



Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Whole School including EYFS)

Independent Day School

Our Lady of Sion School

First edition: May 2025

Frequency of Review: Annually

Next Review Due: May 2026

1. Statement of intent

Our Lady of Sion School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which individuals are empowered to make the best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We are committed to supporting our staff and applicants to be their authentic selves in the workplace without judgement and ensuring that diverse communities are celebrated.

We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics), in line with the Equality Act 2010. More detail on each of the protected characteristics can be found in Appendix A.

We are also mindful of intersecting identities within our school environment and will work with our community to better understand the experience of multiple minority identities for individuals.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, treating colleagues with dignity and respect at all times. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff interact with parents, governors, third-party organisations, and former staff members.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including members of the SLT, teachers, TAs, learning mentors, support staff, trainees, home workers, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers, and agency staff (collectively referred to as 'staff').

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Appraisal of Teaching Staff Policy

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3. Principles Underlying This Policy

The school is committed to:

- Creating a working environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, where individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued.
- Promoting dignity and respect for all.
- Training all employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures regularly to ensure fairness and compliance.

This policy applies to all aspects of the school's relationship with staff, including recruitment and selection, training and development, promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

Instances of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination will be treated as misconduct under the relevant school policies and may lead to disciplinary action.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Board:

- Ensure effective operation of this policy.
- Ensure compliance with discrimination law.
- Monitor workforce composition and review policy effectiveness annually.

SLT:

- Lead by example and ensure adherence to the policy.
- Make development opportunities available to all.
- Base progression decisions on merit.

Head of HR:

- Maintain day-to-day responsibility for policy implementation.
- Organise training and review policy regularly.

Line Managers:

- Participate in equal opportunities training.
- Implement fair and inclusive practices within teams.

All Staff:

- Promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination.
- Take concerns about discrimination seriously.
- Understand liability under the law for unlawful actions at work

5. Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably due to a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice disadvantages people with a protected characteristic unless it can be justified.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates a hostile environment.

Victimisation is treating someone less favourably because they have complained or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

6. Recruitment and Selection

The school ensures that recruitment is fair, consistent and non-discriminatory. Job criteria and adverts are reviewed to avoid bias, and applicants are shortlisted based on merit.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability prior to a job offer, except where legally permitted. Any data collected for equal opportunities monitoring is anonymised and separated from the selection process.

All prospective employees must provide appropriate documentation to confirm the right to work in the UK.

7. Training, Promotion and Conditions of Service

Training needs and progression opportunities are identified through regular appraisals. Promotion decisions are made on merit. The school monitors diversity in recruitment, promotion, and retention to ensure equality and representation.

Conditions of service, benefits and facilities are regularly reviewed for fairness and inclusivity.

8. Termination of Employment

Redundancy and disciplinary procedures are applied fairly and without discrimination, in accordance with relevant school policies.

9. Disability Discrimination

We encourage staff to disclose disabilities so we can support them appropriately. Reasonable adjustments will be considered in consultation with the individual and, if necessary, medical professionals. The physical environment is monitored for accessibility and adjustments made where feasible.

10. Part-time, Zero Hours, Fixed-term and Agency Staff

These staff groups will have fair access to training, benefits, and progression. Requests to alter working patterns are considered in line with the Flexible Working Policy.

11. Breaches of this Policy

Staff are encouraged to raise concerns through the Grievance Policy or to HR. Allegations will be treated confidentially and investigated fairly. No staff member will suffer negative consequences for raising a concern in good faith.

False allegations made maliciously will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Head of HR and the Governing Board will review this policy annually. Staff are encouraged to offer feedback on the policy to support continuous improvement.

Next review due: May 2026

Appendix A Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

Age: People of all ages are protected. Direct age discrimination may be lawful if it is objectively justified.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

Gender Identity/Reassignment: Protection is extended to transgender individuals, regardless of medical status.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: Protection for individuals who are legally married or in a civil partnership.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Protection during pregnancy and statutory maternity leave.

Race: Includes colour, nationality, ethnic and national origins.

Religion or Belief: Includes religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as lack of belief.

Sex: Protection applies to all sexes.

Sexual Orientation: Protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual individuals.