



Donhead Preparatory School

Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff

Donhead Preparatory School is committed to providing equality of opportunity, dignity and respect for all staff and applicants. This policy applies to recruitment, employment, training, promotion, working arrangements, conduct at work and the ending of employment.

The School will not unlawfully discriminate against staff, job applicants or others because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The School will also seek to prevent discrimination arising from perception or association.

The School will keep its employment practices under review so that policies and procedures are fair, transparent and objective, and so that any conditions or requirements which could disadvantage staff or applicants can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

No member of staff or prospective member of staff will receive unfair or unlawful treatment because of a protected characteristic, because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, including in relation to:

- Recruitment and selection
- Promotion, transfer & training opportunities
- Benefits, terms and conditions of employment
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Termination of employment including redundancies
- Conduct at work
- Fair and equitable treatment in the School's working environment and employment procedures.

The principles of non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and dignity at work apply to the way in which staff treat colleagues, pupils, parents, visitors, volunteers, governors, contractors, suppliers and former members of staff.

Implementation

The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy, supported by senior leaders and the Bursar where appropriate. Governors or trustees retain oversight of the policy as part of the School's wider employment, safeguarding and compliance framework. All staff are expected to act in accordance with this policy.

- Identify and remove, where reasonably practicable, barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff from realising their potential or accessing employment benefits.
- Advertise vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.

- Ensure staff are made aware of this policy through induction, the staff handbook or policy portal, relevant staff briefings and periodic policy review.
- Monitor workforce and recruitment information where lawful and appropriate, handling any personal data confidentially and in line with data protection requirements.
- Review procedures to ensure they are not discriminatory in their design or operation.
- Use language in official communications that reflects the letter and spirit of this policy.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection will be conducted in accordance with the School's Safer Recruitment Policy, relevant safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education. The process will be based on objective criteria, the requirements of the role and the suitability of the candidate to work safely and effectively in a school environment.

- The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the major selection criterion but the ability both to work with others and to be trained, coupled with individual potential, will be taken into account.
- All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.
- Appointments will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, including references, identity, right to work, qualifications where relevant, medical fitness, DBS and barred list checks where required, prohibition checks where applicable, and any other checks required by the School's safer recruitment procedures. The School may consider publicly available online information about shortlisted candidates where this is relevant to safeguarding or suitability and in accordance with its recruitment privacy information.

Disability

If a member of staff is disabled or becomes disabled, they are encouraged to tell the School so that appropriate support and reasonable adjustments can be considered. Disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant. Reasonable adjustments will be made to recruitment and selection arrangements where required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of disability.

A member of staff who experiences difficulties at work because of disability should contact the Headteacher, or another appropriate senior leader where the matter concerns the Headteacher, to discuss reasonable adjustments. The School may consult the member of staff and, with consent where required, seek occupational health or medical advice. The School will consider requests carefully, explain any decision, and review agreed adjustments at appropriate intervals.

Reasonable adjustments may include changes to working arrangements, duties, equipment, working hours, access to premises or other support, depending on the circumstances and the needs of the role.

Where, during employment, a member of staff recognises that they may need a reasonable adjustment, they should raise this as soon as possible with the Headteacher or another appropriate senior leader.

Dignity at Work

All staff have the right to work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Staff must not engage in conduct which may amount to harassment, bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Such conduct may be treated as a disciplinary matter and, in serious cases, may amount to gross misconduct.

Harassment may include unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, or other unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can include verbal, written, physical, visual or online conduct, including messages, social media activity, jokes, banter, gestures, images, exclusion, unfair allocation of work, bullying, intimidation, persistent teasing or unfounded criticism. A single serious incident may amount to harassment.

Procedure

- If a member of staff considers that they have experienced discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, they may try to resolve the matter informally where it is safe and appropriate to do so. If informal resolution is not appropriate or has not been successful, the concern should be raised under the School's Grievance Policy or other relevant procedure. Concerns will be handled sensitively, confidentially so far as reasonably practicable, and without unreasonable delay.
- Concerns should normally be raised with the Headteacher. If the concern relates to the Headteacher, or if raising it with the Headteacher would not be appropriate, the member of staff should use the alternative route set out in the Grievance Policy, such as contacting the Chair of Governors or trustees.
- The School will seek to ensure that a person is not victimised or otherwise penalised for raising a concern in good faith, supporting a complaint, giving evidence or participating in an investigation.
- False or malicious allegations may be treated as a disciplinary matter. Retaliation against a member of staff who raises or supports a concern may also lead to disciplinary action.

Updated October 2026. This policy is subject to annual review and should be read alongside the School's Safer Recruitment Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Data Protection Policy.