

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Communication, Differentiation, Learning Support, Anti – Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Assessment and Collective Worship.

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Ladies' College. As a girls' school we are proud of our history as pioneers in the movement for women's education and we continue to combat prejudice where it exists. We welcome applications from students with a diverse range of backgrounds. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our students for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, providing a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each girl feels valued and can flourish.

The Ladies' College is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or social background.

The College's articles of foundation (non-denominational) make explicit our obligation to provide opportunities for collective worship to all students. This is done on a broadly Christian basis. The right of parents to request that their daughter be excused from this collective worship is also safeguarded (1962 Ordinance: Section 18).

The purpose of this policy document is to define the principles and aims of offering equal opportunities at Melrose and at the Ladies' College Pre-Preparatory and to provide a framework which;

- promotes consistency in school planning and school practice.
- facilitates development and change.
- informs new staff, pupils, parents, governors and the wider community.

Principles

- The Principal, the Melrose Senior Leadership Team, Registrar, teaching and support staff play an active role in the implementation of the College's inclusive policy on equal opportunities.
- A successful equal opportunities policy also requires strong and positive support from parents and full acceptance of the College's ethos of tolerance and respect for others.
- Every girl should be given the opportunity to reach her full potential in all areas of school life: different girls may require different treatment in order to do so.
- Equality of opportunity does not equate to equality of treatment.

- All differences, including those of race, religion, gender and social background should be respected.
- Harassment in all its forms is unacceptable. Our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour and Discipline policies contain clear procedures for dealing with any incidences which may arise.

Aims and Objectives

Our aims and objectives are to:

- Promote tolerance of one another and respect for each other's position within the College community.
- Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage students to recognise the contributions made by different cultures and faiths.
- Teach girls to recognise where bias exists.
- Ensure that every girl understands that we live in a diverse society and that we should not discriminate against those different from ourselves, especially with regard to race, religion, gender or social background.
- Ensure that current pupils, prospective pupils, staff, prospective staff and all other members of the school community will not be discriminated against for reasons of race, religion, gender or social background.
- Ensure that each member of our school community values the needs and beliefs of all the other members.
- Instil respect for others and for ourselves.
- Do all we can to meet the physical needs of all our pupils, within the limitations of a listed building.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

Strategies

- Celebrating racial and cultural diversities.
- Using PSHE to explore differences, encourage understanding and instil respect.
- Using RE lessons to teach the values and beliefs of Christianity and make comparisons with the values and beliefs of Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism.
- Responding to the diverse needs of all pupils.
- Helping children to overcome potential barriers to learning.
- Raising awareness of the needs of others e.g. by fund raising and supporting a variety of charities.
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Staff work closely with our Learning Support Coordinator, Miss Coubrough-Barnett in order to support pupils with specific learning needs. (See Learning Support Policy.)

The College as an Equal Opportunities Employer

An equal opportunities statement specifically relating to staff can be found in the Staff Handbook.

Requests for Variation in the School Uniform

Although the Ladies' College, Melrose and the Ladies' College Pre-Preparatory have Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief and we welcome people of all faiths. However, parents should be aware that all pupils at Melrose and the Ladies' College Pre-Preparatory are required to wear a uniform. The Head Teacher will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the school's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Head Teacher may take expert advice, and will normally arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

Monitoring

The Ladies' College, Melrose and the Ladies' College Pre-Preparatory monitors its equal opportunities policy regularly in order to ensure its effectiveness. This policy is formally reviewed every two years, or earlier if it is considered necessary.

Reporting

- Any concerns or suspicions regarding discrimination by any person within the College's sphere of responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.
- In such cases pupils are able to report directly to a teacher, school nurse or other source of help referred to on posters around the school. Pupils will be offered guidance by their class teacher and the wider school community.
- Staff should report to their line manager, the Head Teacher, the Principal or Governing Body as appropriate.

Resources

Assemblies.

RE and Collective Worship.

PSHE.

Other subjects, including Geography.

School Uniform Policy.

Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

Multicultural toys, books and electronic media portraying cultural diversity in a positive light.

