

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY (Whole School)

Statement of Policy

The following clauses set out how the school will approach and deal with Equal Opportunity matters, and you should ensure that you are familiar with the Policy.

Introduction

The School aims to be an equal opportunities employer and undertakes to apply objective criteria to assess merit and ability. It aims to ensure that no job applicant, employee or worker receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexuality, marital status, disability, membership or non-membership of a trade union, "spent convictions" of ex-offenders, class, age, politics, religion or belief.

Selection criteria and procedure will be reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

All employees will be given equal opportunity and, where appropriate and possible, special training to enable them to progress within the school. The School is committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective in order to minimise the possibility of discrimination, and to stop it immediately, whenever it arises.

Definitions

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in similar circumstances on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexuality, marital status, disability, membership or non-membership of trade union, "spent convictions" of ex-offenders, class, age, politics, religion or belief.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which adversely affects one particular group considerably more than another and cannot be strictly justified in terms of requirements for performing the job.

Harassment is defined as unwanted, unreciprocated and/or uninvited comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an employee's job security, or create an intimidating working environment. Harassment is particularly liable to occur as part of sexual or racial discrimination.

Victimisation is defined as singling out of an individual for harsh treatment, or unfair action/sanction.

The School's Responsibility as an Employer

In order for the Equal Opportunities Policy to be fully effective, the responsibility for ensuring that its terms are adhered to will lie with the Head of School. It is, however, the responsibility of each Manager and all other supervisory staff to actively promote equality of opportunity within their own programmes and spheres of responsibility. It should not be overlooked that harassment can take many forms, e.g. age, religion, belief, skin colour, sexual orientation or perception of, disability – even dialect or accent – can all form the basis of unwanted aggression and attention. Victimisation in the widest sense of the word is also a form of harassment and those exposed to or subject to such action need protection.

The school will inform its employees of their responsibilities and opportunities under the Equal Rights Legislation; will make sure that the Company's Equal Opportunities Policy is known to all staff and applicants.

The school will take disciplinary action against employees who are found to infringe its Equal Opportunities Policy.

What the School expects from its Employees

While the main responsibility for providing equal opportunities lies with the school, individual employees at all levels have responsibilities too. Eradicating discrimination depends on everyone's collaboration.

Employees should not harass, abuse or intimidate other employees on any grounds.

Employees should co-operate with measures introduced by the school to make sure there is equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Employees must not victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.

Harassment

The School declares itself opposed to harassment in any form. The experience of harassment is acknowledged as valid grounds for a person making complaints under the Grievance Procedure.

The school will not condone harassment of any employee within the school whether these acts are committed by members of the public or by colleagues. Nor will the school condone any acts of harassment by employees against members of the public.

Individuals suspected of harassment will be liable to disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

Equal Opportunities Grievance Procedure

The school's principal reason for developing a policy and procedure on equal opportunities and harassment is to establish a separate procedure for handling complaints, including nominating specific Managers or other employees to offer confidential advice and support.

If you have a grievance of a serious personal nature or it is against an individual who is part of the Grievance Procedure, you should raise it with the Head of School. If this is not possible the matter should be raised formally, in writing, within one week of the alleged offence occurring with GC Personnel Consultancy. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a Trade Union Representative at any resultant meeting.

You must be able to demonstrate that you have reasonable grounds for wishing to bypass stages of the procedure in this way.

Each stage of the procedure will be implemented as promptly as is reasonably practicable and shall not be subject to undue or wilful delay.