

SECTION 19

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Section 19: Equal Opportunities Policy

19.1 Introduction

We are committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. We aim to equip children with an awareness of our diverse society and to respect and appreciate the value of difference. Every member of our school is regarded as of equal worth and importance, irrespective of his/her creed, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality and/or disability. We express non-discrimination explicitly in teaching materials and displays, implicitly in classroom practice, or as part of the hidden curriculum of social interaction among staff and children. Our environment influences the developing attitudes of the students and can be a powerful vehicle for the promotion of understanding and practice of equal opportunities.

19.2 Aims

- To ensure the principles and practice of non-discrimination apply to all members of the school community: students; teaching and non-teaching staff; parents and visitors.
- To ensure that all members of the school community recognise that discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, gender or ability is not acceptable.
- To provide an environment in which all members of the school community feel safe enough to express and question views.
- To ensure that non-discrimination practices are evident in
 - a. the formal curriculum (the programme of lessons);
 - b. the informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities); and
 - c. the hidden curriculum (the ethos of the school, the quality of personal relationships etc.)
- To educate, develop and prepare all students for a productive life, whatever their gender, colour, origin, culture or ability.
- To encourage students and staff to contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.
- To view all students are seen as individuals
- To ensure that each student's education and care is in direct relation to their needs and abilities. (This approach is to be based upon sound knowledge and awareness of an appropriate range of teaching and learning styles, teaching interventions and medical and diagnostic information.)

19.3 ISL Qatar Profile

ISL Qatar is committed to encouraging the attitudes of the IB Learner profile through the ISL Qatar Profile (see section 1). With respect to this policy, the following attributes have been selected:

Principled – members of the community act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded – members of the community understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience

Caring – members of the community show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

19.4 The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNUDHR)

ISL Qatar is committed to all aspects of the UNUDHR. With respect to this policy, the following rights have been selected:

- Freedom of belief and religion
- Freedom of opinion and information
- Right of peaceful assembly and association
- Right to equality

19.5 Policy into Practice

a. Admissions

We do not permit gender, race, nationality, culture, origin or colour to be used as criteria for admission.

b. Registration

Students will be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures. Students and staff names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced.

c. Non-Discrimination

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. Parents should be aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities. All cases of discrimination or prejudice are taken seriously and dealt with, as appropriate, according to existing sanction procedures.

d. Language

The school views linguistic diversity positively. Students and staff should feel that their mother tongue language is valued.

e. Culture and Race

We acknowledge that members of the school come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a school and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony. We recognise that discrimination towards individuals and groups exists within society and we are determined to take positive action to overcome this and enable every individual to raise his/her self-esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life. We understand the need to be different without being excluded. We value the history, experience and contribution of our multi-cultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and life of our school. We try to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views: a prime cause of prejudice is ignorance and misunderstanding. We do not tolerate racist behaviour in any form.

f. Gender

As a school, we accept that there are gender issues in society which may impose limits on expectations and behaviour, so we constantly examine our curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality. We encourage pupils to be aware of the gender stereotypes presented by, for example, the media.

g. Religion

We acknowledge that members of the school come from diverse backgrounds. We seek to promote an ethos of respect based on understanding of the beliefs and practices of others.

h. Resources

We aim is to provide for all children according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin. Resources reflect cultural and racial backgrounds of children to support positive self-imagery. Displays will similarly reflect a range of cultures and races. All of the materials in use in our school will be monitored.

i. Relationships

Relationships between staff, students and senior leaders is such that any member of the school acting in a manner contrary to the spirit of this policy is made aware of the unacceptable nature of his/her behaviour. This is done in a supportive manner to encourage change and reinforce the principles of this policy.

j. Appointments

We ensure that, in recruitment procedures, any advertisements, short-listing and interview procedures are without any hint of direct or indirect discrimination.

19.6 Awareness of policy

Parents and students should know that the school has a non-discrimination policy and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the school community.