



# MALVERN ST JAMES GIRLS' SCHOOL

## Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Deputy Head and will be reviewed biennially.

### Scope

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Malvern St James' School ('the School').

The School is committed to equal treatment for all pupils and staff regardless of their personal characteristics; the core ones are commonly referred to as 'protected characteristics' and include race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

### Aim

The aim of this policy and the School's ethos as a whole is to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the School community
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy.

All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Staff should read this policy alongside the Recruitment Policy.

### Admissions

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of any disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief), sexual orientation or special educational needs ('SEND').

Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their daughter's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School. The School will not offer

a place to a child with disabilities or specific needs if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School cannot adequately cater for or meet their requirements.

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the School's admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend the School due to financial hardship. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or through the Admissions staff.

### **Malvern St James' commitment to Equal Opportunities**

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment. The School's Equality and Diversity Strategy is detailed in Appendix 1 and the Diversity Champion's job description is detailed in Appendix 2.

The School will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all pupils and staff and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHEEC to:
  - Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 preparing girls to live and work in a multi-ethnic society.
  - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour & Code of Conduct and Anti-bullying policies.

## **Religious belief**

Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community.

The Governing body ('The Council'), through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

## **Requests for variation in the school uniform**

All pupils are required to wear a uniform until the end of Year 11, and a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 12 and 13. The Headmistress will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the School's policy on health and safety and it is reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Reasonable adjustments for staff and pupils with disability or special needs**

The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for staff and pupils with a disability or special needs to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other staff or pupils.

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents or the member of staff about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid them being put at a substantial disadvantage. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of their disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the SEND Policy.

The School has an Accessibility Plan in place which can be found on the School website and a hard copy can be made available upon request. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Headmistress along with members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Diversity and Inclusion Champion regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to Council on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

The School Council is responsible for promoting, monitoring and maintaining the implementation of this Policy and relies on the following to ensure that this is done:

The School Council will monitor the implementation of the Policy regularly and review annually to ensure that it does not disadvantage any particular section of the community.

Any incidents or concerns about equality of opportunity and racial equality should be reported to the Chair of the Council Governance and Legal Committee on a termly basis.

### **MSJ Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Champion**

Malvern St James Girls' School is committed to fostering a thirst for knowledge and a real commitment to learning. Students are shown what it means to take responsibility; they are encouraged to develop a strong moral code with the ability to make informed judgements about what is right and wrong. Central to our ethos is the importance of caring for others and teaching pupils social, physical and practical life-skills. We define diversity as valuing everyone as an individual – whether pupil, staff member or a member of the wider MSJ community. Harnessing these differences creates a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, their talents are fully utilised, and organisational and personal goals are met. We are advocates of equality and recognise that inclusion of all minority groups is vital if we are to ensure the wellbeing of each and every member of the MSJ family.

The Equality and Diversity Champion is a new role at Malvern St James. It is unpaid and will appeal to anyone with a passion for working towards equality for all irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation.

This person will:-


- be asked to provide signposting and a listening ear on equality and diversity matters, as well as potentially offering advice where he/she feels able to do so;
- be well organised and thoughtful about how they communicate. Key skills include; good listening skills, verbal and written communication skills, maturity, open mindedness, confidence, patience, negotiation skills;
- be able to work with other members of staff to contribute to improvement in teaching and learning across the curriculum, with high expectations of the pupils, themselves and their colleagues;
- be able to work with relevant members of the Sixth Form including the Diversity Ambassador, supporting their interest and involvement in matters of Inclusion and Diversity and offering measured advice and encouragement as these pupils seek to lead their peers;
- show an ongoing interest in emerging legislation and news by consulting organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC);
- be involved in working with members of the Senior Leadership Team to develop strategy which is inclusive, diverse and mindful of the need for equal opportunity.

**Further development of the role may include:**

- Creating diversity networks to ensure all groups have a voice in the organisation
- Creating positive action interventions to support under-represented groups
- Coaching and upskilling managers and employees on the value of diversity
- Celebrating diversity through organised events and awareness sessions.

Done brilliantly, this role will enable MSJ to operate beyond the basic legislative and compliance requirements; creating an environment where difference is embraced and individuals can flourish and where inclusion for all is part of the culture.

The work may involve dealing with conflict and controversial or politically sensitive issues, which can sometimes be stressful. Consequently, the person taking this role will have termly opportunities to attend supervision with a Pastoral Colleague

Authorised by	Resolution of the School Council
Signature	
Date	17 March 2021      amended 29 September 2021

<b>Effective date of the Policy</b>	17 March 2021
<b>Review date</b>	February 2023
<b>Circulation</b>	Members of School Council / teaching staff / all staff / parents / pupils [on request]