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations \(2014\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010 and Schools - Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities \(May 2014\)](#)
- [Gender Questioning Children – Non-statutory guidance for schools and colleges in England \(draft for consultation – December 2023\)](#)

4. Scope and responsibilities

- 4.1 All members of the School community, including but not limited to, the Head, Governors, pupils, parents, visitors and Canons Sports Centre are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.
- 4.2 This policy also applies to the School's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, former employees, applicants for employment and individuals such as agency staff, consultants and volunteers who are not our employees, but who work at the School (collectively workers).
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Governing Body has delegated to the Chief Operating Officer day- to-day responsibility for operating this policy and ensuring its accessibility, maintenance and review.
- 4.5 Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard

to equal opportunities.

5. Protected Characteristics

5.1 The School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination based on the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 i.e.;

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

5.2 The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need.

6. Forms of discrimination

6.1 Discrimination may be direct or indirect, arise from a disability and may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

6.2 Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another individual because of a protected characteristic. For example, rejecting an applicant of a particular race because it is considered they would not "fit in".

6.3 Direct discrimination also occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

6.4 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 minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.

6.5 Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a pupil with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend an educational visit because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

6.6 Discrimination also includes victimisation (suffering a detriment because of action the employee has taken or may take to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard (called a Protected Act) and harassment.

Equal opportunities for pupils

7. Special educational needs and disability

7.1 The School welcomes pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The School maintains

and drives a positive culture towards inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, in all activities of the School, and will not treat a pupil differently unless appropriate to their special need and / or their disability.

7.2 At present, the School's physical facilities for the disabled reflect the needs of the current cohort. The School will do all that is reasonable to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies and procedures are made accessible to children who have disabilities, and comply with our legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

8. Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability

8.1 The Equality Act 2010 states there is a duty to make reasonable adjustments if an individual is placed at a substantial disadvantage because of their disability compared with non-disabled individuals or individuals who do not share the disability. Substantial means more than minor or trivial.

8.2 Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled pupils.

8.3 When providing educational services to a pupil, the School will fulfil its legal requirements to make reasonable adjustments in order to cater for a pupil's disability. Reasonable adjustments are changes made to ensure disabled pupils can participate in their education and enjoy the other facilities that the School provides.

8.4 The School will inform the pupil and parents / guardians of the reasonable adjustments that the School is legally required to make for that pupil, which may typically include:

- making arrangements for a child in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room
- allowing extra time for pupils who fulfil the current JCQ access arrangement criteria
- providing examination papers in larger print where this fulfils the current JCQ guidelines
- rearranging the timetable to allow a pupil to attend a class in an accessible part of the building
- arranging a variety of accessible sports activities

8.5 The School is not legally required to make adjustments which include:

- physical alterations such as the provision of a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities, such as a new library.

8.6 Parents of pupils must notify the Head in writing if they are aware or suspect that the pupil (or prospective pupil) has special educational needs and / or a disability, The Registration Form enables parents to give details of their child's special educational needs and / or a disability when applying for a place at the School. Parents must provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing the School with such information will enable the School to support the pupil as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. The School will have due regard to any request made by a parent or pupil (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.

8.7 Applications for a place at the School will be considered on the basis that reasonable adjustments have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's special educational needs and / or a disability. The School will not offer a place if, after all reasonable adjustments have been made, the School will not be able to provide adequately for the child's physical and educational needs.

The School shall inform the parents of the decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are going to make or give reasons why an offer of a place has not been made.

- 8.8 Where the School becomes aware of special educational needs and / or a disability of an existing pupil, the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the pupil, whilst at the School, which may include making reasonable adjustments. If in the professional judgement of the Head, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made, parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil, without being charged fees in lieu of notice and with the acceptance deposit returned. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.
- 8.9 The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed 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.
- 8.10 The Equality Act 2010 requires all schools to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils as part of the duty to make "reasonable adjustments". The School will carefully consider any proposals and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services to be provided.
- 8.11 The School has an Accessibility Plan in place which aims to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum, improve the physical environment of the School to increase access to education by disabled pupils and improve the delivery of information to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities.

9. The Equality Act 2010

9.1 The Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to 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

9.2 Admissions

9.2.1 Applicants:

The School accepts applications from, and admits pupils irrespective of race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered, subject to the section regarding 'Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability' as seen on pages 6-7. As a single-sex girls' school, the School accepts applications from female pupils, including those who are questioning their gender. The School will treat every application in a fair and open-minded way.

9.2.2. Selection:

Every application will be considered on its merits within the School'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 a disability, subject to the section regarding 'Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability' as seen on pages 6-7.

9.2.3 Admissions Policy:

The School's Admissions Policy reflects the School's approach towards equal opportunities and is consistent with this policy.

9.3 Education and associated services

9.3.1 Equal access:

The School will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare, its status as a single-sex girls' school and the section regarding 'Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability' as seen on pages 5-7.

9.3.2 Exclusions:

The School will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding them from the School, or by subjecting them to any other detriment, on the grounds of gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs, subject to its status as a single-sex girls' school and the section regarding 'Reasonable adjustments for those with a disability' as seen on pages 6-7.

9.3.4 Teaching and School 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 School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias.

9.3.5 Pupil interaction:

All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the School's status as a single-sex girls' school. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

10. **Bullying**

- The School will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying include:
 - Bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture
 - Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
 - Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
 - Bullying relating to sexual orientation
 - Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
 - Sexist or sexual bullying

10.1 The School's Anti-bullying Strategy contains more details about the School's anti-bullying practices.

11. **School uniform**

11.1 Pupils are required to wear School uniform until the end of Year 11.

11.2 The Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Head of Junior School will consider requests from parents and pupils regarding variations to the uniform where necessary, for example, on religious grounds.

11.3 Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle worn by Sikhs, and certain items of headwear, such as 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. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be

referred by the parents or pupils to the Head of Junior School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral), whose decision will be final, subject to the School's Complaints Procedure.

- I 1.4 Reasonable adjustments may be required to the School uniform for disabled pupils who require them. Parents or pupils should refer the matter to the Head of Junior School or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the pupil.

I 2. Religious beliefs

- I 2.1 The School's religious ethos, services and timetable are set in accordance with the Christian tradition, but the School 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 School community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

I 3. Pupils with English as an Additional Language

- I 3.1 Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are expected to be able to access the curriculum in English. The School will consult with the pupil and the parents as appropriate and advise parents if additional language support is required. The School's English as an Additional Language Policy contains further information.

I 4. Provision for pupils with religious, dietary or cultural needs

- I 4.1 The School makes provision for pupils with specific needs as far as is reasonable. For example, absence is granted for religious observance and the catering department takes dietary requirements into account as far as is reasonably possible.

I 5. Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination

- I 5.1 If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Head of Junior School and Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- I 5.2 If a parent / guardian of a current registered pupil believes they or their child has received less favourable treatment based on one or more of the protected characteristics, or feel this policy has been breached in any way to their or their child's detriment they are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's Complaints Procedure a copy of which is available on the School [website](#). Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.
- I 5.3 If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint based on the protected characteristics, please contact the Head of Junior School or Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- I 5.4 The School will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint and report. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the School community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of pupils or staff will be dealt with under the relevant policy: Behaviour Policy for pupils, or the Staff Grievance or Staff Disciplinary procedures.
- I 5.5 All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded in the Equal Opportunities log and this record will be reviewed annually by the Head of Junior School and the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Equal opportunities for applicants for employment

I 6. Recruitment and selection

- I 6.1 The School aims to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that

individuals are treated based on 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.

Equal opportunities for staff

17. Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

- 17.1 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 based on merit.
- 17.2 The School's 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.

18. Disabilities and reasonable adjustments

- 18.1 Staff are encouraged to inform the School if they are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment with the School. This enables the School to support staff as much as possible.
- 18.2 Staff may also wish to advise the Chief Operating Officer or their Head of Department of any reasonable adjustments to working conditions or the duties of the job which staff consider to be necessary, or which would assist staff in the performance of their duties. The Chief Operating Officer may wish to consult with staff and with their 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 the job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for the School to accommodate the suggested adjustments and the School will ensure that it provides staff with information as to the basis of the decision not to make any adjustments.
- 18.3 The School shall monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether it places 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.

19. Fixed-term employees

- 19.1 The School will monitor its 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. The School will, where relevant, monitor their progress within the School to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

20. Part-time employees

- 20.1 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. The School will also ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the School's Flexible Working policy.

21. Staff complaints

- 21.1 Staff who believe they may have been disadvantaged on any of the protected characteristics are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's Grievance Procedure. Staff who believe they may have been harassed on any of the protected characteristics are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's Dignity at Work Policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy

will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. The Grievance procedure and Dignity at Work Policy are available in the “Policies and Handbooks” Team.

22. False allegations

22.1 These procedures apply during and after termination of 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 Policy, a copy of which is available in the “Policies and Handbooks” Team.

23. Disciplinary action

23.1 If, after investigation, a member of staff is proven to have bullied or harassed any other worker on the grounds of sex, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability or age or otherwise acted in breach of this policy, that member of staff 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.

24. Monitoring and review

24.1 The Head and Senior Team will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy, and associated procedures.

24.2 The policy will be reviewed every two years (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of Junior School, the HR Director and the SEND advisors.

24.3 The policy will be reviewed every two years (or more frequently if changes to legislation, regulation or statutory guidance so require) by the relevant committee of the Governing Body.

24.4 The date of the next review is shown on the front page.