

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (Equality & Diversity) Policy Statement



- Recommended for all schools by the GMI Financial Working Party
- Recommended by APTIS (Association of Principal Teachers of Integrated Schools)
- Recommended by the Department of Education
- Required by CCEA and other examination Boards.

Summary:

A Statement of Equal Opportunities that will be applied equally and fairly to all members of the school community.

M Houston
Principal

Additional Notes

Policy Number: 2013/1

Reviews

Amended/corrected
September/ October 2013

Ratified by the BOG
January 2014

Review
Reviewed Jan 2015 without
modification

Review Date Jan 2017

Updated February 2023

Review Date January 2025
without modification

General

Ulidia Integrated College believes that providing Equal Opportunities for pupils and staff is central to an effective education system.

The College firmly believes that positive steps must be taken to overcome inequality and to promote genuine equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff in schools.

Promoting equal opportunities involves focusing on each person's individual needs and allowing all members of the school community the opportunity to develop to their full potential. This policy seeks to enhance the achievement of all pupils, whatever their background. Central to this is the student as an individual who is encouraged to reach his or her full potential.

All students need to feel that they are valued, that their identity is respected, and the school is secure and welcoming environment. All students are entitled to a balanced, broad-based, and relevant curriculum. A wide range of achievements will be celebrated.

The policy also seeks to secure equality of opportunity for school staff. Fair and objective appointment procedures enable the school to draw on the talents of existing staff and to attract applications for vacancies from a wide range of candidates. Not only do procedures promote confidence and boost staff morale but they also allow students to benefit from a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience in their teachers.

The whole school Equal Opportunities policy applies everywhere in the school, including classroom, corridor, outdoor areas, canteen, and staffroom. It informs and influences all aspects of school life. It also affects the way that governors' meetings and parents' meetings are conducted. Parents and other visitors to the school will be made aware of the policy.

Admissions:

The Board of Governors is the Admission Authority for Ulidia Integrated College. The school admits students irrespective of their gender, race, creed, disability or special educational needs, provided that there are good prospects of meeting their needs without unduly prejudicing the education and welfare of other students.

Appointment of Staff:

The school appoints staff irrespective of their race, gender, disability, marital status, age or sexual orientation.

Curriculum:

There shall be no differentiation in the curriculum offered to boys and girls. Teaching and other groupings shall generally be co-educational unless there is well-founded reason to operate with single-sex groupings for specific purposes (for instance in aspects of PE, or where a control group may be originated to assist educational research into comparative performance).

The curriculum will encourage students to question assumptions and stereotypes regarding gender, race, creed, disability, and sexual orientation.

Opportunities will be provided widely across the curriculum for studies in which minority groups and disadvantaged or persecuted sectors of society are actively explored to encourage understanding, tolerance, and compassion for others. The issue of race relations will be particularly explored to compensate for the school's lack of direct exposure to a multi-racial society.

Students will explore aspects of citizenship through various areas of the curriculum and these experiences will include aspects relating directly and indirectly to equal opportunities within society.

The organisation and content of the school's curriculum will ensure that all children, regardless of their gender, race, creed, disability or special educational needs, have equal access to a high-quality educational experience. Specific support mechanisms will be provided to assist those who need special consideration in the type of teaching provision and the resources offered for them to reach their full potential. This principle underpins the school's philosophy of equality of opportunity. It applies equally to all students who have a special need of any kind. Thus, additional support is not seen in such circumstances as contradictory to this principle.

The school's extra-curricular activities will equally demonstrate the school's commitment to equal opportunities. It will do this through its transparent inclusion of a full cross-section of students in its activities and through the range and type of activity provided. The extra-curricular programme will also demonstrate the school's commitment to equal opportunities through the way its staff relate to its students and the way we expect students to behave towards each other. The role models of staff will provide a demonstration of mutual respect and respect for all.

Relationships between individuals:

Each child or adult is expected to treat others without regard to their race, nationality, religion, gender, social class, accent, physical appearance, or any disability except where common decency and consideration dictate. Those who demonstrate discrimination or abuse on the basis, of gender, race, creed, disability, or special educational needs will be subject to the school's disciplinary policies and procedures. This applies to both students and staff and due processes will be applied in either case.

Age:

Everyone at the school, regardless of their age, is entitled to equal respect, and their interests shall be considered equally, save in those situations covered by the Children Act 1989 where the interests of a child are paramount. Adults and older children are expected to show responsibility in accordance with their age and experience.

Building access and other special facilities to assist those with physical disability:

The school is committed to providing wheelchair access wherever practicable. It will also work actively to provide special facilities wherever practicable and as far as funding will allow to meet the special needs of both students and staff.

Marital status:

Staff will not be discriminated against on the basis, of marital status and/or family responsibilities.

Religious Observance:

There is no compulsory worship in the school and there shall be no attempt to promote a particular religion. Students are provided with the opportunity to explore their spiritual beliefs freely and to question religious faiths as they see appropriate through both the school's curriculum and through acts of collective worship.

Consultation and Complaints:

Any breach of equal opportunities principles shall be regarded as a serious matter and be submitted to formal complaint processing. In addition, the school encourages an open dialogue regarding all school matters and staff and students are encouraged to contribute their views informally as well.

The Student Council provides a forum for students to raise such matters if, concerns should arise or issues need discussing. Various forums within the school offer staff opportunities for issues to be raised and discussed within groups.

Monitoring:

In addition to the above, Equal Opportunities practice is to be monitored formally once a year by a representative student/staff group. Concerns raised may be discussed with the school, as a whole, via the above processes. The school will keep an electronic record of any incidents involving racial or disability discrimination.

The attainment of students from minority groups will be monitored regularly as part of the school's assessment and performance analysis procedures and through its mentoring programmes. The relevant pastoral staff will actively follow up any cases that indicate a cause for concern. Similarly, the incidence of rewards, sanctions and exclusions will be assessed annually.

Implementation:

All staff and governors will be made aware of the school's policy.

Students will be made aware of the principles of the policy through the areas of the curriculum and the 'hidden curriculum' as outlined above and through the example shown by members of staff. Parents will be made aware of the policy via the school website.