

Equality Opportunities Policy

Aims :

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. prides itself on being an inclusive institution and embraces equal opportunities for all. The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote the concept of equality of opportunity throughout St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. community;
- Develop an understanding of, and promotion of, equality and equal opportunities;
- Promote good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups and communities;
- Enable pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships with others;
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a disability.

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. will;

- Treat all members of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination.
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed below.
- Ensure that those pupils with a statement of special educational needs (or Education, Health or Care Plan) receive necessary educational and welfare support.
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds.
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils, staff and parents.
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and are given appropriate training and support.
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School.
- Ensure that it reviews and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

- Provide equality to all, irrespective of gender, marital or family status; religious belief or political opinion; disability; race or ethnic origin; nationality; and sexual orientation.
- We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All associates and job applicants (actual or potential) will be treated fairly and selection for associateship, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all associates to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- We are committed to preventing any form of direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation; promoting equal opportunities for women and men; securing fair participation for Catholics and Protestants; promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities; and promoting equal opportunities for ethnic minorities.

Protected characteristics

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. opposes less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristics under the Policy. These include but are not limited to sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity.

Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for the Equal Opportunities Policy, for delegating responsibilities and tasks to associates, and for ensuring that this policy is known and understood by associates, pupils and parents. All associates are responsible for following the policy and reporting incidents of unequal treatment. Progress on the implementation of this policy and any equal opportunities and affirmative/positive action programmes will be reviewed annually in consultation with associate representatives.

Measures to ensure equality

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. accepts applications from, and admits, pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic, treating every application or admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy. St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. is committed to full educational inclusion. Pupils are admitted to St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. on the basis of their musical ability and the degree to which St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. can adequately cater for their needs. St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. will take appropriate steps to ensure that lessons are organised in ways which offer the best possible opportunities for full participation by all pupils.

Failure to adhere to the equal opportunities policy

Breaches of our equal opportunities policy and practice will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Associates who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures (Detailed in the Harassment Policy and Procedure). All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that associates making complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Access to facilities

In common with many other schools, St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. consists of many separate and old buildings, many of which are not provided with lifts. St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. is aware that difficulties may be experienced from time to time by the need for disabled pupils to move around site and as a result of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. buildings. However, the majority of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. is accessible to those with impaired mobility and, where it is not, St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. will consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to enable disabled pupils to access St. Columb's School of Music Ltd.'s educational provision.

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. is not legally required to make alternations to St. Columb's School of Music Ltd.'s physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustments duty. However, St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. monitors and reviews the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate disadvantages caused by this. Accessibility will always be a factor when planning new buildings.

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. recognises that discrimination may be, for example, direct, indirect or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of their sex, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, race, nationality or ethnic/national origin.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when a requirement or condition, which cannot be justified on grounds other than sex, marital status, religious belief, political opinion, race nationality or ethnic/national origin, is applied equally but has the effect in practice of disadvantaging a considerably higher proportion of persons in one or other of the above groups.

Disability Discrimination

Disability discrimination occurs when, for a reason related to his/her disability, a disabled person is treated less favourably than other people, and this treatment cannot be justified. It also occurs when an employer fails to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustment in relation to the disabled person, and the failure cannot be justified.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because that person has, for example, asserted their rights under any of the discrimination laws or has helped another person to assert such rights or given information to the relevant statutory body, or because it is suspected that the person might do any of these things.