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The British School of Gran Canaria

Equal Opportunities

Policy Document



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THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF GRAN CANARIA

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Scope

This policy applies to British School of Gran Canaria students and staff, and for all activities within the school and during school day, and outside of school premises and normal hours. The policy is written in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, “The Equality Act 2010 and Schools – Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities” (Department for Education UK, May 2014) and Spanish Law 62/2003 on fiscal, administrative and social measures, *Título II, Capítulo III (BOE, 31 December 2003) and Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres.*

The policy applies to:

- education (teaching and learning, enrolment, student management, student services and curriculum development and delivery);
- provision of goods and services (extracurricular activities, camps, parent–teacher interviews, access to facilities);
- school sport;
- employment at the school (recruitment, allocation of duties, employment conditions and access to benefits such as training, promotion and leave).

2. Definitions

Throughout this document the following words, terms and phrases have the following meanings:

Staff – adults who are employed and work within The British School of Gran Canaria.

Normal school hours – refers to the school day, which runs from 8.30am to 3.45pm, but also includes Enrichment time at the end of the school day, from 3:45-4:45pm.

BSGC – The British School of Gran Canaria.

Pupils – synonymous with students.

Protected characteristics – the personal characteristics to which the law applies.

Outside Activities – this includes visits, which usually take place during normal school hours e.g. visit to a local museum, and trips which include a residential element, and can extend over a weekend or into a school holiday period.

Comité de Igualdad – school committee comprising of representatives workers and employers to review and monitor equality in the work place.

Comité de Empresa – elected employee representatives, affiliated to a recognised Union.

3. Rationale

BSGC aims to provide a welcoming, supportive, and emotionally and physically secure learning and working environment for every member of the school community. BSGC recognises and promotes human rights, and values the diversity of culture, beliefs, practices, customs, physical and intellectual abilities and life experience of the whole school community. This policy is intended to put BSGC's commitment into practice.

4. BSGC's Commitment

BSGC aims to create an inclusive school culture that fosters acceptance and respect for diversity. In doing so, we seek to deepen understanding and knowledge, promote student and staff wellbeing and help everyone achieve their full potential.

We fundamentally believe that BSGC is enriched by the diversity of its community, and actively champions and celebrates this richness. In such an environment, discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation cannot be tolerated and the school is committed to ensuring that the daily working environment is one of acceptance, tolerance and respect.

- BSGC will take action to prevent discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimisation and to promote a safe and inclusive school.
- BSGC will take immediate and appropriate action to address and resolve equal opportunities issues and complaints.
- BSGC will promote human rights both in terms of school policy and practice, and within its educational activities and culture.

This school supports the Equality Act 2010 and Spanish Laws 62/2003 and 3/2007, which identifies 'protected characteristic' in reference to aspects of a person's identity. Treating a person less favourably because they have one or more of these characteristics is unlawful. The protected characteristics are:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex,
- sexual orientation

BSGC also considers that marital status, paternity nor professional category in the school's organisation should lead to different treatment or consideration when compared with others.

5. Unacceptable treatment

No member of the BSGC community will be treated less favourably because they possess any of the protected characteristics nor will such characteristics affect their access to benefits, services and opportunities provided by the school.

Unacceptable behaviour or treatment of another could manifest itself in acts of discrimination, harassment, vilification, bullying and victimization. Being aware and vigilant to these negative behaviours is important and each is described below.

Discrimination – can be direct or indirect – both are against the law.

- Direct discrimination means treating someone unfairly or less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or because of their association with someone identified with one of these characteristics. Examples - refusing to allow a Muslim student to wear the hijab as part of her school uniform or failing to hire a suitably qualified teacher because of their sexual orientation.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when applying an expectation that has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example - imposing a requirement that all students take notes from the whiteboard without assistance may unreasonably disadvantage a student with vision impairment.

Harassment - the unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Such behaviour may make the school an unfriendly or uncomfortable place by:

- humiliating (putting someone down),
- seriously embarrassing,
- offending (hurting someone's feelings) or
- intimidating (threatening someone so they behave in a certain way).

Harassment can take the form of name calling, stereotyping jokes and offensive comments and can include:

- physical abuse;
- offensive or hostile language;
- offensive jokes or banter;
- belittling or derogatory remarks to or about someone;
- teasing or taunting;
- offensive nicknames;
- the transmittal of offensive material by email;
- mimicking someone's accent or mannerisms in a demeaning way;
- ignoring someone.

Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, request for sex or any other sexual behaviour that a reasonable person would know or expect would offend, seriously embarrass or humiliate

another. Sexual harassment can take the form of unwanted touching, unwelcome sexual innuendo or jokes, displaying sexually explicit material.

Vilification - behaviour (through words or actions) that incites hatred, serious contempt or ridicule of another person or group of people because of their race or religious belief. Vilification might include public threats of harm, encouraging others to hate someone because of their religion, racist statements made in public or racist graffiti.

Bullying - unacceptable and is unreasonable behaviour that is intimidating, threatening or humiliating and repeated over time or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour. Bullying can be physical, verbal or indirect, and creates an unfriendly, threatening or offensive environment. Bullying can include taking or damaging other people's property, excluding or isolating someone, subjecting someone to homophobic abuse based on their sexual orientation, deliberately withholding information so as to affect their work performance, threatening not to renew an employment contract.

Victimisation - treating someone unfairly or otherwise disadvantaging them because they have made an equal opportunities complaint or might do so in the future.

6. Training

Training in equal opportunities will be provided to members of the *Comité de Igualdad* and managers involved in recruitment or other decisions concerning staff. Additionally, all staff will have awareness raising training, so they are more informed and able to support the school's policy and commitment in this area.

All training and CPD opportunities must ensure equal access for all staff, irrespective of their gender, family status, race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability and part-time status.

Training should be flexible as regards:

Timing — so as not to disadvantage employees who, because of family commitments or for religious reasons, cannot work on a particular day or at a particular time duration of individual sessions and regular breaks,

Venue — which should be suitable for people who have limited mobility or who use a wheelchair.

7. Grievances

If a member of the school community considers that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against, they may use the school's Concerns and Complaints Policy or the Anti-Bullying Policy to raise their grievance.

Similarly, the school's Whistle Blower Policy, is another way in which a worry or grievance can be shared, concerning oneself or another person.

8. Rights and Responsibilities

Under this policy, every member of the BSGC has the right to learn and work in a safe and inclusive environment free of discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification and victimisation. Underpinning this policy is the school's commitment to equal opportunities and the responsibility all community members to respect and promote human rights and support BSGC in and the elimination of unlawful discrimination.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimization are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under according to established disciplinary procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimization may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice or prosecution as a criminal offense.

9. Comité de Igualdad

As part of the school's Equal Opportunities commitments, and obligations related to the *Ley Orgánica 3/2007, de 22 de marzo, para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres*, BSGC has established a *Comité de Igualdad*. This committee comprises of representatives from the *Comité de Empresa* and from the school, and was initially established to guide construction of the *Plan de Igualdad* and, following the creation of this policy, monitors its implementation and resolution of issues.

10. Policy Framework

The BSGC Equal Opportunities policy is part of the school's broader policy framework that promotes safe and inclusive schools and the protection of human rights. Other relevant and related BSGC policies include:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Concerns and Complaints Policy;
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy;
- Staff Sexual Harassment Policy;
- Whistle Blowing.