



# Shebbear College

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### Whole School Policy from EYFS to Sixth Form

Reviewed and ratified by the Governing Body on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Next Review - November 2019

### INTRODUCTION

Shebbear College prides itself on being an inclusive, tolerant organisation and a diverse community; it is firmly committed to promoting equal opportunities for all current and prospective members of the community, whether they be Staff or pupils. It is committed to providing an environment that is free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability or religious beliefs and aims to create the conditions whereby pupils and Staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits and potential.

### 1. Pupils

i) Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of the College. 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.

ii) The College is committed to equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or disability. We are a non-selective school and we believe that the educational experience is enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.

iii) We welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs (SEN), learning difficulties, and disability.

iv) Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the College's admission criteria to attend the College. As the College is a Methodist school, a limited number of these bursaries are only available to children of Methodist families.

Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the Registrar.

v) Further details on how the College manages admissions are set out in the Admissions Policy.

### 1.1 Code of Conduct

i) The Headmaster, SMT, pastoral staff, house masters/mistresses, the Chaplain and the medical staff play an active role in monitoring the implementation of the College'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 College 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.

ii) Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable; our behavioural management and anti-bullying policies contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination. As part of their inset training, teaching staff receive training on recognising and responding to discrimination and harassment.

iii) A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from parent and guardians, and full acceptance of the College's ethos of tolerance and respect. The College therefore expects parents and guardians to support and honour this policy.

### 1.2 Access

Owing to the nature of the College's buildings, not all rooms are fully accessible. Where necessary, the rooming timetable will be reasonably adjusted (whether temporarily or permanently) in order to allow pupils equality of opportunity.

### 1.3 English as an Additional Language

For some overseas pupils, lack of fluency in the English language is a problem and a potential barrier to a full curricular entitlement. The College's policy is to ensure that such pupils have an appropriate curriculum, but that this will include EAL lessons whose purpose is to encourage and develop the individual's English skills to enable that person to have

access to a full curriculum and be fully integrated within the community. Additional EAL lessons can be arranged at the parent's expense.

#### 1.4 Collective Worship & Curriculum

As a Methodist school the College's acts of collective worship (school assemblies) reflect the Methodist faith. The Headmaster will consider written requests from parents for pupils to be excused from such acts of worship. The Headmaster may take expert advice, and where necessary meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

The law about religious discrimination does not apply to the curriculum. Whilst the curriculum across the College reflects the Methodist ethos, the College aims to cover a wide range of religious beliefs in its teaching.

#### 1.5 Requests for Variation in the School Uniform

Although the College has Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths. However, parents should be aware that all pupils are required to wear a uniform until Year 12, and that a strict dress code operates for Years 12 and 13.

The Headmaster will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the College's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Headmaster may take expert advice, and where necessary meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

#### 1.6 Complaints

We hope that parents do not have any complaints about the operation of our equal opportunities policy; but copies of the College's complaints procedure is available on the College website or can be provided to parents or guardians on request.

## **2. Employees:**

Shebbear College is an equal opportunities employer.

i) In order to promote an environment within which the College can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skill and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, we are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age, and disability (together known as "Protected Characteristics").

ii) To this end, SMT shall regularly review the operation of the College's recruitment, promotion, training and development policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of Staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

iii) No employee or volunteer or prospective employee or volunteer will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds 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, in particular but not only, 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

iv) The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which Staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

v) The College is a Methodist school and is registered with the Secretary of State as being of a designated religious character. This may be taken into account when recruiting teaching staff where appropriate to do so.

## 2.1 Implementation

The College with the assistance of the Staff will:

- i) Break down any barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members realising their full potential.
- ii) Advertise vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- iii) Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.
- iv) Ensure that all members of Staff are fully informed and trained on this policy.
- v) Monitor the composition of the College and the effects of its recruitment practices.
- vi) Existing procedures are reviewed and examined to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation
- vii) Language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy.

## 2.2 Recruitment and Selection

The staffing process is governed by the College's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between, on the one hand, the individual's knowledge and skills, experience and character and, on the other hand, the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

- i) 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.
- ii) All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.

iii) Carefully selected and validated skills and/or psychometric tests may be used as part of the selection process and will be administered by a trained tester.

iv) Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of satisfactory references and DBS checks (and in the absence of prohibition orders) and/or medical report and/or satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

For specific roles and only where necessary, the College will apply the exceptions permitted under the Equality Act to the recruitment process. For example, the College would not appoint a male tutor to work in the female boarding house; nor would it be appropriate to appoint someone under the age of 21 as a tutor in a senior boarding house.

### 2.3 Disability

i) If a member of Staff is disabled or becomes disabled, we encourage them to inform their line manager about their condition so that the College can support them as appropriate.

ii) A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the College. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability.

iii) If a member of Staff experiences difficulties at work because of any disability, they should contact the Deputy Head - Pastoral (in the case of teaching staff) or their line manager (for non-teaching staff) to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. If the Headmaster considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable the reasons will be explained to the member of Staff and the College will try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

iv) The College will make such adjustments to work arrangements or school premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This could include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign and/or flexible hours.

v) Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, he or she should discuss this requirement with the Bursar, the Deputy Head – Pastoral or the Headmaster.

### 2.4 Dignity at Work

i) Staff should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant dismissal.

ii) Harassment may take the form of unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which is perceived as affecting an employee's dignity at work. It may also take the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on their appearance or other personal characteristics which is perceived as affecting their dignity at work. It is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter. Harassment may include

bullying, intimidatory behaviour, persistent teasing or constant unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks, unfair allocation of work and responsibilities, or exclusion from normal work place conversation. It may be directed towards one individual or a group. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.