



LANCASTER  
STEINER SCHOOL



# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the broader Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, Lancaster Steiner School (LSS) seeks to practise within its organisation those principles of justice and fairness, which it aims to promote through its educational philosophy.

LSS is an Equal Opportunities employer. In line with the Equality Act 2010, this policy aims to ensure that no job applicant or worker (whether paid or unpaid) is discriminated on the grounds of race (national origin, ethnicity, language), belief and/or religion or lack of, sex, age, civil or marital status, gender reassignment, sexuality, pregnancy and/or maternity or disability. In addition, LSS will not discriminate in relation to social class or caring responsibility. At LSS we will treat everyone fairly, with dignity and respect.

LSS will apply this principle with regards to admissions, recruitment, remuneration, procedures, terms and conditions of employment, and as far as possible in premises, facilities and equipment. LSS also intends to apply the same principle to materials and methods used in its publicity and promotion.

LSS will take practical steps to move progressively towards this goal. Mechanisms will be set in place to assess regularly both the effectiveness of current measures and progress towards future targets.

At all times, LSS will ensure the safeguarding of children is paramount with respect to any aspect of this policy and its implementation. Please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for more information.

## GUIDELINES

It is intended to provide guidelines for all those involved in LSS – Trustees, Management Group members, members, staff and volunteers; and for all those who use its services. We intend our Equal Opportunities Policy to be of benefit to the school, individuals, other organisations and the wider community. In drafting it, we have drawn upon examples of good practice from other organisations.

We intend this document to:

- be a useful working reference manual;
- be specific enough to be useful without being impossibly detailed;
- allow space for further developments of the policy in the future;
- be written in a way that makes the policy itself accessible



## SECTIONS

1. Admissions
2. Recruiting and employing staff
3. Providing Educational Services to the Community
4. Access
5. Council of Members and the Management Group
6. Members
7. Volunteers
8. Publicity
9. Implementation and Monitoring

### 1 ADMISSIONS

At LSS we strive to be welcoming to new and prospective families, encouraging parents/carers to become part of our active community. No child will be discriminated against because of their race (national origin, ethnicity, language), belief and/or religion or lack of, sex, gender reassignment, sexuality, pregnancy and/or maternity or disability and no child will be discriminated against because of their individual needs. Any decision made will be based solely on our capacity to meet those needs, and not on the existence of these needs.

### 2 RECRUITING AND EMPLOYING STAFF

**2.1** Lancaster Steiner School recruits on the basis of best candidate for the job, irrespective of race, belief and/or religion or lack of, sex, age, civil or marital status, gender, gender reassignment, sexuality, pregnancy and/or maternity or disability, class or geographical location. LSS will follow all legal requirements when recruiting and employing staff and also undertakes to follow current good practice. We will aim to create a working environment in which:

- all people are able to give of their best
- there is no bullying and harassment or discrimination
- all decisions are based on merit.

#### 2.2 Advertising of Vacancies

An appointment may be made internally if it can be shown that:

- the job is a natural extension of the current or recent work of existing staff member(s), OR
- the job demands working relationships or specific experience already established by existing staff member(s), OR
- the timescale of a fixed-term appointment is too short to permit induction and training of a new staff member.



If none of the above applies, the vacancy will be publicly advertised. As a minimum, advertising will be through the principal local newspaper and Job Centre, and by display of notices in a wide variety of locations. Positive efforts will be made to make vacancies known to sections of the community that tend to be under-represented in job applications: for example, by appropriate distribution of notices and by use where possible of neighbourhood, ethnic or special-interest communication organisations. Advertisements will contain the following statement: "LSS is striving to be an Equal Opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community".

### **2.3 Job Descriptions, Specifications and Requirements**

Those drawing up job and employee specifications, job descriptions and application forms will make every effort to ensure that such documents do not discriminate unfairly by making demands or requiring items of information not directly related to the job. It will not be stated or implied that UK qualifications only are acceptable, or that a formal qualification is essential when other evidence of a particular competence would in practice suffice. Language will be clear and avoid jargon. All applicants will receive a job description, a person specification, a standard application form and monitoring form and the Equal Opportunities Statement (also stating the full policy is available on request)

The suitability of each job for job-sharing will be considered.

### **2.4 Shortlisting Procedure**

- 2.4.1** Shortlisting will be based only on the information supplied in formal applications. Shortlisting criteria will be based solely on the job description and person specification and on an agreed scoring system;
- 2.4.2** The shortlisting team will comprise a minimum of three people;
- 2.4.3** All members of the shortlisting team will be conversant with this policy document and will agree to abide by its content and spirit.
- 2.4.4** If overseas or other unfamiliar qualifications are cited, the shortlisting team will if necessary, take advice (e.g. from relevant professional bodies) to ensure that they are given due value.

### **2.5 Interviewing**

- 2.5.1** The interviewing panel should, if possible, comprise of the same members as the shortlisting panel, and will in any case comprise a minimum of two (preferably three) people;
- 2.5.2** All members of the interviewing panel will be conversant with this policy document and will agree to abide by its content and spirit.
- 2.5.3** All members of the interviewing panel will make every effort to ensure that interviewees are asked only such questions as will enable valid comparison of their respective suitability for the requirements of the job. Panel members will consciously avoid asking questions based on stereotypes or untested assumptions.



- 2.5.4** The panel will make a selection based solely on the candidates' performance in relation to the job description and personal specification and on the agreed scoring system and will consider the needs of any candidate with a disability and if necessary, seek advice
- 2.5.5** Panel members will jointly plan the conduct of interviews in advance to ensure, among other things, that they fulfil the responsibilities outlined here and in 2,3 and 4 above
- 2.5.6** The panel will provide unsuccessful candidates with feedback on why they were not selected

## **2.6 Employment**

We will;

- 2.6.1** provide all staff with a copy of their contract and conditions of employment;
- 2.6.2** consider sympathetically the needs of staff who have childcare or other caring responsibilities, who are pregnant or about to become parents, or who have medical needs
- 2.6.3** take disciplinary action against staff (or volunteers) who use discriminatory behaviour
- 2.6.4** make available a grievance procedure to any member of staff (or volunteer) who considers themselves to have been discriminated against.

## **3 PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY**

Besides its work as a school, Lancaster Steiner School aims to provide educational services to different sections of the community. We aim to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. We will positively encourage and assist disadvantaged and under-represented groups to use our services.

We will, where appropriate:

- 3.1** consult with special interest groups to find out needs;
- 3.2** develop ways to encourage under-represented users to provide feedback on how our practice is working
- 3.3** ensure when planning a new piece of work that it considers the needs of under- represented groups

## **4 ACCESS**

We aim to make our educational services as accessible as possible. On our own premises, or wherever we are holding events or meetings other, we will aim to ensure that we:

- 4.1** consider how our environment affects people physically and emotionally
- 4.2** create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for all disadvantaged groups
- 4.3** consider people's dependent and childcare responsibilities, different religious and cultural needs, different sexual and gender orientations;
- 4.4** consider issues of safety, timings of meetings, and single sex provision;



- 4.5 consider dates of major religious festivals;
- 4.6 cater for special diets
- 4.7 We are working towards:
  - having our equipment usable by people with disabilities;
  - providing information where necessary on tape/in Braille/in large print/in translation;
  - making available signers, induction loop systems or translators if required
  - using colour contrast on literature and signs for people with visual impairments.

## 5 TRUSTEES AND THE MANAGEMENT GROUP

We will:

- 5.1 Annually monitor the composition of the Trustee body (we will do this in advance of the annual process of nominations to the Council of Trustees) and if necessary, encourage under-represented groups to make nominations to the Council;
- 5.2 where necessary co-opt individuals from under-represented groups on to the Council
- 5.3 consider providing support from an experienced Council member to help any new Council member who is unfamiliar with committees or Lancaster Steiner School to settle in;
- 5.4 ensure that all Council members know that expenses are available and ensure that they are paid promptly

## 6 MEMBERS

We will:

Annually monitor the composition of the membership and encourage under-represented groups to become members

## 7 VOLUNTEERS

Lancaster Steiner School intends to create a welcoming environment in which all members of the community will feel encouraged to volunteer. We intend to follow good practice in our policy for volunteers

We will:

- 7.1 consider what steps can be taken to attract and support volunteers from under-represented groups
- 7.2 ensure our volunteer work descriptions are clear and avoid creating barriers for people from under-represented groups;



- 7.3 ensure our terms and conditions – insurance, expenses, complaints – are fair and are communicated to volunteers

## 8 PUBLICITY

We check that in our publicity we:

- 8.1 Use positive images and pictures of a wide range of groups;
- 8.2 avoid jargon and use clear, direct language
- 8.3 are careful to avoid creating false expectations
- 8.4 where appropriate distribute publicity on tape/in Braille/in large print/ in translation
- 8.5 aim to reach all sections of the community by advertising in a wide range of appropriate publications and locations;
- 8.6 target groups where appropriate;
- 8.7 where necessary visit under-represented groups to tell them about our work

## 9 IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

Lancaster Steiner School regards the implementation of its EO Policy as a continuing process. The Council of Trustees is responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy but may delegate this job to a member of staff.

We will.

- 9.1 Make sure all staff and members of the Council of Trustees and the Management Group have a copy of the policy, which will also be made known to members, volunteers, potential job applicants and parents
- 9.2 provide training and guidance to ensure that all staff, Council of Trustees, and Management Group, members and volunteers understand their responsibilities under the policy;
- 9.3 examine all our procedures, services and work practices, identify areas where improvements can be made and draw up plans to implement them;
- 9.4 ensure that the working of the policy is considered by the Council of Trustees at least once a year.



## APPENDIX: RELEVANT LEGISLATION

A new Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Equality Act brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined, they make up a new Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

At LSS, in the exercise of our functions, we will have due regards to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

For more information and guidance visit <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-act-2010>