



Equal Opportunities and Harassment Policy

Policy written by Amanda Gibbard

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This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:

Nick Rugg as Director of Schools, Europe, and nominated representative of the Governors

Equal Opportunities

OIS wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, age or disability (“the Protected Characteristics”). ISP believes that it is in the Partnership’s best interests, and in those who work in it, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills of all potential Employees are considered when employment opportunities arise. ISP applies these principles to all Employees.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management are based solely on objective and job-related criteria. All Employees are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity and the Partnership will not tolerate the victimisation, bullying or harassment of employees on the grounds of disability-protected characteristic.

This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. All terms and conditions of employment and related benefits shall be non-discriminatory, other than where there are legal grounds for discriminating in the case of specific jobs with particular requirements, i.e. that an individual of a particular age, sex, race or religion is required to carry out the job. Applicants for employment will be assessed according to their skills, experience and suitability for the job.

This policy also applies to the treatment of ISP’s students, pupils and their parents and other family members.

If any employee believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the grounds of a protected characteristic, he or she should initially raise the matter informally with the relevant senior manager. If the Employee wishes to raise the matter formally, he/she should invoke the Partnership’s grievance procedure as set out in the relevant Policy Statement.

Harassment

Harassment is a distressing, unpleasant experience and the Partnership seeks to maintain a non-discriminatory working environment, which is free of harassment and bullying, particularly of an age, sexual (including sexual

orientation), racial, religious or disability-based nature. Harassment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion and disability is unlawful, and both the company and the harasser may be legally liable.

Harassment may take many forms, from “banter” to actual physical violence. It may be repeated behaviour, or in serious cases, may involve only a single incident. Examples of behaviour by employees towards students, pupils or other employees, which may be interpreted as harassment include:

- Insults, derogatory comments, ridicule, pranks or “jokes” of a sexual, religious or racial nature regarding the Employee or people that the employee associates with.
- Lewd or suggestive comments about appearances or personal life and sexual activities.
- Inappropriate body contact.
- Display or circulation of sexually suggestive material (e.g. pin-ups), or racist material.
- Requests for sexual favours, including the threat of dismissal, loss of promotion for refusal.

The above are examples only of what may be considered inappropriate. It must be borne in mind that it is for each individual to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them and what they consider offensive. The key test is not what the instigator of the behaviour intended, but whether the recipient interprets the actions as harassment and feels victimised as a consequence.

All allegations of harassment will be dealt with sensitively, thoroughly, promptly and in confidence. Employees who feel that they are being harassed, or are uncomfortable about an aspect of the work environment should make it clear to the harasser that the behaviour is unacceptable. The School recognises that the employee may feel unable in some cases to approach the harasser directly, and advice can be sought from the relevant senior manager or the Group Director of Operations on how the matter can be dealt with informally.

If informal approaches are ineffective, or in the case of serious harassment or bullying, employees should bring a formal complaint in writing under the Partnership’s grievance procedure. In view of the sensitivity of the complaint, the employee may wish to approach the Group Director of Operations in the first instance directly rather than the relevant senior manager.

Any employee who is accused of harassment or bullying will be dealt with under the school disciplinary procedure. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be necessary to suspend the alleged harasser on full pay, pending investigation of the complaint.

All parties involved in any complaint are expected to respect the need for confidentiality during the resolution of any complaints, and disciplinary action may be taken against any party who breaches this.

Where an employee is found guilty of an act of harassment or bullying, he or she will be dealt with in terms of the Partnership’s disciplinary procedure. In serious cases of harassment or bullying, the harasser may be summarily dismissed.

The school guarantees that no detriment will occur against any employee who brings a complaint of harassment or bullying, unless it can be shown that the complaint was brought in bad faith or spitefully. In this case, the employee will be dealt with through the Partnership’s disciplinary procedure.

Action to Implement Policy

All employees have a personal responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher will ensure that senior managers put the policy into practice. In turn, they will ensure that:

- Those involved in personnel and management receive appropriate training;
- The operation of the policy is monitored and is reported to the Board at regular intervals.

Any member of the staff, or any applicant for employment with the Partnership, who has a proposal or grievance in relation to the operation of the policy may refer it initially to their line manager. If dissatisfied with the response received, the issue should be referred to the Principal, who will investigate the issue personally or through a nominated senior manager.