

Pupils' Equal Opportunities Policy



SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL

This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including as the context requires, the Little Lambs Nursery, the Pre-Preparatory School, Preparatory School and Senior School).

Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy embraces the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Child Protection Policy, the Learning Support Policy, the Behaviour Policy and the SENDA Policy of Sutton Valence School. It has been reviewed following the publication in June 2021 of the new DfE non-statutory guidance, 'Gender Separation in Mixed Schools'.

This policy sets out to support the aims of Sutton Valence School by allowing all pupils to achieve their individual best and for each member of the community to be treated equally and thereby to flourish. This policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Guidelines to Life at Sutton Valence School' a copy of which is available in the portal and in the Pupil Information Team. The School is a Christian foundation that welcomes the contributions that members of all denominations and faiths make to the whole community. The Governors and all staff are committed to meeting the specific needs of each pupil and acknowledge and value all linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds. This reflects our ethos of a holistic education for life, valuing a broad range of learners.

It embodies our ethos of learning to set high expectations and placing equal emphasis on individual qualities such as leadership, service, compassion and making a difference to the community.

It also focuses on the development of international understanding, cultural difference and global citizenship with the spirit of valuing and respecting difference.

We value all pupils equally and aim to provide a safe and inclusive environment in which all can achieve their full potential, regardless of race, ethnicity, colour, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. We regard it as unacceptable to discriminate against anyone on these grounds.

This philosophy is in particular applied with regard to the following specific areas:

1. Admissions: The School admissions criteria are objective and are consistently applied. They focus on the prospective pupils' academic and all-round potential and their school record. Race, gender and disability are not part of the criteria applied;
2. Discipline: Any pupil, or group of pupils, who discriminates against or harasses any other pupil or member of staff, either verbally, by action or otherwise, on unacceptable grounds, will be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the School. Such behaviour will result in the School's Sanctions Policy being applied.

Harassment and other difficulties

In line with the Complaints Policy, any pupil or their parent on their behalf who feels that they have been singled out for unfair treatment or otherwise harassed on unacceptable grounds should raise the matter with their Housemaster or Housemistress or other senior member of staff;

Any such report will be fully investigated by the Housemaster or Housemistress or other senior member of staff and, if it appears that unacceptable discrimination or harassment of any type has occurred, the Headmaster will be informed and disciplinary measures will be taken.

All members of staff are aware of, and sensitive to, issues of discrimination and will, at all appropriate times, promote awareness of the negative aspects of stereotyping and the development of unacceptable discriminatory attitudes.

The School adopts a zero tolerance approach to peer-on-peer abuse. The School strives to ensure that no victim is ever made to feel ashamed.

Gender Separation

As a coeducational School, we have carried out a gender separation assessment. This enabled us to establish that there were no issues with regards to academic or co-curricular opportunities. Where there were examples of gender separation these fell into the “Relevant lawful exceptions” category. They are:

- Some PSHE lessons are delivered into groups organised by gender;
- The girls and boys do have different choices with regards to their sporting options;
- Separate toilet and washing facilities are provided in keeping with (regulation four of the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 for pupils over eight years and Schedule 22 of the Equality Act 2010);
- Separate boarding accommodation is provided for all pupils. Much is done to ensure that the same standard of accommodation is provided for both boys and girls.

Safeguarding statement

Sutton Valence School is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all pupils and to all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils.

Equal Opportunities statement

The aims of the School and the principles of excellent pastoral care will be applied to all children irrespective of differences in ethnic background, culture, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender and disabilities, so long as in the last matter the student is able to involve himself or herself in the activity concerned; equally these differences will be recognised and respected, and the School will aim to provide a positive culture of tolerance, equality and mutual respect.

TIDE Committee (Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality)

In September 2020, a Pupil Diversity Committee was established. The Committee was given a broad remit that included looking to ensure that those of all faiths, races, identity and sexual orientation felt that not only were they accepted in our community but also that they had a voice. Similarly, it was hoped that the Committee would work with Sutton Valence Prep School, the Head of ESL and the Boarding Houses to ensure that their initiatives have the desired impact. The Committee had also invited contributions from Old Suttonians. The aftermath of the pandemic however stalled the development of this idea. Consequently, from September 2022 the Assistant Head Wellbeing, who also oversees our Pathways provision, has taken responsibility for re-launching this initiative that will give the pupils both a voice and leadership opportunities. Recent changes to our uniform guidance reflects the feedback from this group.

In this way, the School will continue to look to be proud of its community where “each cares for all and individuality is cherished”.

Transgender specific considerations

- There is no definitive point at which a pupil will become a transgender person. However, where a pupil expresses a preference or asks to be referred to by another name, this is usually considered a trigger point for the school to provide support for that pupil as part of its duties under the Act.
- The level of support provided will therefore need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering issues such as:
 1. The pupil’s preferences and presentation;
 2. Their communications about this e.g.to family/peers;
 3. How long the pupil considers they are or have been transgender;
 4. Whether or not they are receiving treatment;
 5. Whether welfare plans are in place;
 6. Guidance from children’s social care (CSC) if anyone at the school has concerns about the pupil’s welfare or considers them at risk of harm.

Risk assessment and monitoring

The School safeguards and promotes the welfare of all pupils through its assessment and management of risks, including risks arising from the examples of gender separation listed above. The risk assessment is an addendum to the Gender Separation Assessment. This includes risks of unintended consequences arising from the gender separation, and details of action taken to mitigate potential negative impacts such as the effect on pupils’ chances to develop into socially confident individuals with their peers of the opposite gender.

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