



Equal Opportunities – Students

TAUNTON SCHOOL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR STUDENTS

General Statement

Taunton School is an Equal Opportunities School and is committed to ensuring that it provides equality of educational opportunities that are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination, victimisation or harassment and in particular on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, cultural background, religious beliefs, linguistic background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, disability, special educational needs, academic ability, sporting ability or because the a child is adopted or is a carer.

As a result each student shall be regarded as an individual of equal worth and importance. Good, inclusive and tolerant relations between all students with or without shared characteristics will be fostered.

We shall strive to ensure that Equal Opportunities are evident in

1. the formal curriculum of the school e.g. lessons
2. the informal curriculum of the school e.g. extra curricular events.
3. the 'hidden' curriculum of the school e.g. the ethos of the school.

We shall ensure that the students of the school are made aware of and understand this policy. It should be read in conjunction with the Anti Bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Admission of students

The school admits students on academic criteria, interview and previous school's report. Further details can be found in our Admissions Policy.

The school is aware of the following protective characteristics from the 2010 Equalities Act.

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment (see separate Gender Policy)
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation (see separate Gender Policy)

NOTES (Not exhaustive)

The following information is designed to provide definitions and examples of unacceptable behaviour. Not all of the protected characteristics are listed but the following guidance is useful when considering discrimination against those not listed.

Race and Related Characteristics

We regard as racism any attitude held by a person or group of one ethnic origin towards an individual or group of a different origin, which is offensive, discriminatory and hostile towards the individual, or group on grounds of ethnic differences. We also consider racism to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such attitudes; or any incitement to behaviour of that kind

Taunton School is a multi ethnic community in which race equality and diversity is a fundamental principle among staff and students.

Gender and Related Characteristics

We consider sexism to be an attitude held by a person or group of one sex towards an individual or group of the other sex which is offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual or group on grounds of gender difference or sexuality.

We consider sexual harassment to be behaviour, acts or expressions that reflect such an attitudes or incitement to behaviour of that kind.

We consider that gender identity to be the innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. Individuals will not be discriminated against due to their gender identity and the school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that individual's needs are met.

Religion and Related Characteristics

All students should attend assembly; they are mostly secular and administrative

Taunton School's Free Church foundation, while making it inclusive of all, nevertheless affirms its Christian witness. Students should accept this as part of what the school has to offer. While open to those of all faiths, or none, a respect for Chapel worship is expected of the school community. If students and their parents have religious or moral objections to a student attending Chapel or the religious element of assembly, then they should write to the Headmaster or to the Headmaster of Taunton Preparatory School or the Principal of TSI. Every effort will be made to enable students to worship in centres that are appropriate to their faith.

Our RE lessons are designed to promote an understanding of Judaeo-Christian heritage as well as the religious diversity that characterises modern Britain. As a Christian foundation, some parents have chosen Taunton School for this reason. Whilst Taunton School is open to students of all faiths and or none, it is expected that Christian teaching should be respected. Parents are entitled by law to withdraw their child from religious education lessons if they so wish to. We aim to explain the diversity of beliefs through our RE teaching and hope that therefore the attendance at such lessons promotes the understanding of cultural variations. Parents who nevertheless wish to withdraw their children should write to the Headmaster or the Headmaster of Taunton Preparatory School or the Principal of TSI.

Disability

Disability is defined as a "physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

We will take reasonable steps to try to avoid a disabled student being put at a disadvantage compared to other students. If reasonable to do so we will provide an auxiliary aid or service to a disabled student in order to alleviate any substantial disadvantage.

We regard as unacceptable attitudes held by a person or group towards an individual with a physical or mental disability, which are offensive, discriminatory or hostile towards the individual on grounds of their disability. We hold this view whether the disability is mild or severe. We regard as unacceptable behaviour acts or expressions which reflect such attitudes or any incitement to others to adopt such attitudes.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour (not exhaustive) would be

Race

- (a) a physical assault against a person or group because of colour or ethnicity
- (b) verbal abuse, derogatory name calling, insults, threats, racist jokes
- (c) racist graffiti
- (d) issuing/wearing of racist materials e.g. leaflets, magazines, insignia
- (e) inciting others to behave in a racist manner
- (f) making racist comments or suggestions in the course of discussions or lessons.
- (g) refusing to co-operate with colleagues or students because of colour or ethnic origin
- (h) excluding students from activities, or recruiting and selecting in preferential ways.

Gender

- (a) a physical abuse against a person or group because of their gender or their gender identity
- (b) verbal abuse and intimidation, insults, threats against a person or group, because of their gender.
- (c) using lurid or suggestive vocabulary to cause offence or humiliation.
- (d) reference to an individual or groups sexuality
- (e) making sexist comments or suggestions in the course of discussion or lessons
- (f) refusing to co-operate with colleagues or students because of their gender.

Disability

- (a) physical assault against an individual because his/her disability
- (b) verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats against the individual because of his or her disability
- (c) offensive reference to an individual's disability inside or outside lessons.
- (d) refusing to co-operate with an individual because of his/her disability.

Mechanisms for dealing with any allegation of discrimination or harassment

1. Any such incident should be reported to the head of TS or TPS or TSI or to their Deputies
2. A senior member of staff will interview the individual or group against whom it was alleged to have been committed. Signed written statements may be taken at the interview. If in their judgement the allegation may be substantiated the following measures will be taken.
 - (1) The individual (s) who is/are alleged to have caused the offence will be interviewed by a senior member of staff. Signed written statements may be taken at the interview and the school guidelines on interviewing (in the staff handbook), will be followed.
 - (2) Parents/guardians of all students involved in the incident will be informed.
 - (3) The victims of harassment and discrimination will receive appropriate support and counselling from trained/qualified staff. The bullying policy may apply.
 - (4) Any such incident will be recorded and kept on file.

Sanctions

If a student or a group of students are found to be in breach of our Equal Opportunities Policy, the school will apply an appropriate sanction, which will be recorded in the student's personal file. Appropriate members of staff shall be informed. The following sanctions may be deemed

appropriate

- (a) detention
- (b) suspension
- (c) exclusion

Training

The Headmaster will ensure that all students and staff (teaching and non-teaching) are kept fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities, harassment, discrimination and victimisation.

Monitoring

The policy will be kept under regular review and analysis of incidents will be undertaken with a view to informing or amending practical procedures. Heads of department are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy in their area. Any concerns should be reported to one of the Deputies. The Headmaster will report any serious concerns to the Governors.