

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS POLICY**

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of our school. We welcome applications from candidates of diverse backgrounds. This diversity enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish.

Our School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity. We recognise the importance of all pupils being able to learn effectively within the learning spectrum of our School, we make provision for pupils with special needs and disabilities, and we refer parents to our *Disability Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Learning Support Policy, English as An Additional Language Policy, Gifted and Talented Pupils Policy and Enrichment Policy*

Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School. (Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website and in the *Parent and Pupil Handbook*).

### **Code of Conduct**

The Headmistress, the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Section, the Form Tutors and others with pastoral responsibilities, the Housemistresses, the Religious Life Coordinator and the School Nurse all play an active role in monitoring the implementation of our School's policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies and PSHEE, RE, Drama, English and other lessons to:

- promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protective characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues
- foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures, and to recognise also bias and prejudice
- understand why and how we shall deal with offensive language and behaviour
- understand that we shall deal with any complaints promptly and in a sensitive manner

Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable. Our *Behaviour Management Policy* and *Anti-Bullying Policy* contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination. All our staff receive anti-discrimination training.

A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from parents and education guardians, and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

### **Monitoring**

Our school monitors its equal opportunities policy as required.

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

Most pupils for whom English is not their first language will nevertheless, by the time of their admission, have had some experience of learning English as an additional language. Whatever the level of proficiency, pupils are supported, in particular by subject teachers, in and out of lessons in the development of their language skills. Specialist tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) is available within the Extra Tuition programme, fees for which are additional to the main school fees (details as given in the annual fee schedules).

### **Mass, Assembly, Form Prayers and Religious Education lessons**

All pupils attend Mass, assembly, form prayers and Religious Education lessons. Our common languages are English and Catholicism, and these languages unite our school community. We aim not to exclude pupils and nor do we expect any pupil to be excluded by self or by a parent. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of their own faith and language(s) within the international setting of the school. Feast days, fasting and times for prayer 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 Variation in the School Uniform**

Parents should be aware that all pupils at our School are required to wear uniform, until Sixth Form, when a dress code operates for Years 12 and 13. The Headmistress will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious or gender grounds that are consistent with the School's ethos and its policy on *Health and Safety*. The Headmistress may take expert advice, and will normally arrange to meet with the pupil's parent(s) to discuss the implications of such a request.

### **Complaints**

We hope that any query arising under this policy may be resolved informally. If you have any complaint about the operation of our *Equal Opportunities Policy*, or wish to raise a matter formally, please refer to the school's *Complaints Procedures* (as given in the *Parent and Pupil Handbook* and on the website).

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