

The St Michael Steiner School

Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

We recognise and value the fact that our school is part of a multicultural society and believe that the atmosphere of respect for others, which our ethos seeks to foster, creates a culture in which discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation are totally unacceptable.

We appreciate people's diversity and value their differences and strive to ensure that our teaching meets all of their needs.

We treat all employees fairly and with dignity and respect regardless of their employment status and value the contribution they make to the school.

Our selection, recruitment, training and development processes ensure that candidates are selected for their aptitude and ability.

We give all employees equal opportunities in the workplace regardless of their age, religion or belief, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation or transgender status.

We strive to deal quickly, thoroughly and confidentially with any discriminatory attitudes we encounter in the school and its community.

We wish to offer an educational environment that is open to all and our policies comply with the Equality Act (2010) and The Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect in October 2010 and in doing so consolidated and streamlined a huge amount of existing legislation, much of which had been developed over the last 40 years. As well as reforming discrimination law into a single Act, it also strengthened the law to support the country's progress on equality.

The Equality Act 2010 details a list of 'protected characteristics'; these are the grounds upon which it is unlawful to discriminate against people.

Protected characteristics are:

- age
- marriage and civil partnership
- sex
- disability
- race
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- religion or belief (or lack thereof)
- pregnancy and maternity.

These protected characteristics are very important when issues of discrimination arise.

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2011

Since 2011, public sector organisations (local authorities, hospitals, educational settings, the police etc) are required to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other behaviour that is unlawful.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic, as well as those who do not share one.

The main types of discrimination

The main types of discrimination are:

- direct discrimination (including perceptive and associative discrimination)
- indirect discrimination
- victimisation
- harassment.

Direct discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (perceptive discrimination), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (associative discrimination).

Perceptive discrimination 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.

Associative discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses any one or more of the protected characteristics.

Indirect discrimination can happen when there's a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Victimisation

Most of us will understand the word victimisation to mean singling someone out for exploitation or unfair treatment. For the purposes of this course, in this context, it is when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Harassment

The law defines harassment as:

“unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.”

Whistle blowing

If any member of the school community experiences or witnesses discrimination as defined by this policy, they should follow the school’s Whistle-blowing policy. Alternatively, the designated College member for Equality & Diversity is: Stella Ottewill