

Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy

This policy applies to all members of staff, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, volunteers and to job applicants.

1. The School's Commitment

The School is an Equal Opportunities employer and is committed to using its best endeavours to ensure that all of its activities in recruitment, selection, employment and in relation to its provision of services are governed by the principles of equality of opportunity, whilst ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff and volunteers must treat fellow colleagues, pupils, and former members of staff.

Royal Russell School welcomes diversity among its staff, volunteers and pupils, recognising the particular contributions to the achievement of the School's strategic priorities and mission which can be made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Royal Russell aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning, social and public environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff, volunteers and anyone in contact with the School are respected.

For ease of reading, a summary of the employment law on equality and some definitions have been included in sections 6 and 7 of this policy.

2. Principles

This policy applies (but is not limited) to advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, to opportunities for promotion, to benefits, terms and conditions of service, facilities and pay, to health and safety, to conduct at work, to grievance, capability and disciplinary procedures, and to termination of employment.

In order to support its commitment as an Equal Opportunities employer, the School will gather personal information about job applicants in order to ensure our recruitment processes are being carried out fairly and without discrimination. The information gathered will be treated in the strictest confidence and recorded and retained in the HR department in line with data protection principles. Information provided by applicants on equal opportunities monitoring forms will not be seen by staff directly involved in any recruitment.

In order to realise its commitment to equality of opportunity and dignity at work, the School will:

- Promote the aims of this policy.
- Promote equality and good relations between people who share a relevant "protected characteristic" and people who do not share it (See section 6 for definition).
- Be proactive in eliminating discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying, through training and the production, dissemination and review of its policies, codes of practice and guidance.
- Have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation and for its policies, codes of practice and guidance to mirror the same and be changed to meet the demands of new legislation.

- Whilst acknowledging that they are not legally binding, have regard to any Codes of Practice issued or adopted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Make this policy, and guidance, available to all job applicants and staff.
- Review regularly the terms of this policy as part of its regular cycle of policy review.
- Monitor the composition of the School workforce and the effects of its recruitment practices
- Ensure language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy
- Carry out an annual Gender Pay Gap analysis, publish the results and implement an action plan to address any issues highlighted by the report

3. Dignity at Work

The School is committed to protecting its members of staff and pupils from any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour which might inhibit them from pursuing their work or studies. The School will view seriously any action which runs contrary to these principles, ensuring an environment in which the dignity of members of staff, pupils and volunteers is respected.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Procedure. Conduct of this type will often be treated as gross misconduct which can lead to dismissal without notice.

Harassment may be broadly understood as consisting of unwarranted behaviour or conduct which is related to a relevant protected characteristic which is perceived by a member of staff as affecting their dignity at work. It may also include the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on their appearance or other personal characteristics which they perceive as affecting their dignity at work and which may be impacting on their mental or physical health. It is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter.

Bullying may be directed towards one individual or a group and is often based on misuse of power. It includes physical, mental or verbal behaviours which may be passive, obvious and public or subtle and hidden, face to face or via telephone, email, text or social networking and includes cyberbullying/trolling). Examples include 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. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Procedure

Any member of staff who considers they have been the recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment, bullying or victimisation (whether a one-off event or a series of events) may wish to try and resolve the matter informally with the other person, either face to face or in writing. They may seek the assistance of a colleague in this and if possible, they should tell the other person what behaviour or conduct they find unacceptable, offensive or unwelcome, and ask the person to stop it immediately. Staff are advised to keep a note of any conversations held. If this approach is not appropriate, or has not been successful in resolving matters, the informal or formal procedures set out in the School's Grievance Procedure should be used which will include an investigation by a senior manager from another department into the issues raised. As a result of this investigation further action may then take place under the School's Disciplinary Procedure. In extreme circumstances the employee suspected of bullying/harassment or the employee raising the complaint may be suspended on full pay, or temporarily redeployed to enable the investigation to take place.

Advice can be sought on this process from the HR department at any time.

4. The School's Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Body

The Board of Governors of Royal Russell School has overall responsibility for setting strategic direction and for taking all reasonable steps to ensure equality of opportunity and dignity at work and the prevention of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of staff, job applicants, pupils and volunteers in their relationship with the School.

4.2 Line managers' responsibilities

The Headmasters, Director of Operations, School Leadership Team and Heads of Department are responsible for setting the School's strategic objectives for equality and diversity and for the day to day implementation and delivery of these.

The School Leadership Team is responsible for the development, implementation and review of policies and practices to support this Policy.

4.3 Responsibilities of staff and volunteers

All members of staff and volunteers should support the School to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and to avoid unlawful discrimination.

The School expects all staff to take personal responsibility for familiarising themselves with this policy and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner towards other staff, pupils, volunteers and users of its services. Staff should adhere to the standards and expectations of conduct and behaviour as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

Members of staff should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work, and should take an active stance to create an environment that is free of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Individual staff can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the School, for any act of unlawful discrimination. Members of staff who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

5. Disability

In the case of any member of staff who is disabled or becomes disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and where their condition or disability is likely to impact on their working life, they are encouraged to advise the HR department about their condition so that the School can support them as appropriate. The member of staff should discuss with the HR department whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to the requirements of the member of staff's job or other aspects of the working arrangements such as changing duties, providing additional equipment or training, or making adjustments to this procedure. Line managers would be involved in these discussions with the consent of the member of staff.

In such circumstances, wherever possible, the School will make arrangements for the person to continue working. The School may also seek advice from medical practitioners to give guidance on the appropriateness of adjustments. Member of staff are expected to attend medical appointments as part of this process as required and to comply with the requirements in the Staff Health, Wellbeing and Absence Management Policy.

6. The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, eg refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is generally unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly, harass or victimise a member of the public based on any of the protected characteristics in the provision of services (such as education provision) or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

7. Definitions

Disability: Under the Equality Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

Victimisation: Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act as treating someone badly because they have committed a 'protected act' (or because the institution believes that a person has or is going to do a protected act). A 'protected act' is making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act) helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information, making an allegation that the further or higher education institution or someone else has breached the Act, or doing anything else in connection with the Act.

Harassment: There are three types of harassment that are unlawful under the Equality Act: unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or that is related to gender reassignment or sex, and less favourable treatment because the person concerned submits to or rejects the unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of either violating the recipient's dignity or creates and intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. 'Of a sexual nature' can cover verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct including unwelcome sexual advances, inappropriate or unwanted touching, forms of sexual assault, sexual jokes, displaying pornographic photographs or drawings, or sending emails with material of a sexual nature.

By Association: The Act includes discrimination by association ie being related to, or friendly with, someone with a protected characteristic, or perceiving someone to have a protected characteristic.

8. Associated Policies

In order for this policy to be applied effectively it must be read and understood in conjunction with other School policies, most particularly:

Staff Code of Conduct
Staff Recruitment Policy
Grievance Procedure
Disciplinary Procedure

Capability Procedure
Staff Health, Wellbeing and Absence Management Policy
Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy and Procedures

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