




**MOUNT HOUSE
SCHOOL**

INSPIRING EVERY INDIVIDUAL

SCHOOL POLICIES

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Review	Date	By
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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Mount House School is a vibrant place to study and work, enriched by the diversity of perspectives, cultures and backgrounds of its students, staff, visitors and local communities. The School is firmly committed to sustaining a highly effective learning and working environment characterised by fairness, equality of opportunity and the appreciation of diversity.

1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.1 The purpose of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (the 'Policy') is to set out the School's commitment to an inclusive and supportive environment for students, staff, contractors and visitors that is free from discrimination, where all are able to participate and where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equally, the Policy sets out the School's expectations, where each member of the School community has a responsibility to adhere to and uphold the Policy. These responsibilities are detailed in Section 4.
- 1.2.2 The Policy promotes positive attitudes towards inclusivity and valuing diversity. It also seeks to ensure that all who are subject to the School's policies, practices and procedures are treated fairly and are not treated less favourably on the grounds of any of the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. These protected characteristics are detailed in Appendix 1.

1.3 Scope

The Policy applies to all students, staff and visitors to the School, and those contracted to work at, or for, the School.

1.4 MHS's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision

- 1.4.1 The School's equality, diversity and inclusion vision is to create an inspirational, inclusive learning and working environment: an environment characterised by inclusivity, respect and dignity, and free from discrimination, harassment and bullying. The School believes that in order for it to succeed in its ambitions to create a nurturing, culturally creative and intellectually dynamic community, equality, diversity and dignity must be embedded throughout the organisation. The School believes that every member of the School community can make a difference and contribute to the success of this vision.
- 1.4.2 The implementation of a robust Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is a key way in which the School seeks to meet both its statutory equality responsibilities and its own aspirations for an inspirational, inclusive learning and working environment.

1.5 Legislative Context

The Head and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), supported by the Board of Directors, have overall responsibility to manage the implementation of equality, good relations, diversity and inclusion in the School, and to comply with the relevant education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties:

- The Equality Act 2010 (inclusive of Schedule 10) ('the Act')
- The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (Department for Education and Department for Health; January 2015)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- The Data Protection Act 2018

As part of its responsibilities under the Act, the School has regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The updated DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 makes it clear that being subjected to harassment, violence and or abuse, may breach children's rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act. The guidance sets out the significance of the Equality Act 2010 to school safeguarding, including that schools and colleges:

- must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of their protected characteristics
- must consider how they are supporting students with protected characteristics
- must take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these students face. For example, by making reasonable adjustments for disabled children and supporting girls if there is evidence they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment

It also looks at the implications of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for education settings. This includes a need to be conscious that students with protected characteristics may be more at risk of harm and integrate this into safeguarding policies and procedures.

The characteristics protected under the Equality Act are detailed in Appendix 1. The key behaviours prohibited under the Act are detailed in Appendix 2.

1.6 Related Policies

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| • Accessibility Policy 2021 – 2024 | • Health and Safety Policy |
| • Admissions Policy | • Online Safety Policy |
| • Anti-Bullying Policy | • Relationships and Sex Education Policy |
| • Behaviour Policy | • Safeguarding Policy |
| • Curriculum Policy | • Safer Recruitment Policy |
| • Educational Trips Policy | • SEND Policy |
| • First Aid Policy | • Staff Code of Conduct |

SECTION 2 – POLICY STATEMENT

The School is committed to embedding equality and inclusion in all of its practices, and aims to establish an inclusive culture that celebrates diversity, is free from discrimination and is based on the values of dignity and respect.

SECTION 3 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The School values a diverse and inclusive community for students and employees as we believe diversity and inclusion improve the learning environment for everyone.
- 3.2 The School seeks to build capability across all areas within the organisation in the development of this inclusive culture and resolution of obstacles to equality.
- 3.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion priorities align with and underpin the Mount House School's strategic aims to ensure that stereotypes and biases are recognised and removed from all teaching and learning materials and in our teaching styles.
- 3.4 The School adopts flexible approaches to engagement to ensure that the voices of stakeholders are taken into account as appropriate.
- 3.5 The School collects, stores and publishes equalities information appropriately, whilst protecting the confidentiality of personal information.
- 3.6 The School makes reasonable adjustments for students and staff in accordance with identified needs wherever possible within the statutory criteria.

SECTION 4 – RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 All School students, staff, contractors and visitors have equalities related responsibilities.
- 4.2 **The Board of Directors is responsible for:**
 - Ensuring that the School meets its legal obligations relating to equality
 - Ensuring that equality analysis is carried out on all senior level proposed policies and decisions where appropriate
 - Reviewing on a regular basis that this policy remains current and relevant, taking into account any changes in legislation and best practice
- 4.3 **Managers are responsible for:**
 - Ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination
 - Fostering a culture in which equality and diversity considerations are embedded into their work areas
 - Ensuring that staff and students are encouraged and enabled to reach their full potential
 - Identifying appropriate staff development to meet the needs of their respective areas

4.4 The Bursar and the Human Resources (HR) Administrator are responsible for:

Supporting all managers in ensuring that procedures relating to staff recruitment, selection, career development, discipline and grievance are carried out in accordance with the statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

4.5 The SLT is responsible for:

- Leading and supporting the School in creating an inspirational, inclusive and diverse environment
- Leading the School in meeting its statutory responsibilities
- Ensuring that materials are selected carefully for all areas of the Curriculum to avoid any EDI stereotyping or biases
- Ensuring that the timetable enables each student to receive teaching from all genders
- Ensuring that an effective policy, service and provision infrastructure is in place to support the School in both meeting its legal responsibilities and fulfilling its equality and diversity vision
- Providing advice, guidance and support on the application of this policy
- Advising colleagues to address equalities related employment and student issues
- Ensuring that pastoral support and student behaviour policies reinforce the School's approach to EDI and that appropriate actions are taken in respect of any student breaches
- Monitor the use of language throughout the School to ensure that there is no unconscious/conscious discrimination

4.6 Students are responsible for:

- Upholding the principles of this policy, treating others with dignity at all times without regard to their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religious belief or age
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity

4.7 Members of staff are responsible for:

- Upholding and implementing the aims of this policy, and promoting equality of opportunity
- Ensuring that all students and staff are encouraged to respect and value each other
- Contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity
- Making the curriculum accessible to all students, addressing their individual needs and abilities and enabling them to realise their full potential
- Providing guidance and advice that avoids stereotypes and enables students to make informed choices to help them reach their full potential and understand that the decisions they make are important determinants to their success and well-being
- Incorporating guidelines for Equal Opportunities into primary practice

- Ensuring that they use materials for all areas of the Curriculum that avoid stereotyping or bias
- Ensuring that time, attention and resources are shared equally across all students in the class
- Taking positive action to address any instances of discrimination in a sensitive manner

SECTION 5 - COMMUNICATION

The Policy is publicly available on the School website.

SECTION 6 – BREACH OF THE POLICY

- 6.1 The School will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the Policy by students, staff, contractors or visitors. Any instances of non-adherence will be investigated with the intent of resolving matters. Where appropriate, such instances may be considered under the relevant disciplinary/behaviour policy and procedures.
- 6.2 The School strongly encourages informal and local resolution of issues or complaints and will seek mediation services to support staff and students when necessary.
- 6.3 Where appropriate, all student and staff complaints about breaches of the Policy should be raised at a local level in the first instance, with a view to informal and timely resolution. If such attempts to resolve complaints are not successful, or are inappropriate due to the nature of the breach of the Policy, then:
- students who believe there has been a breach of the Policy in relation to the provision of a service or facility provided by the School may raise this through their Form Tutor;
 - instances of students breaching the Policy may be investigated under the student Behaviour Policy;
 - employees who believe there has been a breach of this policy may raise this through the Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Support is available for students and staff when these procedures are invoked. For students, support is available from the pastoral team. For staff, advice and guidance is available from their manager, union representative or The Bursar.
- 6.4 Any visitor or service user (other than students) who believes there has been a breach of this policy may complain in writing to the Bursar.

SECTION 7 – CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 7.1 The School acknowledges that individuals may want to keep information about their protected characteristics confidential. The School will keep secure and confidential, information about a student's or staff member's protected characteristic in accordance with its Data Protection Policy (subject to any prevailing legal obligation to disclose a person's personal data, for example, where a court order requires disclosure or where the School is obliged to disclose confidential information in accordance with its safeguarding duties).
- 7.2 In certain circumstances, the School will, with the consent of a student, wish to share information with staff, students, and/or parents or guardians in the best interest of that student.

SECTION 8 - DOCUMENT GOVERNANCE

- 8.1 This policy is owned by the Board of Directors, but any requirement to update/amend falls to the office of the Bursar.
- 8.2 The policy will be reviewed by the Bursar in response to statutory changes, changes in School procedures or structures or as a result of the monitoring of the application of the policy. In any event, the policy will be reviewed every two years.

Appendix 1: Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	
Age	The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.
Disability	Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender Reassignment	The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change their gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. Where transsexual people are absent from work or study because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, it is discrimination to treat them less favourably than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.
Pregnancy and Maternity	A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled.
Race	For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or Belief	In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.
Sex	Both men and women are protected under the Act.
Sexual Orientation	The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) and heterosexual people.

Appendix 2: Equality Act 2010 Prohibited Behaviours

Prohibited Conduct	
Direct Discrimination	<p>Section 13 of the Act defines direct discrimination to be where people are treated less favourably than others on grounds related to their identity as one of the protected groups (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation).</p> <p>The definition of direct discrimination extends protection based on association and perception.</p>
Discrimination by Association	<p>Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.</p>
Discrimination by Perception / Perception Discrimination	<p>Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.</p>
Indirect Discrimination	<p>Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.</p> <p>Section 19 of the Act defines indirect discrimination as occurring when a provision, criterion or practice is neutral on the face of it, but its impact particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic, unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Ultimately, if tested, it will be for a court of law or tribunal to determine what is justifiable.</p>
Discrimination Arising from Disability	<p>This can occur when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their impairment and the treatment cannot be justified.</p>
Failure to make Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled People	<p>The Equality Act 2010 places a duty upon organisations to make reasonable adjustments for staff, students and service users in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provisions, criteria or practices • physical features • auxiliary aids <p>These adjustments apply where a disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people.</p>
Bullying	<p>Bullying is defined as offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power which undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient.</p> <p>The behaviour is unwelcome and may be carried out as a deliberate act or unconsciously.</p>
Harassment	<p>Harassment is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Section 27 of the Act defines victimisation as less favourable treatment of someone because they have made or might make a complaint about discrimination under one of the above Protected Group categories.</p> <p>An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.</p>