

CASTLE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Policy owner: School Management

Applies to: All students, staff, teachers, contractors, homestay providers, group leaders, agents, visitors and other individuals working with or representing Castle School of English

1. Policy Statement

Castle School of English is committed to providing a welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment in which everyone is treated fairly and with dignity.

We value the diversity of our students, staff and wider school community. As an international English language school, we recognise that our community includes people from many different countries, cultures, languages, backgrounds, beliefs and life experiences. We believe that this diversity is an important part of the educational and cultural experience we provide.

Castle School of English does not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. We aim to ensure that all individuals have fair access to our courses, services and opportunities and are able to participate fully in school life.

Our approach is based on the principles of:

- equality of opportunity;
- respect and dignity;
- inclusion and participation;
- recognition and celebration of diversity;
- accessibility and reasonable adjustment;
- prevention of discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- respect for different cultures, backgrounds and perspectives; and
- continuous improvement.

This policy supports our commitment to the standards and values of British Council Accreditation UK and to our responsibilities under relevant UK legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. ensure that Castle School of English provides an inclusive and respectful environment for everyone;
 2. prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 3. promote equality of opportunity for students and staff;
 4. recognise and respond appropriately to individual needs and circumstances;
 5. promote positive attitudes towards cultural and individual differences;
 6. ensure that diversity is reflected positively in teaching, learning and school activities;
 7. provide clear procedures for responding to concerns relating to discrimination or exclusion; and
 8. support the school in identifying and removing unnecessary barriers to participation.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone involved with Castle School of English, including:

- students;
- teachers and academic staff;
- administrative and management staff;
- temporary, freelance and contracted staff;
- applicants and prospective students;
- under-18 students;
- parents, guardians and group leaders;
- homestay providers;
- agents and representatives;
- contractors and suppliers;
- visitors; and
- participants in school-organised activities and excursions.

The policy applies to behaviour and decisions taking place:

- on school premises;
- in classrooms;
- during school activities and excursions;
- in accommodation arranged by the school;
- during interactions with homestay providers;
- during school-related travel;
- through school-related communication, including email and messaging platforms; and

- in other situations where behaviour may affect the safety, wellbeing or inclusion of members of the Castle School community.
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4. Equality and Protected Characteristics

Castle School of English recognises the protected characteristics established under the Equality Act 2010:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

Castle School of English will not unlawfully discriminate against an individual because of any protected characteristic.

We also recognise that people may experience barriers or disadvantage for reasons beyond the protected characteristics listed above. We therefore seek to treat people fairly and respectfully regardless of factors such as:

- nationality;
- language background;
- cultural background;
- socio-economic background;
- educational background;
- family circumstances;
- caring responsibilities; or
- other individual circumstances.

We recognise that different aspects of a person's identity can overlap and may affect their experience of education and participation in school life. We will consider individual circumstances wherever reasonably possible.

5. Our Approach to Inclusion and Diversity

5.1 Students

Castle School of English welcomes students from different nationalities, cultures, religions, backgrounds and life experiences.

Students are admitted and supported according to the school's published admissions requirements and the suitability of the course for their needs. Decisions will not be based on discriminatory considerations.

Where a student identifies an individual need, the school will consider what reasonable and practical support or adjustment may be available.

Students will be given clear information about:

- their course;
- school rules and expectations;
- welfare and support services;
- activities and excursions;
- accommodation arrangements where applicable; and
- how to raise concerns or make a complaint.

Students are encouraged to respect the backgrounds, identities and perspectives of other members of the school community.

5.2 Teaching and Learning

Teachers are expected to create classrooms in which students feel safe, respected and able to participate.

Teachers should:

- treat students fairly and respectfully;
- provide opportunities for all students to participate;
- avoid discriminatory assumptions or stereotypes;
- be sensitive to cultural differences;
- use teaching materials that are appropriate and respectful;
- consider different learning needs where reasonably possible;
- challenge discriminatory or offensive comments appropriately; and
- encourage respectful communication between students.

The international nature of Castle School provides opportunities for students to learn from people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Teachers are encouraged to use this diversity positively as part of the learning experience.

5.3 Cultural Diversity

Castle School of English recognises that students may have different cultural norms, traditions and expectations.

The school aims to create opportunities for students to learn about and respect different cultures while maintaining clear standards of behaviour based on respect, dignity and UK law.

No individual is expected to abandon their cultural identity in order to participate in school life. At the same time, cultural differences cannot be used to justify discriminatory, threatening, abusive or harassing behaviour towards another person.

5.4 Religion and Belief

The school respects students' and staff members' religious and philosophical beliefs.

Where reasonably practicable, the school will consider relevant religious or belief-related needs, including dietary requirements, prayer or worship requirements and significant religious observances.

The school cannot guarantee that every individual request can be accommodated, particularly where this would conflict with health and safety, safeguarding, operational requirements or the effective delivery of a course. Where a request cannot be accommodated, the school will seek to explain the reasons clearly and consider reasonable alternatives where possible.

5.5 Disability and Accessibility

Castle School of English aims to provide an accessible learning environment and to avoid unnecessary barriers to participation.

Students and staff are encouraged to inform the school of relevant accessibility or support needs at the earliest opportunity.

Where appropriate, the school will consider reasonable adjustments relating to:

- access to the premises;
- classroom arrangements;
- learning materials;
- communication;
- participation in activities; and
- other aspects of the student experience.

Any adjustment will be considered in relation to the individual's circumstances, the nature of the request, available resources, health and safety and the practical limitations of the school's premises and services.

The school will not make assumptions about a person's abilities or needs and will discuss appropriate support with the individual wherever possible.

5.6 Gender and Sexual Orientation

Castle School of English is committed to treating people fairly and respectfully regardless of sex, gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

Discriminatory, derogatory or harassing behaviour relating to gender or sexual orientation is not acceptable.

Students and staff are expected to communicate respectfully with one another. Where an individual communicates a reasonable preference regarding how they are addressed, the school will seek to respect this where practicable.

5.7 Pregnancy and Maternity

Castle School of English will not unlawfully discriminate against students or staff because of pregnancy or maternity.

Where appropriate, the school will consider reasonable practical arrangements to support participation in education or work, taking account of health, safety and individual circumstances.

6. Recruitment and Employment

Castle School of English is committed to fair and non-discriminatory recruitment and employment practices.

Recruitment and selection decisions will be based on relevant qualifications, experience, skills, suitability for the role and the requirements of the position.

The school will not unlawfully discriminate against job applicants or employees because of a protected characteristic.

Employment opportunities, training, professional development, promotion and other employment decisions will be managed fairly and consistently.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be considered during recruitment and employment for staff with disabilities or other relevant needs.

All staff are expected to contribute to an inclusive working environment and to treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

7. Homestay and Accommodation

Where Castle School of English arranges homestay accommodation, the school recognises the importance of matching students and hosts appropriately while respecting individual needs and circumstances.

The school will consider relevant information provided by students and hosts, including where appropriate:

- dietary requirements;
- allergies;
- religious or cultural considerations;
- accessibility requirements;
- relevant medical or welfare information;
- household circumstances; and
- other practical requirements.

The school will make reasonable efforts to provide suitable accommodation based on the information available.

Students and homestay providers are expected to treat one another respectfully. Discriminatory, abusive or harassing behaviour is not acceptable.

Where a serious concern relating to discrimination, harassment, safety or welfare is reported in accommodation arranged by the school, the school will investigate and take appropriate action in accordance with its welfare, safeguarding and complaints procedures.

For students under 18, this policy operates alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

8. Activities and Excursions

Castle School of English aims to ensure that school-organised activities and excursions are welcoming and accessible to students wherever reasonably possible.

Activities will be planned with consideration of:

- age and maturity;
- physical accessibility;
- health and safety;
- individual support needs;
- cultural considerations; and
- reasonable practical adjustments.

Where an activity cannot safely or reasonably accommodate a particular need, the school will seek an appropriate alternative where possible.

Students are expected to behave respectfully towards other participants, members of the public, activity providers and school staff.

9. Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

Castle School of English has a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory harassment and victimisation.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour may include:

- racist or xenophobic comments;
- offensive comments about nationality or culture;
- homophobic, biphobic or transphobic comments or behaviour;
- sexist or misogynistic behaviour;
- discriminatory comments about religion or belief;
- disability-related harassment;
- offensive jokes, insults or stereotypes;
- exclusion of an individual because of a protected characteristic;
- unwanted comments or conduct of a sexual nature;
- deliberately misusing or mocking someone's identity;
- discriminatory behaviour towards a staff member, student or homestay provider; or
- retaliation against someone who has raised a concern or supported another person.

This list is not exhaustive.

Discriminatory behaviour may constitute a serious breach of school rules and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the school's relevant procedures.

Where a concern involves a student under 18, the school will also consider whether safeguarding procedures need to be followed.

10. Reporting a Concern

Anyone who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment, bullying or exclusion is encouraged to report the matter to a member of Castle School staff.

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing.

Students may speak to:

- their teacher;
- Student Services;
- a member of the management team; or
- another member of staff they feel comfortable approaching.

Staff should report concerns to their line manager or a member of school management.

All concerns will be taken seriously and handled as sensitively and confidentially as reasonably possible.

Where appropriate, the school will:

1. listen to the person raising the concern;
2. establish the relevant facts;
3. assess whether there are any immediate welfare or safeguarding concerns;
4. take appropriate action;
5. keep appropriate records;
6. inform relevant individuals of the outcome where appropriate; and
7. take steps to reduce the likelihood of the problem recurring.

The school's Complaints Policy should be followed where a formal complaint is appropriate.

11. Confidentiality and Personal Information

Information relating to an individual's personal circumstances, disability, health, religion, identity or other sensitive information will be treated appropriately and shared only where there is a legitimate reason to do so.

Personal information will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection and Privacy procedures and applicable data protection legislation.

The school will avoid making unnecessary assumptions or requiring individuals to disclose personal information that is not relevant to the support or service being provided.

12. Responsibilities

School Management

School Management is responsible for:

- approving and implementing this policy;
- ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities;
- monitoring complaints and concerns relating to inclusion and discrimination;
- reviewing school procedures where barriers are identified;
- ensuring appropriate action is taken when serious concerns arise; and
- reviewing the policy regularly.

Academic Management

Academic Management is responsible for promoting inclusive teaching and learning practices and supporting teachers in responding appropriately to diverse student needs.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- treating others with dignity and respect;
- following this policy;
- challenging or reporting discriminatory behaviour where appropriate;
- supporting an inclusive learning environment; and
- maintaining professional boundaries.

Students

Students are expected to:

- treat other students, staff and members of the wider community respectfully;
- avoid discriminatory or offensive behaviour;
- respect cultural and individual differences; and
- report serious concerns to a member of staff.

Homestay Providers and Other Partners

Homestay providers, contractors, agents and other partners working with Castle School of English are expected to support the principles of this policy and to treat students and staff fairly and respectfully.

13. Training and Awareness

Castle School of English will ensure that relevant staff are made aware of this policy and understand their responsibilities.

In particular, staff should understand:

- the school's expectations regarding equality and inclusion;
- how to recognise discriminatory or exclusionary behaviour;
- how to respond to concerns;
- when a concern may require safeguarding action; and
- how to support students with diverse needs.

Inclusion and diversity will be considered as part of staff induction and, where appropriate, ongoing staff development.

14. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Castle School of English recognises that inclusion is an ongoing process.

The school will monitor relevant feedback, complaints, student comments and staff observations to identify potential barriers or areas for improvement.

Where appropriate, the school may review:

- student feedback;
- complaints and incidents;
- accessibility issues;
- accommodation concerns;
- participation in activities;
- staff feedback; and
- changes in relevant legislation or sector guidance.

Where a recurring issue is identified, the school will consider whether changes to procedures, facilities, training or services are appropriate.

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any significant change in legislation, school provision or relevant British Council Accreditation UK requirements.

15. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside the school's other relevant policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy;

- Student Welfare Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Bullying and Harassment procedures;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Recruitment and Selection procedures;
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Student Code of Conduct; and
- Accommodation/Homestay procedures.

Where an issue involves safeguarding, particularly in relation to a student under 18, the Safeguarding Policy and relevant safeguarding procedures will take precedence.

16. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by School Management.

The review will consider:

- changes to UK legislation;
- changes to British Council Accreditation UK requirements;
- feedback from students and staff;
- complaints or incidents;
- changes to school provision; and
- good practice within the English language teaching sector.

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