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Equality, Diversity and Anti-Racism Policy

“The richness, strength and beauty of life rests largely on the diversity of our gifts, the ideas and thoughts that we all bring together.”

Mother Mabel Digby

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Student Behaviour Policy
- Counter-Bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Children - Child Protection Policy and KCSIE
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Accessibility Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Student Complaints Policy

Overall aims

We at Woldingham School understand and take seriously our responsibility as educators to ensure that we promote equality, embrace diversity and are actively anti-racist in our curriculum, our ethos, our recruitment and our teaching; we understand the need to address in meaningful and sensitive ways all of the issues that young people face in these areas.

Woldingham School will be proactive in implementing its duties described in the Race Amendment Act 2020 and the Equality Act 2010. The school will seek to eliminate racial discrimination and actively promote racial equality and positive race relations. We are also wholeheartedly committed to ensuring equality across each of the protected characteristics.

Protected Characteristics

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Woldingham strives to be an inclusive and tolerant environment in which the wellbeing of every young person comes first. Should a student ever be worried about racism, or prejudice of any kind, or if they feel they have been the victim of any type of abuse, they should report it immediately as discrimination will not be tolerated.

1. The School Community

Woldingham School is an independent boarding school for girls aged 11-18 years and is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. We welcome students from all faiths, cultures, races and backgrounds; we encourage all students to reflect on spiritual, moral and social questions and our approach is influenced by our Catholic ethos and tradition. The school community is made up of children, parents, legal guardians, teachers and other employees and governors from many different races, creeds and backgrounds.

2. Anti-Racism

We understand our position of privilege as an independent school. We are a community that has always sought to promote and support a deeper understanding of equality, diversity and anti-racism, but we also accept that we should regularly consider how we can do more. This includes, for example, a commitment to develop the racial diversity of our curriculum and the racial literacy of our staff. We must also equip our students with the knowledge and skills to meaningfully reflect on the most difficult concepts such as accepting diversity and countering entrenched racism. As educators, we want to work hard to better understand the issues at hand and make changes that will be genuinely impactful.

In summary we will endeavour to:

- challenge racial discrimination, racist behaviour, racist language or harassment, prejudice and stereotyping, however thoughtless or unintentional;
- make sure that all students and staff are encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential;

- provide an environment which respects and values diversity and shows consideration for the traditions, cultures and religious practices of people from different racial groups and different geographical regions;
- prevent direct and indirect, overt and covert discrimination on grounds of race or geographical origin;
- prevent direct and indirect, overt and covert discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics;
- assist in the identification of possible barriers to equality of opportunity for students and staff and to ensure that these barriers are addressed where possible;
- develop a curriculum that will include considerations of race and racism, from an anti-racist perspective, that should be embedded across the whole school curriculum;
- increase the racial literacy of all staff through professional development;
- improve and develop the staff recruitment process to increase diversity within the staff body.

3. Understanding and tackling Racism

Racism is a form of bullying. It can be both (a) **institutional** and (b) **personal**, overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional.

a. Institutional racism:

- *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report* defined this as: ‘The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.’
- When a child is subject to racist bullying or harassment, their behaviour and attainment are likely to be affected; if the behaviour is treated in isolation without taking into consideration the issues and effects of racism, this can be described as institutional racism. The racist element must be explicitly recognised and dealt with.
- This type of racism is also covert and indirect and therefore can be difficult to identify and address. It is often evident in the assumptions, beliefs and values that affect people’s instinctive responses. It can be demonstrated subconsciously in subtle ways and Woldingham School recognises the need consciously to challenge such attitudes.

b. Personal racism:

This is often direct and identifiable and can be manifested through harassment and offensive behaviour in the following ways:

- Physical assault against a person or group due to their colour, ethnicity, geographical origin or culture;
- Derogatory name calling, insults, ridiculing and racist jokes;
- Racist graffiti;
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges or insignia;

- Verbal abuse and threats;
- Incitement of others to behave in a racist way;
- Racist comments within the context of lessons.

Alleged incidents of racism should be investigated in line with our Student Behaviour Policy.

- Students should report any incident to their Form Tutor/HOY or a member of staff they feel most comfortable raising this issue with
- The member of staff should alert the Deputy Head and a report on the incident should be completed by the initial member of staff
- If the Senior Deputy Head is not available, then a member of SLT should be alerted

If an incidence of racism is proven, the Head will need to be informed so that a thorough investigation can take place and an appropriate sanction approved.

Possible disciplinary action by the school could include

- Education on the wrongs of racism in conjunction with more punitive approaches wherever possible, as stated in the **Runnymede perspective: Race and Racism in English Secondary Schools**.
- An official warning from the Deputy Head after a proper apology has been made;
- An after-school detention;
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises and life (such as co-curricular activities);
- In serious cases or where there is extreme or repeated racism, a fixed term exclusion from the school
- Continued racist behaviour will be incompatible with staying at the school and permanent exclusion may be used in such cases.

It is important that significant effort is made to assist the victim of the racist incident to feel comfortable with the outcome of any disciplinary measures taken. It is also important to remember that anyone who has been a victim of a racist incident has the legal right to report it as a crime to the police.

See the school's 'Student Behaviour Policy' and 'Counter-Bullying Policy' for further details about our response to bullying in general.

4. Equal Treatment, preventing discrimination and recognition of Protected Characteristics

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. It may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of

a protected characteristic as set out below. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity).

Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race.

Woldingham School recognises the benefits of having a diverse school community with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. The school is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and will promote equal treatment for all members of the school community. In the provision of equal opportunities, the school recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics.

The school will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and SMSC development of our students, through assemblies, through the supportive School culture, the curriculum, staff professional development and through the school's policies.

Inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged. Children will be encouraged to value and respect appropriately all those they encounter at or through the school.

5. Inclusivity regarding disabilities

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability, and this treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Woldingham School welcomes applications for places from people who have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Every application will be processed and considered fairly. However, at present, the school's facilities, physical and otherwise, for the physically disabled are limited, but all that is reasonable will be done to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to its systems and procedures in order to accommodate disabilities of which it has been made aware, as set out in the School's Disability and Access Policies. However, parents and guardians must take on board the school's site and financial limitations and work with them to agree any reasonable adjustments, with due consideration of cost and staffing implications.

The school will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and

proportionate, the school will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. The school has an 'Accessibility Plan', which is kept under review and revised as necessary.

6. Inclusivity regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and English as an Additional Language

Woldingham School is inclusive and opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need or learning difficulty (SEND), or because English is an additional language (EAL).

The school maintains and promotes a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people within the Equality Act 2010 and those with special educational needs according to the SEND Code of practice and will not treat students and their parents or legal guardians less favourably on these grounds without proper justification.

The School's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy includes details about the welfare and educational provision for students with special educational needs and is guided by the principles of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. The SENCO is available for consultation as appropriate. Children with special needs may have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which will be reviewed and monitored carefully. Please see the 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy' for further details of the procedures offered by the school to assist these children.

The school is English-speaking but will provide appropriate support for EAL students so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students.

The school has an on-going duty to make reasonable adjustments for SEND students in respect of the education and associated services provided, to ensure that such students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students. In making "reasonable adjustments", the school endeavours to provide relevant auxiliary aids and services for SEND students and will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids or services. However, parents and guardians must take on board the school's site and financial limitations and work with them to agree any reasonable adjustments with due consideration of cost and staffing implications.

7. Bullying

Woldingham School will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying include:

- bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture,
- bullying related to SEND
- bullying related to appearance or health conditions,
- bullying relating to sexual orientation,
- bullying of young carers or looked after children, or otherwise related to home circumstances,
- sexist or sexual bullying.

The School's Counter-bullying Policy contains more details about the School's anti-bullying practices.

8. The Curriculum

Following on from our aims, we are committed to reflecting on the appropriateness of our curriculum in raising and educating young people in these issues and promoting voices and ideas from a wide variety of cultures and races. We need to reflect and to do better to ensure that future generations are better educated and do not act inappropriately out of ignorance.

We actively carry out a school wide review of the relevant curriculum areas on a regular basis with regards to how we more actively address issues of equality, diversity and prejudice, notwithstanding the restrictions placed on the curriculum by exam requirements. We are also reviewing our anti-bullying policies to ensure they explicitly protect all students and particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds from bullying, harassment and attack.

We understand that the importance of racial literacy and anti-racism should not be left to the volition of individual teachers but needs to be part of a whole-school-approach. We will continue to develop this through staff induction, ongoing staff professional training and development, regular discussion at staff meetings, in education steering groups, through student voice, and when reviewing the curriculum with particular reference to PHSE and SMSC development, RS lessons and assemblies. Students will be valued for their diversity and differences and, in turn, encouraged to value and respect others.

9. Teaching and Learning

Efforts are made to recognise the possibility of bias (for example, gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the school's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.

10. Curriculum Review and Equality and Diversity

A complete curriculum review, as well as a specific review of equality and diversity in the school curriculum, is underway.

11. Admissions

Woldingham School will provide all students equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs. The school will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered.

Candidates for admission as students are required to satisfy the academic and character requirements current at the time of admission and entry to the school as laid out in the 'Admissions Policy'.

12. Religion

The school's religious ethos is Catholic, encouraging all students to contemplate spiritual and moral questions about the nature of reality, reflecting the range of world views present within our community. While our assemblies and services will at times reflect our Catholic heritage, the school respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths, subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the school community as a whole.

13. Gender, Transgender and Sexual Orientation

Relationships and Sex Education Policy

Through our RSE policy we state:

As the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education reminds us:

“.....Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love. Therefore, it is an integral part of the education process.”

14. Transgender Guidance

Every child has the right to feel safe, welcomed and valued as an individual. Our School is committed to working with families and other agencies to ensure that the needs of all children and young people in our care are met and that they can achieve their full potential. Woldingham School's approach to transgender identities is to minimise the distress and disruption to all students by:

- Ensuring staff and Governors are dealing with transgender matters inclusively and sensitively:
- Providing an inclusive environment for any transgender student:
- Ensuring all students are aware of, and educated on, issues of transgender.

The school will act in line with the Equality Act (2010) and current legislation to ensure that any trans process is implemented sensitively and effectively and to ensure that all students will be supported.

Transgender Policy

The school will not discriminate against any student by excluding her from the school, or by subjecting her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs.

15. School uniform

The school will consider reasonable requests to alter the School Uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements and if required to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled children. This also means that Woldingham School will remove any normalised racism and will ensure that anti-racism is at the centre of every aspect of school life.

Certain items of jewellery and headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by students when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare in certain lessons and the school's existing school uniform policy (with regard to, for example, the school colours). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the student or her parents to the Head whose decision will be final, subject to the 'Complaints Procedure'.

Reasonable adjustments may be required to the school uniform for disabled students. The student or his or her parents should refer the matter to the Head to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the student.

Reasonable adjustments may be required to the school's policy on hair style/length and how hair

can be worn throughout the school day, although normally the school will insist that hair colour is natural in hue, rather than dyed.

The school has signed up to the Halo Code in partnership with the Halo Collective, an organisation committed to ending hair discrimination in schools and workplaces. This is a commitment to safeguard the rights of staff and students to embrace all Afro-hairstyles, acknowledging that Afro-textured hair is an important part of our Black staff and students' racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, and requires specific styling for hair health and maintenance.

We welcome Afro-textured hair worn in all styles including, but not limited to, afros, locs, twists, braids, cornrows, hair straightened through the application of heat or chemicals, weaves, wigs, headscarves, and wraps. Headscarves and wraps must comply with the School's uniform guidelines and be of one, dark colour. Hair colour must also comply with school regulations and be of natural colour.

16. Assemblies and acts of worship

The school's religious ethos is Catholic, encouraging all students to contemplate spiritual and moral questions, reflecting the range of worldviews present within our community. The school respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the school community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

While some of the school assemblies offer a Catholic/Christian message, they also cater for students of any or no religion. Parents may write to the Head if they wish to withdraw their child from religious assemblies or events, although normally all students will be expected to attend. The school, through the pastoral structure, will make every effort to support individual students with particular cultural needs (religious, ethnic, creative, etc.) provided that the same are consistent with the law and the inclusive ethos and tradition of the school.

A room can be made available on request to allow students and staff of any belief to carry out their religious observances during break and lunch time. The school will grant requests of absence wherever possible and reasonable on grounds of belief.

17. Monitoring

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the school's Equality, Diversity and Anti-Racism Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Head day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

Procedure:

- The Deputy Head Wellbeing and Head of Marden will lead on this.
- The lead Governors on Diversity and Inclusion will meet with the Deputy Head termly and review progress and monitor
- The Deputy Head will prepare a report each term for discussion with lead governors and then for the Head's report to the full board of Governors meeting

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively and encourages diversity in the school, all reported breaches of this policy will be recorded, and this record will be reviewed annually by the SLT through the complaints, behaviour and bullying logs.

18. Complaints

A student, parent, or guardian who believes that they (or the student) have received less favourable treatment on any of the grounds referred to in this policy may make a formal complaint in writing in accordance with the school's complaints procedure for students, available on school noticeboards, or the school's complaints procedure for parents, which is on the school website and a copy of which will be available on request.

All complaints will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the school community who is found to have acted in contravention of this Policy.

19. Confidentiality

The school will have due regard to any request by a parent or student (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.