

*St Martin-in-the-Fields
High School for Girls*



With Love and Learning

**EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES
POLICY**

APPROVED: March 2013
DATE TO BE REVIEWED: 2016

St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls
is a company limited by guarantee registered
in England and Wales Registered Number
07984073. Registered office: 155 Tulse Hill,
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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Next Review: 2016

St Martin's is an inner city, multi-ethnic girls' Academy (with a co-educational Sixth Form) and we celebrate and are proud of our cultural and social diversity. The governors, teachers and support staff aim to promote the maximum education and personal development of all our members in keeping with the school's Christian ethos. Its ethos of love and care and its commitment to justice are the foundations of the aims in educating the whole school community to make its proper contribution to society providing life changing opportunities which will empower each member to make a full and worthwhile contribution to society.

We are aware of the existence of prejudice in society and recognize that many members of the school may experience prejudice in the form of racism or sexism, harassment, and exclusion both within the school and the wider community.

We recognise that poverty and social class can be a strong barrier to educational achievement. Therefore we will strive to develop the cultural capital of our young people, in order to build the confidence to compete on a level playing field thus narrowing the gap between disadvantaged and more advantaged groups.

We oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination and seek to actively discourage racist, homophobic and sexist attitudes, behaviour and systems, whilst positively encouraging respect for all people. The school community is fully committed to a policy of inclusion and challenging all forms of discrimination, which devalue the individual.

All members of the school community and visitors to the school are expected to uphold these values. Any behaviour to the contrary will be challenged and appropriate sanctions applied according to the circumstances. Every effort will then be made to help the individual concerned understand why their actions have been condemned.

We shall ensure that our expectations are set at the highest level so that our students fulfil their potential within the school and are equipped to play a positive role in society.

We shall continue to assess our teaching materials and methods in order to promote good practice in this area. We hope that this will enable all members of our community to recognise and reject all forms of discrimination. Staff and students should be able to engage in appropriate discussion and share experiences in an attempt to challenge prejudice and discrimination in all its forms.

This policy will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CODE OF PRACTICE

I. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- a) The school will ensure that its physical environment reflects and celebrates its cultural diversity through displays and exhibitions of students' work, which in particular draw on their own experiences and language.
- b) Images which promote non-stereotypical career paths should be displayed.
- c) Continuous effort should be made to make greater access to the building easier for disabled members of our school community and visitors.

II. CURRICULUM

It is important that teachers in all curriculum areas are aware that they are educating young people for the pluralistic society in which they live. Their teaching methods and resources should reflect this.

Prejudice is largely caused by ignorance and misunderstanding. The curriculum should recognise the achievements and contributions of all groups to world history in order to be accessible to all of our students.

It is essential therefore that an inclusive curriculum should:

- a) Value and celebrate diversity by creating an understanding and interest in different environments, societies, systems and cultures.
- b) Raise awareness about how racism, discrimination and inequalities can permeate institutions.
- c) Recognise that each society has its own values, traditions and everyday living patterns which should be considered in the context of that society.
- d) Explore and share ideas and opinions and variants which derive from particular perspectives and cultural experiences.
- e) Study and increase awareness of the long history of contributions and achievements of women throughout the world.
- f) Study and increase awareness of the long history of contributions and achievements of people from all ethnic and heritage groups.
- g) Study and increase awareness of the contributions and achievements of those with disabilities.
- h) Develop in our students the skills they need to compete on an equal level in the classroom and in the world of work.
- i) Understand how colonial histories have shaped our lives and understanding of the world.

The Pastoral Curriculum

The pastoral curriculum has a major role to play in addressing daily equalities issues. Issues can be dealt with in cross-curricular themes. For example the theme of Citizenship must incorporate issues dealing with racism, appreciation of different cultures, inequalities that exist within our society and within the world in general.

The P.S.H.C.E. programme should enable students to discuss and explore their feelings about all forms of prejudice and ensuing behaviour. Students whose negative behaviour is discriminatory will be dealt with accordingly and counselled and victims will receive support.

III. RESOURCES

Teaching resources and materials, including worksheets, textbooks, DVDs, posters and books, should reflect the cultural heritages of all students in a positive way. Resources, which negate the experiences of women and those with 'protected characteristics' (as defined in the Equalities Act 2010) should be withdrawn where possible, or discussed within the context. Resources should also be of sufficient range and variety to meet the needs of a broader curriculum.

All new material must consider these equality aspects before purchase or production.

IV. TEACHER EXPECTATION/MONITORING PROGRESS

Teachers must be aware of the fact that their expectations can affect achievement and the status of students among their peers.

It is important that only the highest standards of work, behaviour and courtesy are acceptable. To accept less is an affront to the dignity of any student. The progress and inclusion of all students should be monitored to ensure that they fulfil their potential. If students are seen to be underachieving, consultation with all teachers concerned and the students' parents should take place and appropriate measures should be taken to resolve the problem.

V. NAMES

It is important that staff and students should ensure that all names are spelt and pronounced correctly. Everyone needs to be sensitive to different naming traditions and encourage each other to respect and accept names from cultures other than their own. Students and staff should be conscious of different preferences of staff, parents and visitors for prefixes and respect individual choice.

VI. LANGUAGE

- a) Bilingualism should be regarded as advantageous. Dialects, accents and home languages of ethnic minorities should therefore be acknowledged, valued and celebrated.
- b) Each department should ensure that staff are aware of the needs, capabilities and abilities of bilingual students. A student's lack of competence in English should not lead to an automatic assumption that s/he has a learning difficulty.
- c) Staff and students should be aware of the power of language and the hidden assumptions. Language must reflect physical, emotional and verbal respect and be free from intimidation, bullying, name-calling and abuse.
- d) Language must be free from sexual comments, homophobia and inappropriate use of humour and should denote, at all times, high expectations and inclusivity.
- e) Where students use inappropriate words to friends in a joking way they should be challenged and made to understand why such language is unacceptable.
(See Positive Behaviour for Learning policy regarding name-calling.)

VII. RELIGION

All religions, beliefs and observances should be respected providing they are in keeping with the Christian ethos of the school. (See Hosting Other Faiths policy.)

VIII. SEXUALITY

There is no place at the school for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.