



Equal Opportunities

Policy Document No. 4

Eastcourt Independent School

August 2016

Last reviewed: August 2016

Next review: August 2017

Equal Opportunities at Eastcourt

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010
THE EQUALITY ACT AND SCHOOLS 2014
(Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities)

Throughout this PD, Eastcourt has regard to both these documents, notably the following paragraphs and sections in the second:

- Positive Action
 - Victimisation
 - Association
 - Perception
 - Unlawful behaviour
 - Curriculum
 - Uniforms
 - and
 - The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AT ADMISSION; STANDING PROVISION

At Eastcourt the following circumstances apply:

1. Some specific measures for those with permanent physical disabilities are required by law. PD13 lists current accessibility plans.
2. No specific assistants are employed for those with mental impairment; this of course excludes staff who work with *e.g.* slow readers, but may extend to assistance for those with severe behavioural difficulties.
3. Religious restrictions regarding dress code, diet, holidays *etc.* are dealt with as they occur (*i.e.* rarely) but in any case would have been discussed at entry.

4. Boys and girls are taught together, and separate only for changing purposes.
5. No account is taken, on registry or entry, of the ethnic origin of children, nor are statistics kept as to birthplace.
6. Entrance requirements preclude by definition those children who cannot speak English to the required standard.
7. Children already at Eastcourt who subsequently develop a condition which might affect their equal opportunities are catered for to our best ability. However, parents are advised about what is and is not possible (*e.g.*, restricted access to classrooms) and discussions take place as to the best opportunities available to their children.
8. The school ethos nevertheless promotes equal opportunities. Racist behaviour is rare: instances of name-calling have been dealt with severely. Such incidents are logged and a record kept.

All children at Eastcourt are valued equally, irrespective of race, gender, creed, disability or sexual orientation.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN TEACHING SITUATIONS

All staff are assumed to be aware of the paragraph above, which would form part of Mrs Redgrave's address to them as they join the school.

In the event of Mrs Redgrave discovering any breach on the part of a member of staff, an immediate private interview would be sought.

All staff are further assumed to be aware of gender, racial or disability bias in the teaching materials they use. Outdated textbooks have been discarded. Additionally, all material coming into the school for prospective purchase is reviewed in this way. Individual members of staff will speak to Mrs Redgrave if they detect such bias.

Staff promote equal opportunities during the course of lessons as and when the situation seems appropriate. Such situations might include:

- seating arrangements, where segregation of boys and girls may not be desirable
- competitive lessons or games, where the makeup of teams is monitored
- group work, where the same might apply.

The Eastcourt curriculum, in particular RE and PSICHE, promotes respect and understanding of six main faiths, during lessons and in, e.g., assemblies and concerts.

Positive comment and searching questions will be made in the course of lessons, e.g. history where a period or civilisation under review may have had contrasting views about equal opportunities. Class readers may also provide the chance for such comment.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: THE CHILD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Children are expected to behave in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities, and such behaviour is encouraged in Eastcourt from the youngest age.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES – STAFF

All staff at Eastcourt are recruited on the basis of professional suitability appropriate to the post and to the school, irrespective of

- ◆ race
- ◆ gender
- ◆ creed
- ◆ physical disability
- ◆ sexual orientation
- ◆ responsibilities for dependants
- ◆ offending background that does not create risks to children.*

Eastcourt does not discriminate or unfairly treat any member of staff on any of the grounds listed above.

*Candidates chosen for interview will have completed a declaration of criminal record form. Questions are asked at interview stage in order to ensure that candidates with a criminal record are not inadvertently placed in vulnerable positions at Eastcourt. While a criminal record may not prevent a candidate from being appointed, certain offences might debar the post, and recent or serious offences might mean that a candidate presents a risk to children. In those cases the candidate will not be appointed.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The PSED incorporates the principles of the Equality Act, simplifying them under three headings:

1. eliminating discrimination
2. advancing equal opportunities
3. fostering good relations

Eastcourt has 'due regard' to the PSED in that any executive decision will have taken into account the three principles above. This becomes second nature not only to senior management but also to all staff in the preparation and carrying out of their duties.

Furthermore, Eastcourt complies with the statutory requirement to:

- (a) publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, and
- (b) prepare and publish equality objectives

The school does this, *inter alia*, by reference to

- policy documents in which reference is made to pupils or staff with protected characteristics (i.e. currently sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity)
- minutes of staff meetings where any such reference is made
- material published on its website in which compliance will be evident

and by considering and listing the following objectives:

- to narrow the gap in performance of any group where perceived;
- to work with help from outside agencies;
- to increase understanding and respect between religious groups;
- to anticipate the needs of incoming pupils.