



SOAR VALLEY MUSIC CENTRE POLICY DOCUMENT

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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1. General Policy Aims

At Soar Valley Music Centre we do not discriminate against anyone, be they staff or student, on the grounds of their age, sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins, or indeed their educational needs, abilities, sexual orientation or background. This is in line with the 1976 Race Relations Act and 1995 Disability Discrimination Act and covers both direct and indirect discrimination.

We promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our centres.

We ensure that all Soar Valley Music Centre Students have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the centre.

We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning.

We ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve.

We challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs.

We celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups.

2. Anti-racism

It is the right of all Soar Valley Music Centre students to receive the best education we can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by Soar Valley Music Centre. We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident.

We try to make Soar Valley Music Centre welcoming to all minority groups, and our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups.

3. Disability & Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 includes:

- A right of non-discrimination against disabled people in the field of employment;
- A requirement for employers to provide a “reasonable adjustment” to working conditions or environment to overcome the practical effects of a disability;
- A right of access to goods and services;
- A right of access to transport infrastructure;
- A requirement that schools, colleges and universities provide information about the accessibility of their services.

The Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) came into effect from 1 September 2002. The Act removes the previous exemption of education from the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), ensuring that discrimination against disabled students will be unlawful. Institutions incurred additional responsibilities in 2003, with the final sections of legislation coming into effect in 2005.

As the Act is an amendment to the existing Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), it only protects people defined as disabled according to that legislation. This definition is based on an individual's ability to carry out 'normal day-to-day' activities, and so may exclude some students who are usually considered disabled by the support systems within their institutions.

It is unlawful for institutions to treat a disabled person 'less favourably' than they treat, or would treat non-disabled people for a reason which relates to the person's disability.

Adjustments

Part of not discriminating is making reasonable 'adjustments'. If any arrangements at the institution place a disabled person at a 'substantial disadvantage', the institution is required to take such steps as are reasonable to prevent that disadvantage.

From 2005 institutions need to make physical adjustments. All institutional services except for education must make physical adjustments from 2004 because they are already covered by Part III of the DDA. The main implication of the 2005 date, therefore, will be for education itself, which is exempt from the 2004 requirements.

The new provisions do not require institutions to lower academic or other standards to accommodate disabled students. An institution would be 'justified' in discriminating in such circumstances.

Institutions will also only be required to make adjustments where these are considered 'reasonable'. Whether an adjustment is reasonable will depend on:

- Academic standards
- The institutions' resources
- Other financial resources or services available to the student (institutions will not, for example, have to replicate the services that some higher education students may get from disabled students' allowances)
- Cost
- Practicality
- The availability of services/aids from other sources
- Health and Safety
- The interests of other students

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is a duty to disabled people generally, not just to particular individuals. The 'anticipatory' aspect of this duty means that institutions need to consider what sort of adjustments may be necessary for disabled people in the future, and where appropriate make these adjustments in advance.

4. The role of trustees

Soar Valley Music Centre's governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy statement, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the community are treated fairly and with equality.

The governing body seeks to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The trustees take all reasonable steps to ensure that the environment gives access to people with disabilities.

The governing body welcomes all applications to join our centres, whatever background or disability a child may have.

The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our centre on account of their sex, religion or race.

5. The role of the Senior Management Team (SMT)

It is the SMT's role to implement the centre's equal opportunities and race equality policy and they are supported by the trustees in so doing.

It is the SMT's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the policy on equal opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The SMT ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

The SMT promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people in all aspects of college life.

The SMT treats all incidents of unfair treatment incidents and any racist with due seriousness.

6. The role of the Progress Tutor

It is the progress tutor's responsibility to discuss any reported incidents of discrimination with the student concerned. They must also record these incidents and report them to the senior management team who will ensure that they are satisfied the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

7. The role of the teachers

At Soar Valley Music Centre all classroom teachers and instrumental teachers will ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect. We do not discriminate against any child.

When selecting classroom material, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. It is also important to ensure that all resources are accessible to students with any disability or learning difficulty.

Soar Valley Music Centre teachers will challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism and inform the student's progress tutor. The progress tutor will record any minor incidents and report them to the senior management team. They will refer any serious incidents direct to the senior management team to be dealt with. Teachers support the work of all support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination.

8. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of our trustees to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities policy. They do this by:

- monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the college;
- monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;
- requiring the SMT to report on an annual basis on the effectiveness of this policy;
- taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or students;
- monitoring the centre's behaviour and exclusions policy, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.