# Cobham Montessori School

Education for life

# Equality Policy

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### 1.0 Policy statement

At Cobham Montessori School, we value the individuality of all of our children, members of staff and the people who make up our wider community. Our Equality Policy is intended to help to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all children, irrespective of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

### 2.0 Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation (to the extent applicable to independent schools):

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- This document also considers the Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.

We recognise that discrimination may occur in many forms: directly, indirectly, through harassment or victimisation.

- We do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or pupil or parent, on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics listed above.
- We promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.
- We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.
- We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups.
- We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.
- We challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.
- We value each pupil's worth; we celebrate the individuality and cultural diversity of the community centred on our school, and we show respect for all minority groups.

- We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes, and respect for all

We aim to meet our obligations under having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

## 3.0 Roles and responsibilities

**The Head of School:**

- Has overall responsibility for implementation of all equality related policies
- Holds responsibility for the school's compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (as it did for the, replaced, Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act) and should ensure, through monitoring, that this is the case.
- Promotes knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils

**The DSL will:**

- Support the Head of School in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Support the Head of School in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

**All Staff:**

- The Head of School will promote key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality, what is expected of them and can be expected from the school.
- The Head of School will ensure that the whole school community receives adequate training to meet the needs of delivering equality.
- The school's recruitment procedures will implement all aspects of good practice in equal opportunities and safeguarding.
- All staff are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the principles and implementation of the school's equal opportunities policy. This includes a responsibility to record and report prejudice related incidents. This may be probed in the staff selection process.

**Students and parents:**

The school will strive to:

- develop a strong sense of self-esteem and robust self confidence in all students
- recognise and celebrate the achievement of all students
- promote students' and parents' understanding of our equality policies and practices and secure their commitment to them
- promote parental involvement in their children's education and encourage the regular participation of all parents in celebratory, consultative, information gathering and social events
- implement a range of methods to gather student and parent opinion and serious consideration of the trends and ideas expressed

## 4.0 Eliminating Discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction.

## 5.0 Advancing Equality of Opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities

## 6.0 Curriculum

We believe that all students have the potential to achieve highly and learn effectively. This confidence in the learning capacity of all students is reflected in curriculum design and delivery.

- The curriculum is both broad and balanced. Each child has a bespoke learning plan which takes account of her/his needs, interests, aptitudes, and prior attainments.
- The curriculum will, through its range of experiences, promote respect, understanding and celebration of diversity and different cultures and religions.
- The school will provide support, within the resources that it possesses, to:
    - ensure access and achievement for students who have Special Educational Need and Disabilities, English as an additional language, or find difficulty with certain aspects of their learning programmes.
    - ensure that gifted and talented students are challenged in lessons, and, like all our students, have their particular attainment monitored on a regular basis.
    - support the progress of vulnerable students with cognisance of the particular needs of students who are looked after, asylum seekers, young carers, or from a background of social deprivation.

## 7.0 Equality Considerations in Decision-Making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities

## 8.0 Responding to Prejudice-Based Incidents

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes, or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.