

Yesodey Hatorah Girls Secondary School



Equality Policy

(including Recruitment of Ex-Offenders)

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1. Introduction

Yesodey Hatorah is a girls' secondary school, catering to Charedi (orthodox Jewish) students. The school offers equality of opportunities for both staff and students alike, as part of its moral and legal obligations, in line with The Equality Act 2010.

This policy will be made available to all governors and parents via the school web site or from the Main office.

2. Aims

Our school is committed to upholding the Charedi (Orthodox Jewish) ethos as reflected in our handbook. We are committed to encouraging every student to acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience to fulfil their spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional, and physical development. We encourage our pupils to develop confidence, self-respect, and knowledge of other cultures and lifestyles, to value diversity within the school community and to foster a growing sense of corporate responsibility both within the school and in the wider community.

Our school aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our values.

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. This includes age, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender related characteristics.

3. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties\) Regulations 2011](#), which require schools to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: [The Equality Act 2010 and schools](#), the [technical guidance for schools from the Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) and [guidance from the Government Equalities Office on meeting the specific duties that support the Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Resources and Finance Committee will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils, and parents/carers
- ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the head teacher
- Meet with the head teacher regularly and other relevant staff members, to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues

The head teacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to governors
- Raise and discuss any issues with the Resources and Finance Committee
- Have 'due regard' when making a decision or taking an action to whether it may have particular implications for people with particular characteristics
- Identify any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary

All school staff are expected to have a regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 8.

5. Eliminating discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions.

Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting, it is recorded in the meeting minutes.

New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every August.

The Resources and Finance Committee liaises regarding any issues with senior leaders and governors aware of these as appropriate.

6. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic e.g. students with a disability
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school activities, e.g. by inclusion in school performances)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Make evidence available, identifying improvements for specific groups through analysing the data and tracking progress and attainment of students.

7. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in religious education (RE), citizenship and personal, social, health, citizenship and economic (PSHCE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Making pupils aware of our behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- Holding assemblies and workshops dealing with relevant issues, e.g. addressing prejudice and Shemiras Haloshon. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies, and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs or writing competitions.
- We inform parents about work the school does with students to promote knowledge, understanding and respect of different cultures.

8. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. We consider equality implications before and at the time that we develop policy and make decisions and we continue to review these on a continuing basis.

The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups for example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities and students with medical conditions

9. Equality objectives

Yesodey Hatorah has an annual intake of students in Year 7 of at least three parallel grades. Invariably, there is a percentage of students whose academic ability is below that expected at the point of entry to the school. We propose to keep an annual standing equality objective around ensuring that every year, all students are able to access the full curriculum and achieve expected levels of progress and attainment for the year group.

Standing Equality Objective 1: *To ensure that those who are weak in reading (English or Hebrew) or Numeracy when they enter school are fully supported.*

This will be achieved by:

- Identifying all pupils who are weak, prior to or shortly after they enter school

- Providing targeted support using 1-to-1 tuition or small groups in class and outside class

Data shows that most of the students in these categories make better than expected progress during their first year at school. Moving forward, further support will be provided in the second year, where required. Students who were supported to achieve on a par with their peers, should they fall behind and require intervention higher up in the school, they will be picked up through existing systems and intervention schemes.

Yesodey Hatorah has a significantly young teacher profile, and annual staff turnover is at a level which warrants an ongoing focus on equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection of staff. Alongside this, the school seeks to ensure that any staff with disabilities will have reasonable adjustments in place to accommodate their needs.

Standing Equality Objective 2: To ensure open staff recruitment processes without reference to race or disability; have in place reasonable adjustment agreements for all staff with disabilities, to meet their needs well and address any disadvantages they experience; not to discriminate against applicants based on their criminal record.

This will be achieved by:

- Shortlisting of candidates without reference to race or disability. This information is not requested on the Application Form. Job Application Packs encourage applications from suitable candidates with these characteristics
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team will meet with each member of staff with disabilities to discuss whether their needs are met or whether any further suitable adjustments could be made
- Suitable adjustments will be extended, where identified, as far as possible
- New agreements will be put into place as required, with new staff when appointed
- These agreements are documented as a record of the meeting and will be kept under review

Application Forms routinely do not request information on race or disability and articulate that applications from suitable candidates with these characteristics are welcome.

Records of meetings with staff with disabilities evidence that they feel supported and would be happy to raise any further needs with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Moving forward, these agreements will be monitored, and new agreements made where new staff are appointed, as required.

Refer to Appendix A below regarding application of ex-offenders.

The school is an equal opportunities employer and seeks proactively to maintain this position. To this end, there is a desire to ensure that staff and management involved in recruitment are suitably trained and understand the breadth and extent of this important responsibility.

Equality Objective 3: Explore available Equalities training to ensure the best fit for school and commission as appropriate. Train all senior members of staff and governors involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Training evaluation data will show that 100% of those attending have a good understanding of the legal requirements.

This will be achieved by:

- Providing training for all members of staff and governors involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination, particularly for those new to this role.

Evaluation data to demonstrate that 100% of attendees have a good understanding of the legal requirements.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The governing body will be updated on the equality information we have annually.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will review this document annually, to ensure continued compliance with the PSED. The Resources and Finance Committee will approve it.

11. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Risk assessment
- SEND Policy
- SEN information report
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix A – Recruitment of ex-offenders

The school is aware of its responsibility under the Police Act 1997 not to discriminate against applicants based on their criminal record. The school will only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that the school is legally entitled to consider when recruiting candidates. The school selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

All job application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs that require a DBS check will outline that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted for all candidates once they have been offered the position. During the recruitment process, the school will ensure that a discussion between the recruitment panel and headteacher takes place to evaluate any offences or other matters relevant to the position.

Candidates will be informed that failure to reveal any information which is directly related to the post could result in the withdrawal of an offer of employment. Any DBS certificates that reveal criminal information will be discussed with the individual, and their eligibility for the position will be reviewed in accordance with the following section.

Making a recruitment decision

All offers of employment made by the school will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks.

The Headteacher will consider the magnitude of any DBS disclosures.

Major disclosures will result in the candidate being automatically unsuitable for the role. These include where the adult is named on the following lists:

- Children's barred list
- Adults' barred list

Serious disclosures which involve criminal activity, but do not pose a risk to pupils, will be discussed with the Headteacher prior to the candidate being accepted for the role. The headteacher will endeavour to ascertain the relevant facts from the individual and decide upon a conclusion.

Following this, the candidate will receive a rejection or acceptance letter. When considering an applicant who will not be working in regulated activity, the school will not consider any minor or old convictions which are 'protected' from disclosure, as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2016).

When deciding to accept or reject a candidate, the school will consider the following information:

- The seriousness and relevance of the disclosure in relation to the position applied for
- The length of time since the offence or other matters occurred
- Whether it was a one-off incident or if there is a history of incidents
- The circumstances around the incident
- Whether the candidate has accepted responsibility for their actions

A risk assessment will be conducted by the headteacher following a positive disclosure, before deciding on the candidate's suitability. A record of all recruitment decisions following positive DBS disclosures will be kept by the Headteacher. Depending on the circumstances of each case, the chair of the governing board may be asked to countersign the form recording the recruitment decision. A flowchart of DBS criminal record checks and barred list checks can be found on page 64 of 'Keeping children safe in education' – the school will adhere to this flowchart when making recruitment decisions.

Recruitment of ex-offenders' statement

Candidates are made aware of the following information:

- The governing board fully complies with the DBS Code of Practice and will not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure based on conviction or other information revealed.
- All applicants are subject to a DBS check before the job appointment is confirmed; this includes details of convictions and cautions, as well as spent and unspent convictions. A positive disclosure will not necessarily prohibit a candidate from being offered a position.

- The school is committed to the fair treatment of all applicants, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical or mental disability or offending background.
- The school promotes equal opportunity and welcomes applicants from a wide range of backgrounds, including those with criminal records.
- Candidates are selected for interviews based on their skills, qualifications and expertise.
- All application forms and recruitment notices will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested if a position is offered.
- All applicants are encouraged to provide details of their criminal record at the earliest possible stage. This may be sent under separate and confidential cover.
- The school is committed to ensuring all disclosure information will only be seen by those who require access as part of their duties.
- The school will discuss any matters revealed on a DBS certificate with the applicant before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- At the interview, or in a subsequent discussion, an open and measured discussion will take place about the offences.
- Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of any offer made.
- Legal advice is available for all involved in the recruitment process to ensure they can identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- All recruitment personnel have received appropriate training and guidance in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders.