



# EPSOM

## COLLEGE

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY - PUPILS**

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Epsom College ('the College').

The College recognises the benefits of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils will be taught to value and respect others. The College is committed to being an equal opportunities school and is committed to equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment ("protected characteristics").

#### **Aims**

The aims of this policy and the College's ethos as a whole is to:

- Communicate the College's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for its pupils;
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics;
- Promote equal treatment for all members of the College community;
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment, free from discrimination;
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the College;
- Comply with the College's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010;
- Remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist;
- Enforce that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be countenanced.

All members of the College community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.

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

Staff at the College, particularly those working at a management level, have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the College with regard to equal opportunities.

#### **Regulatory framework**

This policy has been prepared to meet the College's obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- The Equality Act 2010 and schools: departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (DfE, May 2014)
- Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2014)
- Working Together with Safeguarding Children (December 2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Exclusions, Removal and Review Policy
- Disability, Equality and Access – 3 Year Plan
- SEN and Disability Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy – Staff
- Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy

## **Admission**

The College treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the College's Admissions Policy. Although an academically selective school, each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the College's selection criteria based on an applicant's ability and aptitude. The College accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their gender, disability, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs ('SEN').

Please see the Equal Opportunities Policy – Staff and the Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy in relation to our approach to staff recruitment and selection.

Parents must inform the College 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 fully to participate in the education provided by the College so that the College can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children. The College will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the College cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the College's admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend the College due to financial hardship. Details of our provision for bursaries may be found on our website or obtained from the Admissions Department or Bursar's Office.

## **Educational services**

The College affords all pupils 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). The College will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The College will:

- Treat all members of the College 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 pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support;
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds;
- Challenge inappropriate and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff;
- Encourage children to work and play freely and have respect for all other pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic;
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of co-curricular activities;
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in College;
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices;
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSD 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;
  - Encourage children to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order better to understand discriminatory behaviours and bias.

The College recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies.

## **Religious belief**

Although the College's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the College 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 College community.

The Governing Body, through the Senior Leadership Team, 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.

### **Requests for variation in the school uniform**

All pupils are required to wear a uniform until Year 12 (Lower Sixth), and a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 12 and 13 (Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth). The Head will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the College's policy on health and safety and it is reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the College's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn to College, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Head, in advance.

### **Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disability**

The College has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils, including during the admissions process.

Where the College is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the College is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The College will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the College. Further information on the College's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the College's SEN and Disability Equality Policy.

The College has a Disability Equality and Access Plan in place which can be found on the College website and a hard copy may be made available upon request via the Bursar's office. This sets out the College's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the College's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the College for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the College; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

### **Monitoring and review**

The Head regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to the Governors on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

### **Breach of this policy**

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the College's Behaviour Policy.

If you believe that a child has received less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to a child's detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the College's complaints procedure which is available on the website or from the Bursar's Office.