

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you in to nations and tribes, so that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)".

(The Qur'an: 49:13)

We have a commitment to Equality Opportunity for all.

We believe that equality of opportunity is an essential principle of Islam and for us it is about enabling all our students to fulfil their full potential.

They can only achieve this if we help to facilitate access to:

- A broad and balanced curriculum within the framework of the Quraan and Sunnah.
- Islamically desirable attitudes, values, skill and knowledge.
- Differentiated learning experiences, commensurate with their age, ability and aptitude.

This means that each individual must be treated in accordance with the Islamic principles, with the same care and consideration regardless of their ability, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background.

This approach should be evident in every aspect of the life of the madrassah:

- Across the whole curriculum.
- Pastoral care and Personal and Social Development programmes.
- Special Educational Needs.

In practical terms we expect evidence of equal opportunities being offered in:

- The management structure.
- The management processes and procedures.
- The recruitment selection and promotion of staff.
- The curriculum framework.
- The teaching and learning styles.
- The pastoral support system.
- The provision and deployment of resources.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OUR PUPILS - OUR POLICY AND PRACTICE

"Oh people! Surely your Lord is One and your father is One. You all belong to Adam, and Adam was created of clay. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, or vice versa. No white man is superior to a black man and vice versa. Surely, the noblest amongst you are the most God-fearing amongst you".

(The Prophet Mohammed's (saw) Farewell Sermon)

A requirement stated in the Sex Discrimination Act is that a madrassah must give all pupils equal access to all the "benefit, facilities and services" offered by the madrassah. Our aim is to work towards providing equal opportunities throughout practices, especially in the following four key areas:

The Whole Curriculum:

Our whole curriculum will provide a balanced educational provision within the framework of the Quraan and Sunnah.

- All pupils are offered the same opportunity of access to each of the subject areas on offer.
- All pupils have equal opportunity of access to the extra curriculum provision on offer.
- In some areas this is actively encouraged.

Resourcing:

- Our policy is to ensure that all unreasonably biased contents are eliminated from the textbooks, and we recommend that the library books, and other resources used in the school reflect an accurate account.
- We will endeavour to present a balanced perspective when curriculum topics are developed.

Relationships:

Within our madrassah we work towards trying to promote a deeply spiritual belief, self-esteem, with respect for everyone regardless of their culture or beliefs.

- We use a system of "rewarding" to acknowledge when children try their best, whether in an academic or social context.
- When there are disputes we try to ensure that everyone concerned gets a fair hearing and justice is achieved.
- Expectations of behaviour and any sanctions due to irresponsibility are imposed evenly.
- We expect mutual standards of respect between pupils and staff.

The Madrassah in the Community:

- We encourage all parents and pupils to participate in madrassah events.
- All pupils have equal opportunity of access to the extra curriculum provision on offer.
- All parents are offered equality of access, subject to prior appointment, to discuss their child's progress.
- Seek guidance and purposeful partnership with the home and the community at large, in particular where such contact will enhance the quality of educational provision and enlighten (steer, guide, encourage) our students towards achieving excellence.

Staff

The madrassah values diversity amongst the staff. In all staff appointment, the best candidate will be appointed, based upon strict professional criteria.

Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders:

- As an organisation using the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure service to assess applicant's suitability for positions of trust, madrassah complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- The Madrassah is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all disclosures applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- A disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within The Madrassah and we guarantee that this information is only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

- Unless the nature of the position allows the Madrassah to ask question about your entire criminal record we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We ensure that all those in the Madrassah who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subjects of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Policy Statement on the Secure Storage, handling, Use, Retention & Disposal of Disclosures Information.

General Principles

As an organisation using the DBS Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Madrassah compiles fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligation under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

Storage & Access

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant’s personnel file and is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosures information for longer than six-months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual Subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure.

However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.