Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils

(Reviewer: Dominic Mott February 2023)

1. Aim

As a Woodard school, promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Hurstpierpoint College. Hurst is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity.

We welcome applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish.

We are an academically selective school and we believe that the educational experience can only be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.

We also welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs (SEN), learning difficulties, and disability.

Generous bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found in our Awards Policy.

2. Implementation and training

The Head of College, the Senior Management Team, pastoral staff (House Masters/Mistresses/Tutors), the Chaplain, the SenCo and the Medical staff all play an active role in monitoring the implementation of the College policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, tutorials, and both academic and enrichment activities to:

- promote tolerance and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be recognised.
- understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
- understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

The College Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team engage with pupil and staff groups to promote equal opportunities throughout the College. A number of support groups are in place to encourage all pupils to engage with issues surrounding equal opportunities.

Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable; our policies relating to behaviour and anti-bullying contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful, and potentially emotionally and psychologically damaging, discrimination. Teaching and medical staff attend INSET sessions on the subject.

A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the College's ethos of tolerance and respect.

3. Monitoring

The College monitors its equal opportunities policy regularly and reports to the Governors in order to ensure its effectiveness. The vast majority of our pupils are recruited from within 45 minutes' drive and are of White British origin, but the experience of those belonging to ethnic minorities in the College, and of all our pupils, is monitored carefully by our pastoral teams.

4. Requests for variation in chapel attendance and school uniform

Although, as a Woodard School, Hurstpierpoint College has Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths and offer the opportunity for Jews, Hindus, Muslims etc to practise their own faiths. Those who require dispensation from attendance at Chapel to do so are asked to write to the Head of College who will consider their request. A multi-faith room is being established Lent 2023 to provide a space for those wishing to practice their religion during school hours; for example, during Ramadan.

Parents and guardians are aware that all pupils at Hurst are required to wear a uniform until Year 12, and that a strict “business dress” code operates for Years 12 and 13 (See the Pupil Guide). The Head of College will consider written requests from parents and guardians for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the College’s ethos and policy on health and safety. The Head of College may take expert advice, and may arrange to meet with parents and guardians to discuss the implications of such a request. As of September 2022 the uniform is now non-gendered with two uniform options that students sign up to wear for a minimum period of time: kilt or trouser uniform. We adopt the Halo Code at school with regard to hair.