

MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY
& DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY SCHEME**

September 2011

Chair of Governors

Date

Headmaster

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AND
DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY SCHEME

1. INTRODUCTION

Maidstone Grammar School is a Foundation School. However, the Governors of the School agreed that the School would continue to follow the policies laid down by Kent County Council. This is the case in terms of the School's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement.

The Governors are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment. Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right and we will exercise leadership and commitment in promoting this right.

Diversity is a strength and we will value and harness difference for the benefit the students, staff and parents of the school. We are committed to ensuring that current and potential students, employees or job applicants will not be discriminated against on the grounds of social circumstances or background, gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sexuality, age, or religion.

The principles of tolerance and understanding and respect for others are central to what we believe.

2. GENDER (sex)

The Governing body will eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex and promote equality of opportunity between women and men on our staff. The Governing body will revise and review the plan every 3 years and report on progress annually.

3. DISABILITY

The governing body through the Headmaster and Senior Staff will:

- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people: students, staff, parents, carers and other people who use the school or may wish to; and
- Prepare and publish a disability equality scheme to show how they will meet these duties
- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum;

- Improve the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled students can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Improve the delivery to disabled students of information, which is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

4. RACE

The governing body will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups

To meet this requirement the governing body will

- identify action to be taken to tackle discrimination and promote equality and good race relations across school activity.
- assess and monitor the impact of race equality policies on students, staff, and parents, in particular the attainment levels of students from different racial groups, and take such steps as are reasonably practical to publish the results of this monitoring annually
- record racist incidents and report them to the local authority on a regular basis.

The school will contact the local authority for advice on the format, process and frequency of reporting as required.

5. RELIGION OR BELIEF AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The governing body will not tolerate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation and unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief.

6. OPERATIONAL MATTERS IN THE SCHOOL

6.1 Admissions: The School admits pupils irrespective of their gender, race, creed, disability or special educational needs, provided that they meet the criteria in the School's Admission Policy, without unduly prejudicing the education and welfare of other pupils.

6.2 Curriculum: The curriculum will encourage students to question assumptions and stereotypes regarding gender, race, creed, disability, and sexual orientation.

6.3 Relationships between Individuals: Each child or adult is expected to treat others without regard to their race, nationality, religion, gender, social class, accent, physical appearance or any disability except where common decency and consideration dictate.

6.4 Age: Everyone at the school, regardless of their age, is entitled to equal respect, and their interests shall be considered equally, save in those situations covered by the Children Act 1989 where the interests of a child are paramount. Adults and older children are expected to show responsibility in accordance with their age

and experience. Age may be taken into account, along with other factors, when admitting students (recommended age is 11-19).

6.5 Appointment of Staff: The School appoints staff irrespective of their race, gender (except where privacy is a consideration), disability, or sexual orientation.

6.6 Building Access: The School is committed to providing wheelchair access wherever practicable.

6.7 Religious Observance: There is no compulsory worship in the School and although there is be no attempt to proselytise for a particular religion there will be hymns and prayers at Big Hall assemblies which are held most days. Students are encouraged to explore their spiritual beliefs freely and to question religious dogma as they see appropriate.

6.8 Consultation and Complaints: Any breach of the equal opportunities principles shall be regarded as a serious matter and be submitted to formal complaint processing. In addition, the School encourages an open dialogue regarding all School matters and staff and students are encouraged to contribute their views informally as well. There are several informal opportunities, including weekly staff briefings, staff meetings, student councils, tutor meetings, Heads of Department Meetings, Student Services Department Meetings, Support Staff Managers Meetings etc.

6.9 Monitoring: Equal opportunities practice is to be monitored once a year by the SMT. Concerns raised will be discussed with the Governors and the wider constituency as a whole.

7. EQUALITY SCHEME

The Governing Body has started the process of producing the school's Equality Scheme. This is to meet the duties to promote equality of opportunity for and between diverse members of the school community, including, disabled students, staff, parents, women, men and different racial groups within the school. In order to do this the school will:

- Ensure that the Health and Safety Committee works to promote the equality scheme
- Ensure that all staff have an overall vision of the duty to promote equality of opportunity for pupils, staff and parents.

Elements of the duties upon the School are:

1. Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people, women and men and between different racial groups.
2. Eliminate discrimination and harassment on the grounds of disability, sex, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion or beliefs.
3. Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.
4. Encourage participation of disabled students, parents, staff and carers.
5. Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

7.1 Action by School Management Team (SMT) responsible for the Equality Scheme:

- Raise awareness of elements of the duties with all staff, governors, parents and students.
- Refer to 'Implementing the DDA in Schools' published by the Disability Rights Commission
- Ensure understanding of the broad definition of disability within the DDA.
- Encourage disclosure of disability by pupils, parents, staff and other users of the school.
- Refer to 'The Gender Equality Duty and Schools' published by the Equal Opportunities Commission
- Work with trade unions to implement the gender duty in employment functions
- Create separate action plans for each equality duty highlighting links as appropriate.
- Carry out, as necessary, Impact Assessments as part of the wider review of policies.
- Delegate to the Health and Safety Committee the responsibility for the following key functions:
 - To ensure the involvement of disabled pupils, parents/carers and staff regarding the disability equality duty.
 - To ensure the involvement of trade unions regarding the gender equality duty.
 - To arrange for the gathering of information.
 - To consider arrangements for race, disability and gender impact assessments.

7.2 The governing body will use the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 definition of disability to respond to the different needs of disabled people.

Definition of disability

The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has:

'A physical or mental impairment which has a **substantial and long-term adverse effect** on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'

Definition of the terms:

- 'physical impairment' includes sensory impairments;
- 'mental impairment' includes learning difficulties and an impairment resulting from or consisting of a mental illness;
- 'substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'; and
- 'long-term' is defined as 12 months or more.

The definition includes a wide range of impairments, including hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism, speech and language impairments, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These are all likely to amount to a disability, but only if the effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is substantial and long-term, as defined above.

The effect on normal day-to-day activities is on one or more of the following:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- perception of risk of physical danger.

Some people are automatically covered by the definition: those with cancer, multiple sclerosis, HIV infection or a severe disfigurement. There are special provisions for people with progressive or recurring conditions.

7.3 Involvement of pupils, staff, parents and other users of the school.

The school will consider and plan to involve students, staff, parents and other users of the school in relation to the race, disability and gender equality duty.

The school will continue to take into account the preferred means of communication for those with whom they are consulting.

The school will ensure the involvement of a range of people and hear a range of views to meet the disability, gender and race equality duties.

The views of the students, staff, parents, trade unions and other users of the school will be used to set priorities.

7.4 Information gathering

The collection of information is crucial to supporting Maidstone Grammar School in making decisions about what actions would best improve opportunities and outcomes for students, staff and parents. The information will also subsequently help us to review our performance. Information will be detailed enough to enable us to measure the delivery on equality duties relating to disability, race and gender, to assess the impact of the changes made and to help the school us identify which of our priorities have been achieved.

7.5 Information to Be Gathered

- Recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees, women and men from different racial backgrounds.
- Education opportunities available to and achievement of disabled, female and male pupils and pupils from different racial backgrounds.
- Identify disabled students, parents, carers, staff and other users of the school to develop the Scheme(All efforts to be made to collect information)
- The SMT recommends how the information is held in school, and how it interlinks with other registers. E.g. Does the school have just one school profile with differing levels of access? Confidentiality and need to know clauses are required.

- Student attainment of boys and girls taking into account that certain groups of boys may do as well as girls.
- Careers and sports choices of both genders
- Bullying and harassment on the grounds of gender, disability and race.

7.6 Impact assessments.

Impact assessments refers to the review of all current and proposed policies and practices in order to help schools act to ensure no gender, racial group or disabled person is disadvantaged by school activities and to promote race, disability and gender equality. Impact assessments will be an on-going process to ensure that our policies and practices develop, evolve and are incorporated into the school's planned review and revision of every policy. Every new policy or procedure will be drawn up with regard to our duties to promote race, disability and gender equality and to eliminate discrimination and harassment within the school community.

8 IDENTIFYING THE MAIN PRIORITIES FOR THE SCHOOL'S SCHEME AND DECIDING THE ACTIONS

8.1 The priorities for Maidstone Grammar school's scheme will be set in the light of:

- an examination of the information that the school has gathered; and
- the messages that the school receives from the disabled students, staff, parents and trade unions.

8.2 The priorities identified may include:

- Improving access to information;
- Maintaining the involvement of disabled students, staff and parents
- Challenging gender stereotypes in subject choices and career advice
- Health, sport and obesity differences between girls linked to girls reduced likelihood of taking part in physical education and sport compared to boys.
- Tackling sexual and sexist bullying of boys and girls such as applies to a school with girls only in the sixth form
- Employment and considering any gender pay gap

9 MAKING IT HAPPEN

9.1 Implementation

The Scheme is supported by individual action plans relating to disability, gender and race equality an, where appropriate, be incorporated into the School Development Plan, with oversight by the governing body so that progress can be checked.

The Action plans will show:

- clear allocation of lead responsibility;
- clear allocation of resources;
- an indication of expected outcomes or performance criteria;
- clear timescales;
- a specified date and process for review.

The Scheme reflects the requirements of the Accessibility Plans of 2003 and 2006. The SMT will evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme as will Ofsted when the school is inspected.

9.2 Publication

The SMT will decide how best to publish the Equality Scheme. The school will provide access to the policy via the School's website.

9.3 Reporting

The school will report annually on the progress made on the action plans and its effect on policy and practice within the school.

9.4 Reviewing and revising the scheme

As part of the review of the Scheme, the school will:

- revisit the information that was used to identify the priorities for the scheme; and
- re-examine the information to see if actions that the school has taken have affected opportunities and outcomes for disabled students, staff and parents, diverse racial groups and both genders.

The review of the Scheme will inform its revision; how the school sets new priorities and new action plans for the next scheme. This process will continue to:

- involve students, staff and parents; and
- be based on information that the school has gathered.

The main documents that will inform the development of this scheme are:

- Disability Equality in Education Course Book, Richard Rieser
- Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early years settings, DFES
- Promoting Disability Equality in Schools, DfES Guidance.
- The Gender Equality Duty and Schools, EOC guidance

9.5 Action Plans

The School's Action Plan is attached.