



DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION

Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils (W013)

“At the Dean Close Foundation our aim is for every individual to Flourish, and our core values, Love, Courage and Contribution, serve as the cornerstones of the organisation. The Foundation is committed to fostering an educational and workplace culture built on integrity, openness, and mutual respect, ensuring that everybody feels valued, supported and challenged. We believe that each pupil, parent, employee and volunteer has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the community, develop their expertise, take thoughtful risks, and drive positive change. By upholding and embodying these values, which spring from the Christian ethos of Dean Close, the Foundation creates an environment where everyone can thrive and succeed, and which makes a positive impact on the wider community”.

Registered Charity No: 1086829

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THE DEAN CLOSE FOUNDATION EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR PUPILS

- This policy has been authorised by the Trustees of The Dean Close Foundation (the “Charity”) for all of its schools, (the “School”).
- This policy will be reviewed periodically by the CFOO (or the Finance and General Purpose Committee) on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Introduction

1. Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of The Dean Close Foundation. We welcome applications in respect of pupils from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is important in preparing pupils for today’s world. We concentrate on educating the individual and providing a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where every individual feels valued and can flourish.
2. The Dean Close Foundation is committed to ensuring equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of an individual’s race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, learning difficulty, body image or social background. We have broadly academically selective Schools, all of which have their own Admissions Policy, and we believe that the educational experience can be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.
3. We also welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policies covering Special Education Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulties, and Disability Policy.
4. Bursaries are made available in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the School’s admission criteria to attend the School regardless of their parent’s financial means. Details of our provision for bursaries can be obtained from the Bursar’s office.

Aims and Code of Conduct

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

- Communicate the School's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for its pupils
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Promote equal treatment for all members of the School community
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment, free from discrimination
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010
- Remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist
- Enforce that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.

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

Staff at the School, particularly those working at a management level, have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

The Head, Teachers, Senior Management Teams, pastoral staff, chaplaincy staff and members of the medical staff play active roles in monitoring the implementation of the School's policy on equal opportunities for pupils. Matters of concern are brought to the attention of the Trustees as appropriate. Where it is appropriate to do so use is made of Assemblies, PSHE, RS, Drama, English and other lessons to:

- Promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the School community.
- Promote positive images and role models to combat 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 deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why we deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable; our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies contain clear procedures for recognising and dealing with unlawful discrimination. All members of staff receive anti-discrimination briefings. Teaching staff, classroom support staff, chaplaincy staff and medical staff also attend regular INSET sessions on the subject.

A successful Equal Opportunities Policy requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2024
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2023)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)

- Keeping Children Safe in Education This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:
 - Admissions Policy (W038)
 - Behaviour Policy (per school)
 - Anti-bullying Policy (W045)
 - Exclusions Policy (per school)
 - Accessibility Policy and Plan (W025)
 - Sexual Violence and Harassment between Pupils Policy (W065)
 - Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities Policy (per school)
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (W044)
 - Parent Complaints Policy and Procedure (W007)
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (W012)
 - Recruitment Policy (W041)

Admissions

The School treats every application for admission in a fair, open-minded and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. For further and more detailed information please refer to the Admissions Policy.

Also, please see the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Recruitment Policy in relation to our approach to staff recruitment and selection.

The School does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special education needs, provided we can offer them any support that they require, cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any disabilities and/or special education needs which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children. The School will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School feels that they cannot adequately cater or meet their needs, that the prospective pupil is not going to be able to meaningfully access the education offered, or that their health and safety, or those of other pupils or staff, may be put at risk.

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 obtained from the Bursar's office.

Educational services

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.

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of the School, pupils must be fluent English speakers. Normally pupils should have been educated in the English language for several years before coming to the School, but for those who have an imperfect command tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the fee payer's expense.

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
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all pupils 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 and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Encourage pupils to work and play freely and have respect for all other pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic
- 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 PSHE to:
 - Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
 - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
 - Encourage pupils to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias.

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 (including cyberbullying) is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies which make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment and that appropriate sanctions will be applied to any pupil who displays inappropriate behaviour.

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, through the senior leadership team, 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 as a strict dress code. Pupils will be given the choice of approved items of uniform (including sports kit). The Head will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations to 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 that such request/s are reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn to School, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Head, in advance.

Although The Dean Close Foundation has an evangelical Christian position, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief; we welcome pupils of all faiths and none and offer the opportunity for members of other faiths to follow their own religious practices, including the wearing of specific garments of clothing. However, parents should be aware that all pupils are required to wear a uniform until Year 11, and that a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 12 and 13. The Head will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the School's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Head may take expert advice and will normally arrange to meet with parents to discuss the implications of any such request.

Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disability

The School is committed to treating all pupils fairly and in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the School will seek to ensure that pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage, by comparison with pupils who are not disabled. As such, the School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability which includes:

1. making reasonable adjustments to our policies, criteria and practices (i.e. the way the School does things); and
2. providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. provision of additional support or assistance).

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator "SENCO" / Head of Learning Support, and (with the parents' consent) any appropriate third party, which

may include for example, a medical practitioner or educational psychologist. The School will discuss what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other pupils. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School.

The School is not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils or prospective pupils. Similarly, the School is not required to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with its provision of education and services.

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 of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Breaches of this policy

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

We hope that parents and pupils will not have any complaints about the operation of our Equal Opportunities Policy but copies of the School's Complaints Policy and Procedure are available on the School website and can be provided to pupils or their parents in hard copy on request.