

# Sydenham School

## Equality Policy



High  
Performance  
Learning

**Approved by:** Children, Families and Community  
Committee

**Date:** October 2022

**Last reviewed on:** October 2022

**Next review due by:** October 2025

## Contents

1. Context.....	3
2. Statement of Commitment (Equality Statement).....	3
3. The Legislative Framework: .....	5
4. The Public Sector Equality Duty .....	5
5. Sydenham School Equality Objectives 2019-2022:.....	6
5.1. Equality Objective 1: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.2. Equality Objective 2: .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.3. Equality Objective 3:.....	6
5.4 Equality Objective 4:.....	7
5.5 Equality Objective 5:.....	7
6. Unlawful behaviour.....	7
7. Opportunity through the curriculum via the High-Performance Learning framework .....	8
8. The Curriculum.....	9
9. Students with a Disability.....	9
10. Auxiliary Aids:.....	10
11. Accessibility Plan:.....	10
12. Student Behaviour for Learning .....	10
13. An Inclusive Ethos .....	11
12. Anti-Bullying.....	11
13. Students undergoing gender reassignment.....	11
14. Pregnancy and Maternity.....	13
15. Sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.....	13
16. Work Experience and Careers Guidance.....	13
17. References for former students:.....	14
18. Recruitment of Staff and Equal Opportunities in Employment .....	14
20. Continuous Professional Development.....	15
21. Parents, Governors and Community Partnership .....	15
22. Responsibilities: .....	15
22.1. The Governing Body and the Headteacher:.....	15
22.2. The Senior Leadership Team:.....	16
22.3. Director of Resources:.....	16
22.4. Year Learning Coordinators: .....	16
22.5. Curriculum Leaders and Subject Leaders:.....	17
22.6. Careers Advisor: .....	17
22.7. Subject Teachers: .....	17

## 1. Context

Sydenham School has a very strong and deeply held commitment to Equal Opportunities. This stretches back to the early days of the school and reflects its development into a diverse school with 71 languages over the last 100 years. The staff and governors serve a rich and broad community, in a comprehensive and inclusive inner-city school and have a very real sense of pride in what we do and what we achieve with our students.

## 2. Statement of Commitment (Equality Statement)

As a learning community, we are committed to maintaining an ethos that nourishes and supports each person in our care and each member of our staff. Although our commitment to equal opportunities is absolute, we recognise that to be effective, this commitment needs continued scrutiny. We also recognise that members of the school will need to engage individually with the complex issues of equality, often from different starting points, and that the role of the school is to facilitate this learning process in a spirit of mutual support.

At Sydenham School, our Equality Policy is based upon the following principles:

- We respect and celebrate our differences and similarities regardless of gender, gender identity, culture, ethnicity, religion, academic ability, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic background, maternity, special education needs or disability. We stand against discrimination towards individuals and/or groups.
- We are committed to providing dynamic and exciting opportunities for *all* students and this is rooted in the ethos encapsulated in the High-Performance Learning Framework. This includes support for the development of the full range of learners – the most able who come to Sydenham above 110 in the KS2 SATS, low prior attainers who come into Sydenham below 100 in the KS2 SATS, learners with SEND, as well as Middle Prior Attainers who can go quietly unnoticed. We value the contribution that each and every student can make. We aim to protect the rights of the whole school community to learn and be safe; this means that the school will take action when the good order of the school is undermined, and the learning opportunities of the majority in the school community are at risk.
- We recognise that we live in a highly complex society and that to ensure equality and achievement for all is a significant challenge. While the school's position against intolerance, discrimination and prejudice is clear, we shall deal sensitively with others' views, particularly where the students are concerned; it must be recognised, however, by all members of the school community, that the ethos of the school supports equality of opportunity and the rights of others. Our commitment to reinforcing fundamental British values and our stand against intolerance, prejudice and discrimination is non-negotiable.
- We believe and understand that members of our community have different starting points and may have unequal beginnings and that we should always work towards addressing this imbalance. We believe that education and life-long learning are essential to a student's life chances, their achievement and aspiration. We bring a range of different experiences, from which we can all benefit.
- We believe in inclusion and inclusive practices, and we shall work with all members of the school community to ensure that we support effort, perseverance, development, achievement and attainment, and staff will support those who are experiencing difficulty or challenge.

It is an expectation that these principles will be understood and respected by all those who join or visit the school.

Sydenham School values and respects all its students, staff and parents and the richness of variety that our culturally diverse school presents. We wish to provide, for every member of our school community, a learning experience which enables everyone to achieve in a wide variety of ways. As a girls' comprehensive school, with a mixed Sixth Form, we wish to prepare our students to be the thinking young people of the future who will contribute actively and pro-actively to the communities in which they live.

**Through our Equality Policy the school aims to:**

- Promote achievement in its widest sense, and enjoyment of life-long learning
- Support all members of the school community to understand that purposeful learning can take place through experimenting with new ideas, taking risks and making mistakes, this is encapsulated through our commitment to the High-Performance Learning Framework.
- Develop excellent teaching which promotes and ensures high quality learning, so that students learn effectively and achieve at their highest level
- Create an environment that values everyone and the contribution that everyone can make
- Actively narrow the gaps in progress and achievement between different groups, including when related to ethnicity, disadvantage or SEND.
- Provide a safe and positive environment for all, and one which challenges discriminatory and anti-social behaviour
- Promote positive images and role models that celebrate and use the school's diversity to foster high expectations
- Develop a community which is vibrant, caring, creative, diverse, inspiring, welcoming, harmonious and aspirational
- Re-affirm consistently our belief that we should all treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves, and celebrate our common humanity
- Ensure that the school Behaviour Policy is enacted in a way that fulfils Sydenham's statutory Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Encourage students to understand their responsibilities as well as their rights, and support parents and carers in developing this understanding with their children
- Develop in all members of the community a willingness to celebrate the common elements of our multiple cultures and values rather than highlighting areas of conflict
- Actively encourage the appointment of staff at all levels who reflect the diversity of the school and wider local community
- Ensure that any bullying which relates to protected characteristics is dealt with seriously and in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.

- Ensure that the school does not discriminate against a student because of the sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, maternity status or gender reassignment of another person with whom the student is associated.
- Ensure that there is no unlawful behaviour (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation) within Sydenham School.

### **3. The Legislative Framework:**

The Sydenham School Equality Policy underpins and links to all other school policies, implemented through working systems which are embedded in school practice and procedure. The policy is situated within a national legislative context of the Equality Act and the school's duty clearly lies within that framework in relation to:

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty
2. Unlawful Behaviour defined within the Equality Act.

### **4. The Public Sector Equality Duty**

Sydenham School is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which means that it must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,
- Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Specifically, this means that Sydenham School must:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that is connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that is different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Therefore, the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body must:

- Be aware of the duty to have 'due regard' when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics
- Consider equality implications before and at the time that policy is developed, and decisions are taken, not as an afterthought, and keep these under review on a continual basis
- Integrate the Public Sector Equality Duty into the carrying out of the school's functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty must be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind.

The Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body are expected to keep a written record to show that there has been an active consideration the Public Sector Equality Duty in decision making. This should be light touch and is most likely to be recorded via meeting minutes.

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Sydenham School must:

- (a) publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty;

- (b) prepare and publish equality objectives
- (c) prepare and implement an Accessibility Plan.

Sydenham School must update the published information at least annually and publish objectives at least once every four years.

It is expected that every person in Sydenham School will make a positive contribution to the policy and upholding the Public Sector Equality Duty, namely:

- All staff whether paid or voluntary and Governors
- All visitors to, and partners of, Sydenham School
- All students at Sydenham School
- All parents at Sydenham School.

## 5. Sydenham School Equality Objectives 2019-2022:

Progress towards the following objectives must be published on the school's website annually and reported to governors at every meeting of the full Governing Body.

### 5.1. Equality Objective 1:

To proactively improve outcomes and close gaps in attainment, progress and achievement between all groups of students, including students eligible for free-school meals, students with special educational needs and disabilities, children looked after and students from minority ethnic groups.

**Success criteria:**

- At **KS5**, the ALPS grade is consistently positive when broken down by ethnicity, SEND and PP compared to all other groups.
- At **KS4**, the Progress 8 gap is above national when broken down by ethnicity, SEND and PP compared to all other groups.
- At **KS3**, there is greater parity between students *working at the expected standard and students working towards the expected standard* when broken down by ethnicity, SEND and PP compared to all other groups.

### 5.2. Equality Objective 2:

To enable all students including and in particular those with protected characteristics, to make a positive contribution to school life.

**Success criteria:**

- Greater parity in participation of students with protected characteristics in extra-curricular clubs, trips and enrichment opportunities.

### 5.3. Equality Objective 3:

To promote mental health and well-being so that all members of the school community are valued and supported, regardless of special educational needs and disability, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

**Success criteria:**

- Attendance at least at 98%
- Reduced number of CPOM entries linked to mental health compared to 2021-22
- Positive feedback on mental health and wellbeing via student surveys

90% or more of the following groups, when surveyed, agree or strongly agree with the following statements:

- **Parents:**
- The school deals effectively with bullying
- My child is happy at Sydenham School

- My child feels safe at Sydenham School
- **Students:**
- Is bullying a problem at your school? (inverse the target to 10% saying agree or strongly agree)
- My school encourages me to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally
- **Staff:**
- The school deals with any cases of bullying of students effectively (bullying includes persistent name-calling, online or prejudice-based bullying)
- All staff are treated fairly and with respect at this school
- Reduction of number of incidents linked to bullying or discrimination over 3 years in comparison to 2021-22

#### 5.4. Equality Objective 4:

To develop processes for transition points for all students, including those in groups with protected characteristics to ensure that appropriate advice, guidance and support is in place to ensure successful transition to next steps.

##### Success criteria:

- High retention rates from the beginning of Y12 through to Y13
- High retention rates of Year 7 students
- High % parental engagement in all year groups

#### 5.5. Equality Objective 5:

To promote an equitable and inclusive working environment for all staff regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, sex, religion, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment ensuring that the school workforce is diverse.

##### Success criteria:

- School work force is diverse
- Inclusive recruitment processes that consider unconscious bias are embedded
- Staff survey outcomes support equitable and inclusive working environment
- Reduction in formal complaints and staff grievances

## 6. Unlawful behaviour

The Equality Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour – direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment and victimisation. All stakeholders at Sydenham must show due regard to this and ensure that they act within the law.

**The responsible body:** is the Local Authority. Any persons acting on behalf of Sydenham School – including employees of the school – are liable for their own discriminatory actions, and the responsible body is also liable unless it can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the individual from doing the discriminatory action or from doing anything of that kind.

**Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if Sydenham School were to refuse to let a student be a prefect because of her sexuality.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a “provision, criterion or practice” is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents’ meeting on a Friday

evening, which could make it difficult for parents who are observant of some faiths to attend. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate.

**Harassment** is “unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but can also include actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic.

Where Sydenham School is concerned, as with all schools subject to the Department for Education guidance, the offence of harassment as defined in this way in the Act applies only to harassment because of disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not to religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Bullying or harassment because of these latter characteristics would still be unlawful as well as unacceptable; however, these would be considered direct discrimination rather than harassment.

Sydenham School must not victimise students or staff. Victimisation is when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done (“a protected act”) in connection with the Equality Act. A protected act might involve, for example:

- making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act
- supporting another person’s complaint by giving evidence or information
- anything that is done under or in connection with the Act.

Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, Sydenham School must not take any responsive action unless the person was acting in bad faith. This is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation. If it is deemed that a student was acting in bad faith and making a malicious allegation against a member of staff, this will be dealt with under provisions in the Sydenham School Behaviour Policy.

As well as it being unlawful to victimise a person who does a protected act, Sydenham School must not victimise a student because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act. This means that a student must not be made to suffer in any way because, for example: her mother has made a complaint of sex discrimination against the school, or her brother has claimed that a teacher is bullying him because he is gay, whether or not the mother or brother was acting in good faith.

If a student has himself or herself done a protected act – such as making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher – then the child’s own good faith will be relevant. For example, if the parent’s complaint is based on information from her son and the son was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish him in the same way as it might do any other student who has acted dishonestly. Unless it can be clear that the mother was also acting in bad faith (for example that she knew her son was lying) it would still be unlawful to victimise her for pursuing the complaint.

## **7. Opportunity through the curriculum via the High-Performance Learning framework**

The expectation within the HPL framework is that all students are capable of success and the role of staff is to ensure that all students access the curriculum and at an appropriate level for their individual needs. Staff work within the HPL Framework and deploy a range of strategies, for example,



assessment for learning, differentiation within lesson planning (access for all), assessment and feedback on class work and homework, students' involvement in their learning and catering for the range of learning needs.

The use of data is central to the development of personalised learning. The school keeps a range of data on student progress and pastoral welfare, in order to ensure appropriate educational provision. Data sources include DfE ASP data, currently working at levels/grades, forecast grades, KS2 outcomes, Fischer Family Trust (FFT) estimates, school-based analysis through 4 Matrix and SISRA, Sixth Form analyses such as ALPS Connect, information on students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Pupil Premium data, stage of English as an Additional Language (EAL), INTEX and Exclusion Data, Merit and Demerit Data, CPOMS reports, vulnerable students who are subject to a Social Care plan and attendance particularly Persistent Absentees.

Staff should access the school-based data through SIMS, 4 Matrix and SISRA and are expected to proactively seek to redress gaps between groups and raise the attainment of all learners. Staff are expected to be able to explain the impact of their work to improve outcomes for:

- Students with a Special Educational Need or Disability
- Students with differing levels of prior attainment
- Students from different ethnicities
- Disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students
- Children who are looked after or have been previously looked after

The Inclusion Faculty provides specialist support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), students with EAL and / or language acquisition needs and those with social or emotional difficulties. The Faculty conducts annual reviews for statemented students, updates the SEND register, ensures there is early identification and intervention for students with special needs and EAL students, develops IEPs and works with the school-based Attendance Officer and our Speech and Language Therapist. The Faculty staff access funding to ensure that the students' needs are met within available funding parameters. Appropriate agencies are used to support particular student needs, for example, child and family guidance counsellors, educational psychologists, CAMHS, and so on. The purpose of the Faculty is to support students to overcome learning inequality and social inequality, through appropriate school-based intervention. The provision of support is co-ordinated via the Team Around the School meetings, held on a fortnightly basis for each year group.

## **8. The Curriculum**

At Sydenham, students are taught a full range of issues, ideas and materials in the curriculum, and exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, including those which are challenging or controversial. The curriculum is rigorous and expected to provide challenging opportunities to increase social capital, including through extra-curricular enrichment, for all students. The way in which these issues are taught must be done in such a manner that individual students are not subjected to discrimination.

## **9. Students with a Disability<sup>1</sup>**

In line with equality legislation, at Sydenham we may, and often must, treat a disabled student more favourably than a person who is not disabled to ensure that a disabled student can benefit from our provision to the same extent that a person without a disability can. Where something

---

<sup>1</sup> The Equality Act defines disability as when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

that the school does places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared to other students then we must make a reasonable adjustment by taking reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

## **10. Auxiliary Aids:**

The Equality Act extends the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled students. At Sydenham, the following factors will be taken into account when considering what adjustments are reasonable:

- the extent to which support will be available to the student under the SEN framework
- the school's resources
- the financial and other costs of making the adjustment
- the extent to which the adjustment would be effective in overcoming the disabled student's substantial disadvantage
- the practicability of the adjustment
- the effect of the disability on the individual student
- health and safety requirements
- the need to maintain academic, athletic, musical, sporting and other standards.
- the interests of other students and prospective students.<sup>2</sup>

## **11. Accessibility Plan:**

Sydenham School has an Accessibility Plan which is aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- Improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

The Accessibility Plan must be reviewed on an annual basis, with relevant actions built into the School Improvement Plan.

## **12. Student Behaviour for Learning**

The Sydenham School Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies exist so that all students are treated fairly, within an agreed framework in which clear boundaries are set. The use of merit and demerits, detentions, internal exclusion and fixed term/permanent exclusions should be closely monitored by SLT, YLCs and Curriculum Leaders from an equality perspective and action taken to address any identified inequality.

Exclusions are monitored at Governing Body meetings, along with progress towards the Equality Objective linked to the use of school rewards and sanctions.

---

<sup>2</sup> For further guidance, Sydenham will refer to the Technical Guidance for Schools in England (Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Pupils) from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

## 13. An Inclusive Ethos

At Sydenham School, it is the responsibility of all members of staff meet the Public Sector Equality Duty by eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations across all characteristics within the school community. All staff have a responsibility to build an inclusive ethos in the following ways:

- Actively creating an environment that values everyone and the contribution that everyone can make
- Provide a safe and positive environment for all, and one which proactively and reactively challenges discriminatory and anti-social behaviour. This will be reinforced through the pastoral and PSHE curriculum and the assembly programme
- Promote positive images and role models throughout the curriculum that celebrate and promote the school's diversity to foster high expectations
- Develop a community which is vibrant, caring, creative, inspiring, welcoming, harmonious and aspirational for all
- Re-affirm consistently through our curriculum and behaviour policy our belief that we should all treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves, and celebrate our common humanity
- Use our PSHE and pastoral programme to ensure students understand their responsibilities as well as their rights, and support parents and carers in developing this understanding with their children
- Develop in all members of the community a willingness to celebrate the common elements of our many cultures and values rather than highlighting areas of conflict and difference
- Ensure that any bullying, including any which relates to protected characteristics, is dealt with seriously and in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

## 12. Anti-Bullying

It is the responsibility of all staff at Sydenham School to ensure that any bullying which relates to protected characteristics is dealt with seriously and in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy. This will be monitored at a Senior Leadership level and reported to Governors at every Fully Governing Body meeting.

## 13. Students undergoing gender reassignment

Protection for students from discrimination in schools because of gender reassignment is a legal duty. Gender reassignment is defined in the Equality Act as applying to anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes. Therefore, a student will not necessarily have to be undertaking a medical procedure to change their sex but must be taking steps to live in the opposite gender, or proposing to do so, to be protected under the Equality Act.

Students undergoing gender reassignment away from a female gender role will not affect the school's single-sex status and will be able to continue on the Sydenham School roll.

Sydenham School will adopt the following measures to support students undergoing gender reassignment:

1. Access to gender neutral toilets.
2. A move towards the use of gender-neutral pronouns in communications from the school.

3. Adjustment to the uniform (shirt collar) requirements.
4. Reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support from external sources. This must be recorded in such a way that protects the student's privacy.
5. Reasonable steps taken to ensure that the correct gender, name and pronoun are used uniformly to address students undergoing gender reassignment. If a student wishes to change their name or gender identity, the school will accommodate this and change all relevant personal data on our school's MIS system, letters home, reports etc. Where there is uncertainty on the part of the school as to which gender should be recorded for the school census, the gender must be recorded according to the wishes of the student and/or parent. This can be changed at any time and does not need to remain static. When exam entry is being made, it is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to ensure that a strategy is agreed with the student and their parents or carers, and then agreed with the exam boards, as early as possible once a student has started an accredited course so that the preferred name appears upon exam certificates.
6. A robust and preventative anti-bullying policy
7. PSHE teaching about gender identity
8. Arrangements for changing facilities that are sensitive to the student's needs and recognise the needs and sensitivities of other students.
9. Support to ensure that a student is not prevented from participating in PE and sporting activities. Within the competitive and representative aspects of school sport, situations will be dealt with on a case by case basis and in close liaison with the student and their family. Where necessary, the school will seek the advice of the relevant sport's governing body if a student undergoing gender reassignment is to represent the school or compete outside regular PE lessons and internal school events.
10. Where competing at another school or outside venue, staff should ensure that appropriate and sensitive provision is made for changing which respects both the dignity of a student undergoing gender reassignment and their privacy.
11. Careful consideration of work experience placements is required. The Equality Act 2010 encompasses every environment that students will be working in, therefore all placements should be aware of their duties and responsibilities. The school must complete a suitable assessment on a potential placement to establish if there is any risk (physical or otherwise) to a student undergoing gender reassignment. This must take account of the rights to privacy and information on the student must not be shared. Careful discussion about the placement with the student, parents or carers must occur as early as possible.
12. When a female only vaccination is provided in a mass vaccination session, the school must liaise with the parents or carers of a student undergoing gender reassignment at the earliest possible opportunity. It may be that the student would prefer to have the vaccination provided by their GP if the vaccination is gender specific.
13. On school trips, a student undergoing gender reassignment must not be subject to any direct or indirect discrimination. Consideration must be given to sleeping arrangements before the trip is undertaken and where it is possible a separate room should be arranged. Each individual case and trip should be considered separately. In depth and recorded discussions, included the allocation of cost for this, must take place with the Educational Visits Coordinator at the earliest possible opportunity. When traveling outside the United Kingdom, the trip coordinator must check the requirements for searches at borders with the relevant border control agency to ensure that adequate risk assessment procedures are in place. The school must also investigate laws regarding trans communities in countries considered for school trips and ensure that adequate risk

assessment procedures are in place to protect the safety of students who are undergoing gender reassignment.

## 14. Pregnancy and Maternity

The school must not discriminate against students because of pregnancy or maternity; this means that students at Sydenham School will not be treated less favourably if they become pregnant, have recently had a baby or are breastfeeding. Sydenham School must also consider pregnancy and maternity when considering their obligations under the Equality Duty.

Sydenham School will work closely with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that there are suitable plans in place for any student who has become pregnant, has recently had a baby or is breastfeeding. It is the responsibility of local authorities under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, to arrange suitable full-time education for any student of compulsory school age who would not otherwise receive such an education. This includes students of compulsory school age who become pregnant or who are parents. In particular, where students are unable to attend Sydenham School, the Local Authority would need to consider whether this duty is applied. 'Suitable education' should meet the individual needs of the student and must take account of their age, ability, aptitude and individual needs including any special educational needs they may have.

## 15. Sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership

It is the responsibility of Sydenham School to ensure that all gay, lesbian or bi-sexual students, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents or carers, are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other students. The school should check that there are no practices which could result in unfair, less favourable treatment of such students.

Sydenham School's PSHE programme fulfils the legal requirement to teach about the 'nature of marriage' when delivering sex education and is in line with the legal guidance on **sex and relationship education**. Teachers at Sydenham School are subject to professional requirements, the school curriculum, school policies and anti-discrimination duties towards colleagues and students. All teaching about marriage must be done in a sensitive, reasonable, respectful and balanced way. No individual teacher is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples. However, it is a responsibility of all teachers to ensure that teaching is based on facts and should enable students to develop an understanding of how the law applies to different relationships. Teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education, and to meet duties under equality and human rights law. It is the responsibility of the subject leader for PSHE to ensure that the curriculum is kept up to date to meet changing legislative requirements and that teachers of PSHE are fulfilling their statutory duties.

## 16. Work Experience and Careers Guidance

In relation to work placements, at Sydenham School our responsibility is to:

- Ensure equality when finding and offering work placements, and ensure discrimination does not occur
- Take steps to prevent a student being subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

In relation to work experience and opportunities linked to careers guidance, it is the responsibility of the Careers Advisor to ensure that Sydenham School fulfils the Public Sector Equality Duty and advances equality of opportunity between people who hold a particular characteristic and those who do not. In relation to the implementation of the Equality Policy at Sydenham School, this includes advancing equality of opportunity between Disadvantaged and Non-Disadvantaged students as well as the protected characteristics covered within the Equality Act.

It should be noted that work placement providers have duties under the 'work provisions' of the Equality Act to protect against discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Careers Advisor should ensure that suitable risk assessment procedures are in place in relation to this for all work experience placements.

## **17. References for former students:**

Sydenham's responsibility not to discriminate, harass or victimise a student applies to actions connected to the previous relationship between the school and student. This includes the provision of references for former students or access to 'old students' communications and activities.

## **18. Recruitment of Staff and Equal Opportunities in Employment**

The Headteacher and Governors hold the responsibility for ensuring that equality legislation is correctly implemented in terms of staff appointments.

The school will take active steps to employ a diverse workforce on the basis of merit and thereby provide positive role models for students by:

- Advertising new posts widely in all relevant media
- Actively targeting specific ethnic minorities which are under-represented in the school and employing on the basis of merit
- Conducting equality monitoring in the recruitment process for all vacancies (applications, short listings, appointments) to ensure that there is no bias against people in relation to any particular protected characteristic
- Assessing each member of staff's competence in the area of equality through appraisal and ensuring that staff and Governors are provided with sufficient training on equality to allow them to carry out their statutory duties
- Ensuring an induction programme for all staff on the Equalities Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy and ensuring that existing staff are made aware of the Policies.

The school will apply fair selection criteria and all applicants for posts will be supplied with the same information, an opportunity to teach a class for applicants for teaching posts and, subject to any shortlisting procedures, an interview. As far as possible, the lesson observation aspect of the interview process will involve similar classes, but there will be occasions when time and timetabling constraints may prevent this. All applicants for teaching posts will be given a specific lesson observation brief and class information, to enable them to prepare an appropriate lesson.

For support staff who may work directly with children, e.g. Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentors, an appropriate group activity will usually be organised, which may involve students. For all appointments in-tray exercises, data analysis, other tests or presentations may also form part of the interview process where appropriate.

The interviewing panel will operate fair procedures by:

- Issuing appropriate selection criteria and information about the post

- Ensuring a welcoming environment as part of the interview
- Ensuring the interview process is fairly applied to all applicants, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or disability
- Asking all applicants similar questions, within the context of DfE guidance on Safer Recruitment practice, and ensure there is an appropriate safeguarding question for every interview
- Giving all applicants similar tasks, e.g. presentations or in-tray exercises
- Making notes during applicants' answers and allocating marks to allow for a moderation process
- Keeping interviews to time
- Moderating and discussing the interviews fairly at the end of the process
- Appointing the best person for the post by consensus of the interview panel, or reaching a joint decision on whether to re-advertise.

This section of the policy should be cross-referenced with the relevant section of the HR Policies.

## **20. Continuous Professional Development**

The school recognises that there will be a need to support the promotion of equality. All staff should have an equal right to high quality training and development, and the school should be proactive in supporting the needs of groups who may be disadvantaged in terms of employment opportunities – for example, women into leadership roles, black staff seeking opportunities in middle and senior leadership posts, or disabled staff seeking promotion.

Training needs for all staff will continue to be identified through the Performance Management Policy, the School Improvement Plan and in accordance with the CPD Policy.

## **21. Parents, Governors and Community Partnership**

The school will encourage all parents and especially those who are under-represented to become involved with the life of the school, formally as Governors and at Parents' Evenings by:

- Informing all parents on the progress of their child, if necessary in home language
- Where patterns of under-representation exist, proactively encouraging parents from under-represented groups to attend Parents' Evenings - by letter and, if necessary, by phone or by visit
- Year Learning Coordinators collating, analysing and communicating data on parental attendance to inform future planning for Parents' Evenings
- Informing the parents and local stakeholders about how to become a governor.
- Encouraging all communities to use the school's facilities for their leisure activities by advertising in the appropriate media.

## **22. Responsibilities:**

### **22.1. The Governing Body and the Headteacher:**

- The Governing Body and the Headteacher will ensure that the school complies with all relevant legislation

- The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that statutory requirements relating to equality legislation, and related procedures and strategies outlined in the Sydenham School Equality Policy, are implemented
- The Headteacher will ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities relating to equality legislation
- Monitor progress towards the Equality Objectives at every full Governing Body
- Ensure the Governing Body takes action to deliver equality of opportunity in relation to the appointment of Governors and senior staff within the school
- Ensure Governing Body meetings include active consideration of equality duties in decision-making and that minutes keep a written record to show that this consideration has taken place.

### 22.2. The Senior Leadership Team:

- Ensure that the school implements all statutory requirements relating to equality legislation, as outlined in the Sydenham School Equality Policy, in all aspects of their work
- Ensure progress in relation to the Equality Objectives where relevant to their remit
- Ensure the accurate collation of data to enable the Governing Body to track progress towards the Equality Objectives and the fulfilment of other aspects of the Equality Policy
- Ensure all staff who they line manage are aware of their responsibilities relating to the Equality Policy
- Ensure Senior Leadership Team meetings include active consideration of equality duties in decision making and that minutes keep a written record to show that this consideration has taken place
- Ensure a consistent response when complaints are made in relation to issues encompassed within the Equality Policy
- Ensure equalities considerations are considered in recommendations for fixed term or permanent exclusions.

### 22.3. Director of Resources:

- Ensure all aspects of staff recruitment and HR practices are compliant with the Equality Act
- Ensure that data is published on the school workforce if it is at such a size that this is required under the Equality Act
- Ensure all staff who they line manage are aware of their responsibilities relating to the Equality Policy
- Ensure that the school implements all statutory requirements relating to equality legislation, as outlined in the Sydenham School Equality Policy, in all aspects of their work.

### 22.4. Year Learning Coordinators:

- Ensure the ethos of the year group is inclusive and fulfils the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Ensure that any incidents of bullying linked to protected characteristics is followed up consistently and in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Ensure the pastoral curriculum in the year group is compliant with the requirements of the Equality Policy
- Ensure progress is made, within the year group, to meeting the Equality Objectives
- Ensure that all students within the year group are making strong academic progress and be tenacious in the use of the Team Around the School meetings to commission support to enable students to over barriers and ensure equality of opportunity for all students



- Ensure that the Sydenham School Behaviour Policy is implemented consistently and in a non-discriminatory manner; monitor data and address and trends related to equalities that occur

#### 22.5. Curriculum Leaders and Subject Leaders:

- Ensure the ethos of the faculty is inclusive and fulfils the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Ensure the curriculum in the Faculty is compliant with the requirements of the Equality Policy
- Ensure progress is made, within the Faculty, to meeting the Equality Objectives
- Ensure that all students within the Faculty are making strong academic progress and be tenacious in the leadership of the Faculty to enable students to overcome barriers and ensure equality of opportunity for all students
- Ensure that the Sydenham School Behaviour Policy is implemented consistently and in a non-discriminatory manner; monitor data within the Faculty and address and trends related to equalities that occur

#### 22.6. Careers Advisor:

- In relation to Work Experience and opportunities linked to careers guidance, ensure that Sydenham School fulfils the Public Sector Equality Duty and advances equality of opportunity between people who hold a particular characteristic and those who do not
- Ensure that Sydenham School does not discriminate when finding and offering work placements
- Advance equality of opportunity between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students as well as the protected characteristics covered within the Equality Act
- Take steps to prevent a student being subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- Ensure that suitable risk assessment procedures are in place in relation to the 'work provisions' of the Equality Act for all work placements
- Ensure there is a thorough risk assessment and liaison with students and parents/carers for all students undergoing gender reassignment before a work placement is secured.

#### 22.7. Subject Teachers:

- Ensure that the Equality Policy is implemented in all aspects of their professional practice at Sydenham School.

### 23. Complaints if there is a breach of the Equality Policy

Sydenham School wishes to ensure that all complaints and grievances are resolved quickly and fairly. The vast majority of concerns are dealt with immediately and satisfactorily at an informal stage. However, the school recognises that there may be occasions when a formal complaint will be warranted. Therefore, the Complaints Policy sets out to provide an efficient and accessible complaints procedure with clear channels of communication. Where relevant, the Staff Grievance Procedure is also in place.

Complaints about a breach of the School Equality Policy will be considered under these procedures:

*For a student:* A meeting will be arranged with parents and suitable sanctions and responses implemented as outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

*For a member of staff:* A discussion with the Headteacher/Chair of Governors followed by a verbal warning and written warning.

*For Governors:* A discussion with the Headteacher/Chair of Governors followed by a verbal warning and written warning.

*For the Headteacher:* A discussion with the Headteacher/Chair of Governors followed by a verbal warning and written warning. Persistent breach of the Equality Policy could result in disciplinary action. All staff and students will have the right of appeal, according to the school's and Local Authority's standard procedures.