

THE GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. EDUCATION

Policy Statement

The Council of The Girls' Day School Trust is committed to equal opportunities in education and will not unlawfully discriminate against any pupil at, or applicant to, its schools on the grounds of race, nationality, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief or disability.

This policy embraces the following areas.

(a) Admissions

Each school has its own written admissions policy for all points of entry, and a copy is available from the school.

Admission to schools is dependent on achieving an acceptable standard in an assessment or examination appropriate to the age group and academic pace of the school, as well as the availability of places. All examinations and tests are expected to be free of bias, and broadly to reflect expectations of pupils at the relevant stage in their development, regardless of background.

Arrangements for tests are also made with the intention of ensuring that no candidate is unfairly disadvantaged, and, where practicable, reasonable adjustments will be made to cater for individual needs.

(b) Transfers

Arrangements for transfer between key stages (e.g. from Junior to Senior Department and entry to the Sixth Form) are subject to the terms of the contract with parents and written criteria published by the school.

Continuity of education is anticipated normally throughout each age range (i.e. the Junior and Senior Departments) and at the key stages of transfer unless in the opinion of the Head after due deliberation the pupil will not benefit from continuing to be educated at the school or has not attained a sufficiently high standard of work or behaviour for continuation or for entry to the next stage. Factors such as poor behaviour or lack of motivation on the part of the pupil or a complete breakdown of the professional relationship between the family and the school may be taken into account. As a term of the parent contract, parents and pupils agree to be bound by the school rules and to support the school in maintaining its ethos and good standards of behaviour.

Clear procedures must be in place to keep parents informed of pupil progress in any of the above areas at the earliest opportunity, and of any targets to be met should transfer be in doubt. Specific procedures for certain key stages of transfer are set out in the parent contract.

Transfer between Trust schools, for example as a result of relocation or the need for boarding facilities, may be arranged. Any such transfer will be subject to the availability of a place and the professional judgment of the school in which a place is being sought of the ability of the pupil concerned to benefit from such a place, given the overall nature of the intake. This may necessitate the pupil's involvement in some

form of admissions procedure, in addition to a recommendation from the original Head.

Special arrangements apply to the Belvedere School, Liverpool.

(c) The Curriculum

Trust schools aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, with time-tabling designed to support the widest possible access to the range of subjects available, and protect valued minority subjects wherever possible. In order to remain educationally and economically viable, however, and to keep pace with developments in the curriculum, the availability of specific subject choices and minimum/maximum group sizes may be subject to alteration over time. Details of the curriculum offered are readily available in all schools.

Where appropriate and practicable, curricular arrangements may be adjusted to reflect pupils' individual needs.

(d) Special educational needs

The Trust has established guidelines for its schools on responding to pupils with special educational needs ("SEN") and all schools have a written policy setting out their approach to identification/support and highlighting any costs to parents. Some limited funding for assessment and materials or equipment required to meet particular pupil needs is available to schools on application to the Trust. These individual cases of need are catered for in accordance with criteria published to the Heads.

Initial and on-going pupil assessment should enable pupil difficulties/special gifts to be identified/supported. Each school should designate an appropriate member of staff to co-ordinate arrangements for pupils with SEN. However, the Trust does not, in the main, employ specialist SEN staff, and will put in place what can be reasonably expected within an academically selective establishment.

(e) Religious observance

Schools are required to provide assemblies which bring together the whole community to reflect on moral, spiritual and ethical issues, and promote a sense of the existence of God or of a reality which transcends the purely material. This is generally achieved within a broadly Christian framework but should take account of the specific needs of the school community. There are provisions for pupils to be excused attendance.

The Trust's policy is that religious studies should be accessible to all pupils. However, pupils may be excused from all or part of the programme at the written request of parents.

Schools seek to make appropriate arrangements to reflect the requirements of different religious faiths with regard to acceptable variations to school uniform, catering arrangements and authorised absence for religious festivals falling during term time. These may include reasonable arrangements to allow for specific acts of religious observance in school.

(f) Disability and access for the disabled

The Trust will seek to deal with the individual needs of all pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities as far as reasonably practicable.

Statutory requirements regarding access for the disabled to new buildings are met. Some of the Trust's existing premises are subject to listed building and other

planning restrictions or cannot readily be modified. However, each school has its own accessibility plan, which sets out a structured programme to increase access to its facilities.

(g) Scholarships, bursaries and prizes

Arrangements for the award of scholarships, bursaries and prizes are made with the intention of providing equality of opportunity for candidates.

(h) Exclusion

Schools are required to follow the procedures for the fixed period or permanent exclusion of pupils contained within the Regulations of the Council.

(i) Other policies

Individual schools operate a range of other policies in all of which they are expected to reflect equal opportunities' issues. These include policies on, for example:

- safeguarding
- discipline/sanctions
- anti-bullying
- access/support for school trips and extra curricular activities
- entry to public examinations.

(j) Monitoring of policy implementation

Applications and admissions are subject to ethnic monitoring, and ethnic monitoring will be undertaken in respect of academic performance over time. All other policies are subject to regular review by Heads or the Trust.

(k) Complaints

Any parent who is not satisfied that the above policies have been properly applied may make a complaint in accordance with the Trust's formal complaints procedure, which complies with all statutory requirements and is available from the school.

Pupils should be made aware of the mechanisms available to them within school to raise matters of concern of an academic or pastoral nature.

2. **EMPLOYMENT**

Policy Statement

The Council of The Girls' Day School Trust is committed to equal opportunities in employment.

The Council's policy aims to ensure that all employees are recruited, trained and promoted on the basis of ability, the requirements of the job and relevant and objective criteria.

The Trust will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee or job applicant on the grounds of race, nationality, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, belief or disability in any matters to do with employment

This policy embraces the following areas.

(a) Recruitment and promotion

All posts are advertised, either internally or externally as appropriate. Vacancies for Heads and deputy Heads are always advertised nationally.

All Heads and others with responsibility for recruitment are required to adhere to the guidance on fair recruitment procedures provided by the Trust.

Recruitment is done on the basis of matching skills, qualifications and experience with a person specification for the post in accordance with recommended best practice for ensuring equality of opportunity in employment.

(b) Employment of ex-offenders

Many posts involve substantial opportunity for unsupervised access to children and are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974. Applicants are therefore required to declare any criminal convictions, including those normally regarded as 'spent' under the Act. All candidates offered an appointment to an exempt post are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed, which will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions.

All other posts fall into the category of "regulated positions" as defined in the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2000, and all candidates offered an appointment are required to obtain a Standard Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed.

In the event that the Disclosure reveals a criminal record or other information of concern, this will be discussed with the candidate before a decision is made whether or not to confirm the offer of employment. In making this decision, the Trust will consider the nature of the offence and whether in the opinion of the Trust this makes the applicant unsuitable for the type of work to be undertaken or unacceptable to other employees, how long ago the offence was committed and the age of the prospective employee at that time, together with any other factors that may be relevant.

(c) Pay and conditions

The Council's pay policy, pay scales and other staff benefits and policies are published in the Trust's Notes of Guidance for Schools, and apply to all staff. Part-time staff benefit on a pro-rata basis from the same pay scales and benefits as full-time staff.

(d) Access to training and development

Training and development opportunities are available to all staff as appropriate, and all staff are entitled to an annual review interview. In schools, it is the Trust's policy that all newly qualified teachers are provided with an appropriate induction training programme in accordance with national guidelines. A Central Training and Staff Development Programme provides opportunities for all staff to apply for training grants, and to attend central training programmes as appropriate. The Trust Office has attained Investors in People accreditation.

(e) Disability and access for the disabled

The Trust will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements for applicants with disabilities to attend interview. As in paragraph 1(f) the needs of employees with disabilities will be met whenever reasonably practicable.

(f) Monitoring of policy implementation

Ethnic data is collected on all employees and job applicants and used to monitor the effectiveness of the Council's policies. All policies are subject to regular review.

(g) Complaints

Any member of staff who is not satisfied that the above policies have been properly applied may make a complaint in accordance with the Trust's grievance procedure, which complies with all statutory requirements.

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