

Abberley Hall

Equal Opportunities Policy

Reviewed by RPS Nov 16

Next Review Nov 17

This is an all School Policy including Prep, Pre-Prep, EYFS, After School Care and Holiday Club

This document is a Legal Requirement and an ISI Reporting Standard and a OFSTED Reporting Standard for Boarding Schools

References:

- A. Education and Inspections Act 2006
- B. 'Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff', Section C of ISBA Staff Handbook
- C. Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- D: The Equality Act 2010
- E. 'Presenting Ethnic and National Groups Data' www.ons.gov.uk
- F. ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools, the Regulatory Requirements (September 2015) in particular, paragraphs 39, 40, 56, 57, 65, 66 and 189
- G. 'Technical Guidance for Schools in [England or Scotland]' (Equality and Human Rights Commission or "EHRC")

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1. Equality of Opportunity

Abberley Hall is committed to equal treatment of all irrespective of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, social background, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity. Equal Opportunities is fundamental to the aims of Abberley Hall and preparing our pupils for today's world.

The active pursuit of such aims must be evident in daily work, activities and relationships with each other. We intend to ensure that all pupils enjoy the greatest possible benefits from their attendance at Abberley Hall. Policy statements are intended to embody practical details to help all achieve these high ideals. Entrenched and potentially damaging perceptions need to be challenged.

We welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs (SEN), learning difficulties, and disability.

Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school.

Equality of opportunity is a principle accepted by governors, headmaster, staff, pupils and all who use the school.

2. Equality Of Gender

Ensuring equality of opportunity in relation to gender is a matter of human justice. Sex-stereotyping is wasteful of human potential, both male and female. It denies those affected dignity and respect as unique individuals, and as such is diametrically opposed to the aims of Abberley Hall School.

Education must challenge gender inequality and, by consistent good practice, lead our pupils to challenge the assumptions and the framework within which they grow and develop.

The curriculum, hidden and overt, must work consciously and positively towards ensuring equality of opportunity. Sexism has no place in schools and should not be tolerated.

Aims of Policy

- To build an atmosphere of genuine understanding and support for the issue of gender equality. To enable each individual to derive maximum benefit from schooling, developing abilities, aptitudes, qualities and ambitions freely, unhindered by the restricting effects of sex stereotyping.

Policy

- All members of staff must be vigilant and avoid sexist behaviour that, even when unintentional, can militate against the stated aims.
- There will be equality of access to all areas of the curriculum, irrespective of gender.
- When planning for equality of opportunity, a whole school approach must be taken and pupils must be engaged in facing the issue of sexism and its implications. This involves:
 - Confronting pupils with the reality of stereotyping and encouraging their critical analysis of its implications for members of each sex in general, and for themselves in particular
 - Encouraging pupils to challenge, from the standpoint of human justice, the widespread assumptions of society about 'men's roles' and 'women's roles'.

- Enabling pupils to appreciate that much of their own gender-related value system is the product of socialisation.
- Leading them to question those values and to re-appraise characteristics and qualities that are so often presented in gender specific terms, e.g. the perceived femininity of gentleness and compassion and the perceived masculinity of aggression and ambition.
- When planning the curriculum in detail, content and resources must be carefully considered to ensure their consistency with the spirit of this policy.
- When teaching, staff must ensure that the methodology and the classroom interaction encourage the active involvement of pupils of both sexes. One group must not dominate or claim disproportionate attention.
- Staff will be vigilant and will deal firmly and quickly with incidents of sexual harassment. Offenders will be reprimanded and victims given supportive help.

Areas Requiring Consideration and Vigilance

The following distinctions between the overt and the hidden curricular are not definitive: many areas overlap. However, as long as we are aware of this, the distinctions can assist analysis.

- **Overt Curriculum**
 - Content and Resources: To be evaluated in relation to the images they present of male and female roles and characteristics
 - Option Choices
 - Assemblies
- **Hidden Curriculum**
 - Language Usage: This refers to spoken language in school and to language used in school publications and communications. There should be a consistent approach to the use of first names, irrespective of the pupil's gender.
 - Groupings
 - Classroom Interactions
 - Role Models
 - Visual Displays
 - Harassment

3. Equality of Race and Culture Policy

Policy

Schools must prepare pupils to take their place in the world. The cultural and racial diversity of the immediate community is a vital factor and puts responsibility on the Abberley Hall staff to widen children's experiences and perception, enabling them to appreciate the enrichment that adds to our society from cultural diversity and preparing them for life in a multi-cultural society.

When planning the curriculum, staff should recognize the educational advantages of a multi-cultural approach and its relevance to all areas of the curriculum and all pupils. Strategies must be planned across the curriculum to take account of the following:

- Pupils must know about the diversity of British society.
- School is possibly the only place in which they can be given the information in an honest, well-balanced and unprejudiced way.
- They must be encouraged to consider the implications of the racial, cultural and religious dimensions of society.
- Pupils must be encouraged to discuss openly and to challenge preconceptions about 'other' cultures and races.

Staff should consider the appropriateness for a multi-cultural society of all their teaching material and strategies, and revise or modify them as necessary.

The school must develop knowledge of and sensitivity to the particular needs of various cultural groups and, as far as possible and when necessary, meet the needs of the individual ethnic groups within the community.

Abberley Hall will seek to forge links with members of the community, and with appropriate agencies, to secure a coherent educational provision and equality of opportunity.

We should help our community to appreciate that we may have many differences as people, but the similarities between us are much more important and unifying.

Multi-cultural education must be supported by a clear anti-racist policy. Racist language and behaviour (examples are given later) should not be tolerated from any in Abberley Hall. All teachers must be vigilant in detecting and countering manifestations of racist behaviour and in offering support to victims of such behaviour.

Abberley Hall will keep under regular review the extent to which it is meeting the needs of the community through its multi-cultural approach to education.

Definition of Racist Behaviour

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has described racial harassment as `any hostile or offensive act by a person of one racial and ethnic origin against a person or group of another ethnic origin, or any incitement to commit such an act that:

- Interferes with the peace and comfort of the aggrieved person
- The persons aggrieved fear for their safety
- The quality of life of the person aggrieved is reduced.

Examples of racist behaviour:

- Racist name-calling, insults and joke-making.
- Racist graffiti on walls, furniture or in books.
- Direct physical assault or the threat of it.
- Verbal abuse.
- Incitement of others to racist behaviour.
- Ridiculing of an individual for cultural differences, such as music, dress, food.
- Wearing of badges or insignia belonging to racially motivated organisations.
- Bringing racist literature or propaganda into school.
- Expressing prejudices or deliberate misinformation on racial or ethnic distinctions.
- Refusal to co-operate with other people because of their ethnic origins.

Action to be taken to Combat Racist Behaviour

We are trying to create a community in which justice and respect for all people flourish. The following actions are to be used when unacceptable behaviour occurs:

- Racist graffiti or slogans, wherever they appear, should be removed immediately on discovery.
- Racist literature, badges or insignia should be confiscated. The reasons for not allowing them on the premises should be clearly explained.
- Members of staff should always make absolutely clear to those responsible for racial actions why their behaviour is unacceptable. If a member of staff is experiencing difficulty in dealing with any incident of a racist nature, they will be helped and supported by senior and/or more experienced staff.
- Any pupil who refuses to desist from racist behaviour should be brought to understand the seriousness of the offences by the direct involvement of parents.
- A pupil who has suffered as a result of racist behaviour should be offered support. If the pupil is suffering harassment in other situations, school should offer to liaise with the appropriate agencies.
- Schools are now required to record all incidents of racial behaviour. Records should include details of the incident, the names of those involved, the action taken and sanctions imposed. It should be signed and dated by the member of staff who observed the incident or dealt with the subsequent complaint and given to the Headmaster.

4. Code Of Conduct

The headmaster, the senior management team, house masters and mistresses, chaplain and Matrons play an active role in monitoring the implementation of Abberley Hall's policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHE, RE, Drama, English and other lessons 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.
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be recognised.
- Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitively.

Harassment in all its forms unlawful and unacceptable; our behaviour and anti-bullying policies contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination. All our staff receive anti-discrimination training. Teaching and Matrons attend regular INSET sessions on the subject.

A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

5. Monitoring

Abberley Hall monitors its equal opportunities policy regularly and reports to the Governors annually in order to ensure its effectiveness.

6. English as an Additional Language

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Abberley Hall pupils should be fluent English speakers. Normally pupils should have been educated in the English medium before coming to Abberley. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense.

7. Requests for Variation in School Uniform

Whilst Abberley Hall School has Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths and offer them the opportunity to practice their own faiths.

Any request for a variation to the School dress code should be made to the headmaster in writing and he will consider variations on religious grounds that are consistent with the school's ethos and policy on health and safety. The headmaster may take expert advice, and will arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

8. Complaints.

Any complaints about the operation of our equal opportunities policy should be immediately reported to the Headmaster. Copies of the school's complaints procedure are available on the School website and can be provided on request.

The Board of Governors will be monitoring compliance with this policy.

Signed: **Date: 17 June 2016**
Governor
Andrew Manning-Cox

Signed: **Date: 17 June 2016**
Headmaster
Mr Will Lockett

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