

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY (STUDENT) POLICY

Policy Owner PPS DSLs	Applies to Prior Park Schools (Trust wide)	Superseded documents Equal Opportunities Policy v1
Associated documents Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy EAL Policy PSCHE Handbook Policy Exclusions Policy Accessibility & Access Plan Policy Counter-Bullying Policy, Admissions Policy	Review frequency Every year (unless the legislation/regulations update before this time) Implementation date 1 July 2021	Legal Framework Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 10) KCSIE 2020 ISSR Para 5 SEND Code of Practice 2015 DfE Guidance Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

1. Introduction

Prior Park Schools (PPS) comprises three schools. Two of those schools, Prior Park College (PPC) and The Paragon School (TP) are incorporated in England as Prior Park Educational Trust Ltd. The third school, Prior Park School Gibraltar (PPSG), is incorporated in Gibraltar as Prior Park School Ltd. Both are companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.

2. Scope

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Prior Park Schools.

This Equal Opportunities (Student) Policy sets out how PPS and each school intends to meet these aims and comply with its equality duties and is written under the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) ('the Act') and draws upon the DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014).

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

PPS seeks to encourage greater awareness of its aims, policies and procedures in relation to equal opportunities and will provide information and training as required.

Unlawful discrimination The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) as defined below:

Direct discrimination This 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 (e.g. if the school were to refuse to let a student become a prefect because he is gay).

Indirect discrimination This occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting students with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to students without that characteristic (e.g. if the school were to hold a parents' meeting on a Friday evening, which would make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend).

Harassment This is defined in the Act as "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 potentially extends to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable.

Victimisation This occurs when a student is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. If a student has done a protected act themselves (e.g. making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher) then the student's own good faith will be relevant (e.g. if the parent's complaint is based on information from their child and the child was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish the student in the same way as it might do any other dishonest student). A student must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act.

PPS are committed to equal treatment for all staff, students, parents and visitors regardless of age, race, social and cultural background, linguistic background, gender, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), religious views and beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity/paternity, gender reassignment, political views or trade union membership, and for all to have equality of opportunity.

3. Policy Aims

The aims of this policy and the Trust's ethos as a whole are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics (the protected characteristics are;
 - age,
 - disability,
 - gender reassignment,
 - race,
 - religion or belief,
 - sex,
 - sexual orientation,
 - marriage and civil partnership and
 - pregnancy and maternity
- Strive to ensure that the school and its work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the PPS community.
- Comply with the equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

All members of the PPS Community- staff, students, trustees, visitors, volunteers and contractors - are expected to comply with this policy.

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

4. Policy

Admissions

PPS treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with the Trust - Wide Admissions Policy.

Our aim is to admit students with academic and other qualities such that the child would gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities available at the Prior Park Schools, whilst maintaining a balance between day and boarding students, boys and girls. In the event of there being more applications than places available, places will be offered in accordance with the following criteria; the weighting of these criteria may vary:

- whether the family is Catholic/Christian
- academic ability & school report or an informal teaching assessment
- extra-curricular interests & other talents
- siblings* at Prior Park College or other schools within Prior Park Schools
- previous attendance at The Paragon (for College entry)
- class size & size of the school roll
- other factors

** A child is a sibling if they are a full or half-brother or sister, an adoptive brother or sister or if they are children of the same household - although this does not guarantee entrance.*

PPS accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective students irrespective of their gender, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief or special educational needs ('SEND').

Disability

Disability and discrimination

- Direct discrimination: PPS will not treat a disabled student less favourably simply because that student is disabled.
- Indirect discrimination: PPS will not do something which applies to all students, but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled students only unless the School can show that it is done for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- Discrimination arising from disability: PPS will not discriminate against a disabled student because of something that is a consequence of their disability (e.g. by not allowing a disabled student on crutches outside at break because it would take them too long to get out and back).
- Harassment: PPS will not harass a student because of their disability (e.g. a teacher shouting at the student because their disability means that they are constantly struggling with classwork or unable to concentrate).

Reasonable adjustments

Each school will take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty).

Where the school is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the school is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a student's disability and the resources available to the school.

Reasonable adjustments and students' behaviour

Independent schools must comply with the Act in relation to student exclusions. The Act does not prohibit schools from excluding students with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding students because of their protected characteristic or from discriminating unlawfully during the exclusion process. Schools also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusions process for disabled students.

For further information, please see the SEND Policy.

The School's Accessibility Policy sets out the school's arrangements for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school's curriculum.
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of the education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is readily accessible to students who are not disabled.

Parents must inform the school when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child'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 if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend due to financial hardship. (Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the Finance office).

Curriculum and Teaching

PPS affords all students 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). PPS will not discriminate against a student on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

PPS will:

- Treat all members of the 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 children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that students with English as an Additional Language and students with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Monitor the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by students and staff
- Offer all students 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 across the school's
- 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.

PPS recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all their forms are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust and each school's Behaviour and Counter-Bullying policies.

Religious belief

Although two of the school's religious ethos is based on Catholic Christian values and tradition, and one is Christian, each 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 Board of Trustees, through the Senior Leadership Team(s), 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.

School Uniform

All students are required to wear the approved school uniform until Year 12, and a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 12 and 13. The uniform is as such that it accommodates for variations depending on personal choice. For further guidance please read each school's own Uniform Policy.

Breach of this policy

PPS will do its utmost to protect students from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or groups within the school. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of students or staff will be handled under the relevant policy: the students' Behaviour Policy or the Staff Grievance / Disciplinary Policies.

Raising a Complaint

Current students and parents can raise a complaint through the Complaints Procedure as set out in our Complaints Policy.