



EQUALITY AND  
INCLUSION POLICY

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MAY 2020

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## > 1. Objectives

Merrywood House is committed to ensuring that all staff and children are treated equally and fairly regardless of race, gender, nationality, religion or belief, orientation, disability, age or marital status and this policy has been designed to combat any form of discrimination or prejudice within the school environment.

The school has due regard to the Equality Act 2010 to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- c) Foster good relations across all characteristics - between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Merrywood House recognises that everyone has a contribution to make and that overall performance can be improved by harnessing the skills and contributions of everyone.

This policy and any actions that arise as a result of it, take into account current statutory requirements:

1. Equality Act 2010.
2. The Employment Act 2008.
3. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
4. Employment Rights Act 1996

This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

**OUR EQUALITY AIM IS TO:** eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by law.

## > 2. Responsibilities

Merrywood House recognises its duty to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination within the workplace and the school environment.

The Equalities Act 2010 makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a child:

- a) In relation to admissions.
- b) In the way it provides education for children.
- c) In the way it provides children access to any benefit, facility or service,
- d) Or by excluding a child or subjecting them to any other detriment.

It is the responsibility of all staff and children to support and promote Equal Opportunities and to achieve equality and inclusion.

Merrywood House will:

- a) Treat people as individuals with consideration and respect for their needs.
- b) Provide services and opportunities that are open to all.
- c) Provide a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for all staff, children and visitors.
- d) Commit to developing an organisational culture that values all people and the individual contribution that they make.
- e) Provide appropriate training and development opportunities to facilitate the effective delivery of education.
- f) Encourage the recruitment of staff from all parts of the community.
- g) Influence other staff and agencies to be aware of their responsibilities under relevant legislation and through this help to create a culture that encourages and promotes inclusion.
- h) Accept our responsibilities and work within the requirements set out in all relevant legislation.
- i) Publish our Equalities Policy and Objectives on our website.

All staff are responsible for:

- a) Dealing with incidents of unlawful discrimination and bullying.
- b) Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping.
- c) Promoting equality and good relations between all groups.
- d) Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination and taking up training opportunities.
- e) Striving to provide images and lesson plans that show positive images of and are inclusive of people from the protected characteristics.

## > 3. Requirements

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- a) Age.
- b) Being or becoming a transsexual person.
- c) Being Married or in a civil partnership.
- d) Being pregnant or on maternity/paternity leave.
- e) Disability.
- f) Race – including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- g) Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief.
- h) Sex.
- i) Sexual orientation
- j) Gender - Merrywood House recognises the history of discrimination and stereotyping on the grounds of gender and strives to ensure that all its policies and procedures work against all forms of sexism within the school.
- k) These are commonly referred to as the 'protected characteristics.

Further detail on some of these categories are included in the following sentences.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on these grounds or to apply requirements or conditions, which have a disadvantageous effect on people of a particular sex or marital status, where they cannot be justified, it aims to protect people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society.

### **3.1. Sexual Orientation**

Merrywood House values all staff and children equally, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender assignment. It aims to create an environment, within which the sexual orientation of all its staff and children is respected.

### **3.2. Religion & Belief**

Merrywood House values the diversity brought to the school by different groups of staff and children and aims to create an environment within which the cultural, religious and nonreligious beliefs of all are respected. It also aims to ensure that the school's recruitment and selection and admission procedures, as well as employment practices, such as dress codes and disciplinary procedures, treat everyone fairly regardless of their religion or belief.

### **3.3. Race**

Merrywood House understands that it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnicity or national origin, or to apply requirements or conditions which have a disadvantageous effect on people of a particular racial group, and which cannot be justified on non-racial ground.

### **3.4. Ex-Offenders**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent' or ignored, after a 'rehabilitation period'. A rehabilitation period is a set length of time from the date of conviction. After this period, with certain exceptions, an ex-offender is not normally obliged to mention the conviction when applying for a job.

There are however some exceptions to the general principle of the act whereby spent convictions are declared. For example, when assessing the suitability of a person for certain positions of trust, an employer is entitled to ask a candidate to reveal details of all convictions, whether spent or not. This in part will help ensure that children and other vulnerable groups are protected from those who may wish to do them harm by helping to prevent such people from being appointed to positions of authority and/or trust over them.

These positions of trust, or excepted professions, are set out in the Exceptions Order to the ROA and Merrywood House falls into the above category.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working at Merrywood House. This will depend on the nature of the position and circumstances and background of the offence(s). Please refer to separate statement regarding employment of ex-offenders

## > 4. Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice

Merrywood House intends to ensure that information released in disclosures is used fairly and kept in a safe/lockable area, which is only accessible to authorised individuals. Information obtained from disclosures will not be used to discriminate against an individual.

## > 5. Equal pay

Merrywood House is committed to equality of pay (Equal Pay Act 1970) and strives to ensure that all staff undertaking equal work in the same employment, are entitled to equality in pay and terms and conditions.

## > 6. Disability

The Equalities Act 2010 defines disability as: *'when a person has a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.'*

Merrywood House will give due regard to the provisions of the Act in the area of disability:

- a) Direct discrimination: the school will not treat any child less favourably because he/she is disabled.
- b) Indirect Discrimination: the school will not make changes for all children which may affect a disabled child less favourably. We will consider all changes in the light of the Equalities Act.
- c) Discrimination arising from Disability: we will not treat a child less favourably because of a consequence of their disability.
- d) Harassment: the school will not harass a child because of their disability.

## > 7. SEN

Merrywood House caters for children who have Education, Health & Care Plans/Statements of Special Educational Needs and will ensure that all staff are trained in understanding clearly what the implications of the child's needs are. The school endeavours to ensure that no staff member or child is disadvantaged in any opportunity or access, because of a disability. Wherever possible Merrywood House will support any reasonable changes which are necessary to allow equality of opportunity for all. (See Appendix 1: Accessibility Plan).

## > 8. How our school promotes equality

Type of information	Evidence
Data collection by year group and need.	School Information Systems
Children assessment data including inequalities of outcome and participation	Based on school observations, teacher assessment, children attendance, children progress, academic, social and behavioural. Data analysis is carried out termly.
Statements of our duties under Equalities Act are in our Equalities policy, School Development Plan, Self-Evaluation, Newsletters, Anti-bullying Policy.	Published on website
The CEO is responsible for equalities matters.	Training & Diploma in Equality
The school's programme for CPD includes direct and indirect references to Equality issues.	Educare Licence
There is good Equality practice in the recruitment of staff.	Safe Recruitment and Equality guidance is followed.
There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice related bullying and incidents	Published on website
We survey children regarding how safe and happy they feel at school.	Survey data available after one year of operating
Activities across the curriculum that promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a priority for the school.	PSHE curriculum
In curriculum materials, wherever possible, there are positive images of disabled people; of gay and lesbian people; of both women and men in non stereotypical gender roles; and of people from a wide range of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.	Schemes of work

## > Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

##### The Equalities Act 2010 states that:

Schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- a) Increasing the extent to which disabled children can participate in the curriculum.
- b) Improving the physical environment of schools to enable disabled children to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- c) Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled children.

##### Access to the school environment:

- a) The school is located in a rural setting.
- b) The school is not currently able to accommodate children in wheelchairs without training members of staff to carry the child across two learning floors.
- c) There are plans to install a lift in due time.
- d) The school will be mindful when placing children and recruiting staff with mobility and have open discussions with the local authority, parents and child.

##### Access to the learning environment:

The school will regularly audit resources such as software and hardware suitable for supporting learning difficulties; maintain up-to-date information on adaptations e.g. communication aids & appropriate subject software packages.

The school will ensure that disabled people are portrayed positively in curriculum materials. Barriers to learning will be identified through regular reviews and where necessary adjustments will be made to the curriculum and teaching methods.

Staff will ensure that the specific needs of each child has been met by forward planning of every lesson, and the production of differentiated material to meet identified needs.

**Access to the curriculum:**

The school undertakes to assess its provision of the curriculum to children on a regular basis, and to use this information to better tailor the curriculum to child's requirements. Curriculum planning should ensure that resources and literature are non-discriminatory and consider including a disability dimension. Staff will use a wide variety of approaches when planning the curriculum to draw on different strengths and aptitudes of the children. The curriculum will be diversified to meet the needs of all children.

All on and offsite activities must include all children.

**Access to information:**

Communication is considered of high importance at Merrywood House, both with regards to children and staff. Recognition will be given that some formats, whilst beneficial to many will not be appropriate for all.

Policy documents and all information for staff will be made available in large print wherever necessary. The school prospectus, along with other requested documents will be made available in large print for prospective stakeholders if requested.

**Access to training:**

We will provide generic and specific training to staff at all levels including senior management, teachers, support staff, administration staff etc.

Learning support should be effectively coordinated throughout the school, allowing time for joint planning across all disciplines.

Disability awareness sessions will be incorporated into staff induction.

The school has considered the use of negative language used to describe children and will challenge use of disablist language and impairment derived abuse, name calling and bullying as part of the Behaviour Management and Anti-bullying policies.

**Date:** May 2020

**Date of review:** May 2021



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