



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This policy is a 'Whole School Policy' and informs practice in the Senior School, Prep School and Nursery. Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Battle Abbey School. We welcome applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish. For EYFS pupils, please see the separate policy 'EYFS – Equality of Opportunity Policy'.
2. The School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, sex, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, learning difficulty, body image, pregnancy, maternity or social background. We believe that the educational experience can only be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing. We also welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our Special Education Needs (SEN) and Disability Policies.
3. Generous 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 web site or obtained from the Bursar's office.

### **LEGAL AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

4. Schools have a legal duty to uphold the law on equal opportunities for pupils and staff alike. Under paragraph 3 of the Independent Schools Regulatory Requirements (quality of education provided) teaching at the school must not discriminate against pupils contrary to part 6 of the Equality Act 2010. In addition, paragraph 5 of the regulations (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils) requires schools to ensure that principles are actively promoted which... (vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Attention is also drawn to the explanatory notes in paragraphs 39, 40, 56, 57, 65, 66 and 189. It must be stressed that if Battle Abbey School was seen to be deficient in any of these areas, the adverse publicity could be serious. Extensive guidance on equal opportunities in the employment context can be found in the Staff Handbook.
5. The DfE has published advice for school staff and governing bodies in 'The Equality Act 2010 and Schools' published in May 2014 and details are at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf). This document covers, amongst other matters, general expectations relating to admissions and the curriculum and special issues relating to single sex sport, religion, etc.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

6. The Head, Senior Leadership Team, Senior Management Team, pastoral staff, and teaching staff play an active role in monitoring the implementation of the School's policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHE, RE, Drama, English and other lessons to:

- Promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the School community.
- 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.
- Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

7. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable and our Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination. All our staff receive anti-discrimination training and equal opportunities training during regular INSET and this also covers the DfE guidance at para 5 above. Teaching and medical staff attend regular INSET sessions on the subject. However, a successful equal opportunities policy also requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

### **MONITORING**

8. The School monitors its equal opportunities policy regularly and reports to the Full Court annually in order to ensure its effectiveness. As part of that process, the School completes the DfE and ISI ethnicity census returns. Under no circumstances would we link our ethnic monitoring data with our pupil records.

### **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

9. In order to cope with the high academic and social demands of the School, pupils must be fluent English speakers. Normally pupils should have been educated in the English medium for at least 2 years before coming to the School; however, this is not appropriate for EYFS pupils. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense.

### **REQUESTS FOR VARIATION IN THE SCHOOL UNIFORM**

10. Although the School has Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths and offer the opportunity for pupils to practice their own faiths. However, parents should be aware that all pupils are required to wear a uniform until Year 11, and that a strict 'business dress' code operates for Years 12 and 13. The Head Master 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 Master may take expert advice, and will normally arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

### **COMPLAINTS**

11. We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about the operation of our equal opportunities policy; but copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request.