



Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff

Document control

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Senior leader responsible	The Bursar
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Statutory status	Non-statutory policy giving effect to the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and informed by the EHRC statutory Code of Practice on Employment
Applies to	All members of staff and prospective employees
Availability	Published on the School website and available in hard copy on request

Policy summary

This policy explains Cokethorpe School's commitment to equal opportunities in employment: how we recruit and select fairly, how we ensure no member of staff or prospective employee is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic, how we make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities, how concerns are raised and handled, and how we monitor and report on our practice.

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1. Purpose and values

The people who work at Cokethorpe are central to the education and care we provide. We are committed to being an equal opportunities employer because we want to draw on the widest possible range of knowledge, skill and experience, and because every member of our staff deserves to be treated fairly and with respect. We aim to achieve and maintain a workforce in which people can realise their full potential, free from discrimination.

2. Scope and protected characteristics

This policy applies to all members of staff and to prospective employees. No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a protected characteristic, because they are perceived to have one, or because they are associated with someone who has one.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

This commitment applies in particular, but not only, to:

1. recruitment and selection;
2. promotion, transfer and training opportunities;
3. benefits, terms and conditions of employment;
4. grievance and disciplinary procedures;
5. termination of employment, including redundancy; and
6. conduct at work.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

3. Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's obligations under, and has regard to:

1. the Equality Act 2010 (including its employment provisions);
2. the EHRC statutory Code of Practice on Employment;
3. the School's safer-recruitment obligations under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026).

4. Our commitments

To give effect to this policy, and with the support of staff, the School will:

1. seek to break down barriers to equality of opportunity that may prevent staff realising their full potential or accessing benefits;
2. advertise vacancies appropriately and ensure selection criteria are relevant to the role;
3. investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment promptly and fully, taking appropriate action;
4. ensure that staff are informed and trained on matters relating to equal opportunities;
5. monitor the composition of the workforce and the effect of its recruitment practices;
6. review procedures to ensure they are not discriminatory in operation; and
7. use language in official communications that reflects the School's inclusive approach.

5. Recruitment and selection

The School will regularly review its recruitment, promotion, training and development practices to ensure that no applicant or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.

The School is a Christian foundation and is registered with the Secretary of State as having a designated religious character; this may be taken into account when recruiting teaching staff, where it is appropriate and lawful to do so.

6. Disability and reasonable adjustments

If you are disabled, or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you appropriately. A disability will not of itself justify a decision not to appoint.

We will make such reasonable adjustments to the application process as are needed to ensure applicants are not disadvantaged; for example, alternative arrangements will be made where written tests are used.

If you experience difficulties at work because of a disability, or you consider a reasonable adjustment to your working arrangements or to School premises may be needed, you should raise this in the first instance with HR. We may wish to consult with you, and with your medical adviser, about possible adjustments, and you may be asked to consent to a report on your state of health and ability to perform your duties.

We will consider the matter carefully and seek to accommodate your needs within reason. Where we consider an adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Adjustments may be reviewed at agreed intervals to assess their continuing effectiveness.

Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to, the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign and flexible hours.

7. Raising concerns

We take all concerns about discrimination, harassment or victimisation seriously. If you experience or witness conduct that is inconsistent with this policy, you are encouraged to raise it with HR or through the Grievance procedure set out in the Employee Handbook.

Matters relating to the conduct of staff are also addressed in the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct).

Concerns will be handled sensitively and, so far as possible, confidentially.

8. Responsibilities

The Head and the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for setting the standard of behaviour, leading by example, and promoting equality of opportunity across the School.

The Head of HR is responsible for fair recruitment and selection practice, for handling reasonable-adjustment requests in the first instance, and for monitoring workforce composition.

The Bursar has oversight of this policy as the senior leader responsible for governance and compliance.

All staff are responsible for treating colleagues, pupils, parents and visitors with dignity and respect and for complying with this policy.

9. Monitoring and review

The Head of HR monitors the operation and effectiveness of this policy, including the composition of the workforce and the outcomes of its recruitment practices. The policy is reviewed at least annually.

The Bursar reports annually to Governors on equal opportunities matters via the Compliance Committee.

10. Related School policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Employee Handbook (including the Grievance procedure)
- Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils
- Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)

11. Legislation, regulation and guidance

Relevant authoritative sources include:

- Equality Act 2010
- EHRC statutory Code of Practice on Employment
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026)