



Equal Opportunities Policy

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Introduction

School context

Park Lodge School is a small school for students who have been admitted to Park Lodge Clinic, a CAMHS Tier 4 Eating Disorder Service. While students at the school primarily have a diagnosis of an eating disorder or eating-related difficulty, most also experience mental health or psychological issues such as depression, OCD, anxiety, or self-harm. Many students are detained under the Mental Health Act.

Students are admitted and discharged throughout the year, with the average length of stay being 16 to 20 weeks. However, this is dependent on individual circumstances, and some admissions may extend beyond a year.

Many students may have been out of formal education for a significant period and may find re-entering a school environment challenging. Upon admission to Park Lodge Clinic, the school strives to gather detailed information about a student's physical, emotional, and mental health needs, as well as their educational history, to ensure that early and appropriate interventions can be implemented.

Park Lodge School is located within Park Lodge Hospital, an inpatient eating disorder service for up to 12 young people aged 11-18. All young people who are patients at the hospital receive an education from the school by agreement from their home Local Authority who fund the school place and maintain responsibility for the education of every student.

The school works collaboratively with all members of the hospital's Multi-Disciplinary Team which includes Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Occupational Therapy, the Nursing and Care team, and Social Workers. Therefore, our school ethos centres on personalisation and a holistic approach to a student's care, treatment and academic needs.

School values and ethos

At Park Lodge School, we pride ourselves on the inclusivity of our community. Park Lodge's core values align with the abbreviation "HEALTH", this reflects the school's commitment to creating a supportive and nurturing environment for students dealing with eating disorders.

- Hopeful Environment: Foster a hopeful and positive atmosphere that inspires growth and recovery.
- Empathy and Understanding: Cultivate a community that practices empathy and understanding, promoting a sense of belonging.
- Achievement: Encourage the highest levels of achievement within the context of the barriers stemming from a young person's medical needs.
- Lifelong Learning: Promote a commitment to continuous learning and personal development for both students and staff.
- Therapeutic Support: Provide comprehensive and specialised therapeutic support for individuals facing eating disorders in partnership with the health provision.
- Holistic Wellness: In partnership with the health provision undertake a holistic approach to reintegration into education and the home community.

These values underpin our school's ethos. Our overarching aims are for each pupil to find their voice, develop their talents and become confident. At Park Lodge School, we contribute to the holistic model

created by the hospital and school to ensure that all our students' health and educational needs are being met.

Purpose and scope

This policy sets out our approach to ensuring equality of opportunity for both pupils and staff. It applies to all aspects of school life, including recruitment and employment, teaching and learning, access to services and enrichment activities.

We recognise that equality goes beyond compliance with legislation — it is about actively creating an inclusive, supportive and understanding environment where difference is valued and celebrated.

We are committed to providing a fair and inclusive environment for all members of our school community. As a hospital school supporting pupils with complex social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, we recognise the unique challenges our pupils and staff face. We aim to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and that no one is disadvantaged due to personal circumstances, background or identity.

Legal framework

This policy is guided by the Equality Act 2010 and reflects our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. It complements our wider equality policy and other relevant documents, including our complaints policy.

Discrimination and inequality

We are committed to preventing:

- Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination: applying rules or procedures which disadvantage particular groups without a justifiable reason.
- Harassment: unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the effect of violating someone's dignity.
- Victimisation: treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a concern.

Equal opportunities for staff

We aim to be a fair employer and ensure equal treatment in all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment, selection and promotion
- access to training and professional development
- working conditions and pay
- support with flexible working where appropriate
- a culture where concerns can be raised safely
- all staff are expected to uphold the principles of equality in their practice and interactions.

Equal opportunities for pupils

In our hospital school setting, we understand that many of our pupils face complex and challenging personal circumstances. We are committed to ensuring that:

- all pupils have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum, adapted to meet their individual needs
- pupils are supported to overcome barriers related to health, emotional wellbeing, or past educational experience
- diversity is reflected in our resources and curriculum content
- pupils are listened to, respected and involved in decisions about their education

Strategies and support

We take practical steps to promote equality, including:

- providing regular training for staff on equality and diversity
- adapting teaching approaches to reflect individual needs, especially for those with EHCPs or undiagnosed additional needs
- working closely with families, clinical teams and external agencies to provide joined-up support
- encouraging a school culture that actively challenges prejudice and promotes empathy

Monitoring and review

We monitor the effectiveness of this policy through ongoing evaluation of:

- pupil progress and engagement
- staff recruitment and retention
- feedback from pupils, staff and families
- records of any incidents of discrimination

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented and that equality is promoted throughout the school.

All staff are responsible for modelling inclusive behaviour and addressing any instances of discrimination.

The Advisory Board have oversight of equality practices and ensure the school meets its legal obligations.

Complaints

Any concerns about discrimination or unequal treatment should be raised in line with our complaints policy, which outlines the steps for making and responding to complaints in a clear and supportive way.