

Meridian International School s.r.o.



– Equality & Equal Opportunities Policy –


SECONDARY & HIGH SCHOOL

(Grade 6 to Grade 12)

Review Date: 1st September (2017)

Next Review Date: 20th August (2018)

Approved by: Mr. Ahmet GURSOY (School Director)

Signature: 

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PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX 3 (PAGE 17) FOR A TABLE OF ACTION PLANS AS TO HOW MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL WILL COMMIT TO ENSURING THAT CONCERNS OF EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE SCHOOL'S OBJECTIVES.

Important Child & General Safety Contact Information

Name	Contact Number
Police Department	158
Fire Department	150
Ambulance	155
International Aid Communication in Foreign Languages	112
Prague City Police	156
Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children	+ 420 222 805 244
Educational Psychologist (Prague 8)	+ 420 286 882 368
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Meridian International School

– SECONDARY & HIGH SCHOOL (GRADE 6 to GRADE 12) –

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1. Introduction

As a growing education institution which strictly follows the National Curriculum of England, in accordance to the British School system, as well as in adherence to the principles that categorise the values and rule of law in the United Kingdom, Meridian International School does its utmost to function as if it is an establishment based in the U.K. Based in the Czech Republic, the school embraces the opportunity to adhere to the aforementioned values and applying them whilst existing in a central European setting.

Since the collapse of the communist-system, in 1989, the Czech Republic (independent since 1993) has grown from a post-communist state into a thriving member of the European community. Still very much a growing economy, the Czech Republic is increasingly multicultural in societal appearance, whilst the country invites more people from abroad (foreign businesses, to an increasing expatriate population, whilst also conforming to EU policies that concern asylum and safeguarding citizens from abroad that are in the process of receiving 'refugee status').

Considering the increasingly multicultural and diverse appearance of Czech society, it is important that international schools in the Czech Republic have a firm commitment to promoting the values of diversity and ensuring that all pupils and staff are 'equal' in how they are treated. Meridian International School, home to over 60 nationalities, embraces and thrives under these conditions, and will always do its utmost to ensure that a strong commitment to equality and equal opportunities is always implemented, as well as maintained.

1.1 General Statement

As an international school that is governed in the 'British style', Meridian International School places great value in the laws of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It also provides some changes about which schools need to be aware.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It simplifies the law by removing anomalies and inconsistencies that had developed over time in the existing legislation, and it extends the protection from discrimination in certain areas.

As far as schools are concerned, for the most part, the effect of the new law is the same as it has been in the past – meaning that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment.

Meridian International School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and

learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

This Equality Policy for Meridian International School brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Aims

Meridian International School's *Equality Policy* is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

It explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

2.1 Overall Aims of our Equality Policy

- To provide a secure environment in which all our students can flourish and achieve all five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and enjoy economic well-being).
- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

3. Meridian International School's Moral Duty

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for

all. We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately, negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster good relations between different groups of pupils and the wider school community.

We will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under a SEN statement, or where the statement does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- The engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies.
- Preparation for entry to the school.
- School policies.
- Breaks and lunchtimes.
- The provision of school meals.
- Interaction with peers.
- Opportunities for assessment and accreditation.
- Exam arrangements.
- Behaviour management approach and sanctions exclusion procedures.
- School clubs, activities and school trips.
- The school's arrangements for working with other agencies.
- Preparation of pupils for the next phase of education.
- Learning and teaching and the planned curriculum.
- Classroom organisation.
- Timetabling.
- Grouping of pupils.
- Homework.
- Access to school facilities.
- Activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school.

Deleted:

- School sports.
- Employees' and staff welfare.

3.1 Students

All pupils should at all times feel safe from harassment, insult or discrimination and have access to help should any offence occur.

All pupils should have the right to functional access of all curriculum areas and should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential in each of those areas.

All pupils are equally entitled to their teachers' attention, use of resources, rewards and sanctions, and access to extra-curricular activity.

Pupils' needs differ, and this must be recognised by both staff and pupils if all are to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

3.2 Staff

All staff will be mindful of the unintentional nature of much discrimination and will adopt good practice in relation to expectations, use of appropriate language, resources and guidance.

Teachers will strive to plan work and organise and manage classes to take into account such factors as ethnicity, disability, gender, socioeconomic backgrounds and giftedness whilst maintaining consistently high expectations.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Head of School

Our Head of School will:

- Ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of and informed about the Equality Policy.
- Oversee the effective implementation of the policy.
- Ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy.
- Develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available.
- Monitor the policy and report to the School Director at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information.

- Ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.

4.2 School Director

Our School Director will:

- Designate a leader with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy.
- Ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
- Support the Head of School in implementing any actions necessary.
- Engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy.
- Evaluate and review the policy and objectives annually.

4.3 Senior Leadership Team

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- Have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy.
- Provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.
- Assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP.

4.4 Students

Our students will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability.
- Be expected to act in accordance with the Policy.
- Be encouraged to actively support the Policy.

4.5 Parents & Carers

Our parents/carers will:

- Be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy.
- Have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements be encouraged to actively support the Policy.

- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy.
- Be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child.

4.6 School Staff

Our school staff will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- Understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- Make known any queries or training requirements.

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy.
- Be encouraged to support the Policy.
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy.

5. Implementation, Monitoring & Reviewing

This policy will be actively promoted and disseminated via our school website, with parents, with our school council, class time, assemblies, PSHE and curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our senior leadership team who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

Each student's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, ability or additional needs. In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the school meets its duty to positively promote diversity. (e.g. lesson observations record evidence of differentiation and texts are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity). The data collected is used to inform further school planning, target-setting and decision-making.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

In the planning and development stage of policy-making, we will ensure we have consulted and taken into account many different views. All improvement plans will be designed with an element of impact assessment built in to monitor the success of each activity. There will be a

systematic review of the impact of all policies and procedures on equality and diversity to address any areas of inequality. Our target setting processes ensure appropriate, challenging targets are set in relation to identifiable groups as well as individual students/cohorts.

APPENDIX 1: KEY LEGISLATION (U.K.)

1. Equality Act 2010

Harmonises and streamlines existing equality legislation into one Single Act.

The Act protects pupils from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics':

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

This relates to:

- Prospective pupils.
- Pupils at the school.
- In some limited circumstances, former pupils.

The Act also contains positive action provisions which enable schools to take proportionate action to address disadvantage faced by particular pupils. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged pupil group.

The Public-Sector Equality Duty commenced in April 2011.

There are exceptions to enable single-sex schools to admit only pupils of one sex and for schools with a religious character to enable them to have admissions criteria which give preference to members of their own religion.

For more information:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00215460/equality-act-2010-departmental-advice>

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/inclusion/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

2. Accessibility Planning

Accessibility planning is a statutory duty and can be incorporated into this policy. Schools must plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled children and young people to the school curriculum
- Improving access to the physical environment of schools, and
- Improve the delivery of written information to disabled children and young people.

3. Auxiliary Aids & Services

We acknowledge our duty to provide auxiliary aids as part of the reasonable adjustment duty for all schools as from September 2012.

The school and the Local Authority acknowledge our reasonable adjustment duties under the Equality Act 2010. We will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under a SEN statement, or where the statement does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

The first plans were required to be in place by April 2003. Therefore, as schools come to review their accessibility plans they should consider building these actions into their Equality policy. A comprehensive Access Resource Pack to support schools with accessibility has been developed by the Development Planning Team at ESCC and sent out to all schools. Schools should contact Darren Guyett (01273 481314) if they require a copy.

Community Cohesion – Education and Inspection Act 2006.

4. General Duty

To promote community cohesion. One of the ways in which this is achieved and promoted is through Meridian International School involving itself with the local community, in whatever way it can. This can be through collaboration with other local, Czech schools, other international schools in the city, as well as through community events.

5. Meridian International School – Specific Duties & Commitment

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – helping children to learn to understand others, to value diversity while also promoting shared values.

- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level.
- Engagement and extended services – to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations with different schools and communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

APPENDIX 2: KEY LEGISLATION (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Taken from the Labour Code of the Czech Republic:

https://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/3221/Labour_Code_2012.pdf

1. Part One/Chapter 4: Equal Treatment and Prohibition of Discrimination (Section 16)

- (1) Employers shall ensure equal treatment for all employees as regards employee working conditions, remuneration for work and other emoluments in cash and in kind (of monetary value), vocational (professional) training and opportunities for career advancement (promotion).
- (2) Any form of discrimination in labour relations is prohibited. The terms, such as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, persecution, an instruction to discriminate and/or incitement to discrimination, and the instances in which different treatment is permissible, are regulated in the Anti-Discrimination Act (Note 108).
- (3) Different treatment arising from the nature of occupational activities where this different treatment is a substantial requirement necessary for work performance is not considered as discrimination; the purpose followed by this derogation must be legitimate and the requirement must be adequate. Measures which are justified and aimed at preventing, or levelling out, disadvantages arising from the fact that a certain individual belongs to a group in respect of which relevant reason is laid down in the Anti-Discrimination Act shall not be deemed as discrimination. Section 17 Remedial measures relating to protection.

2. Anti-Discrimination Act (2008)

Please read the necessary document via the following link:

https://www.ochrance.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/DISKRIMINACE/pravni_predpisy/Antidiscrimination-Act.pdf

APPENDIX 3: ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Meridian International School aims to continuously improve and expand upon its commitment to establishing a working environment that prides itself for having a staunch commitment to Equal Rights & Equal Opportunities.

As such, the following plan serves as a commitment of how Meridian International School will continue to affirm/guarantee this obligation.

1. Aims & Objectives

- To plan for improvements to ensure that all Staff, Pupils, Parents and Visitors can have access to the curriculum, premises and information, in compliance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure that no-one is discriminated against.

2. Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as:

A person has a disability if –

- They have a physical or mental impairment.
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day to day activities.

3. Protected Characteristics

The following characteristics are protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

	Activity and Proposed Action	How will the Impact of the Action Be Monitored?	Who	When	Success Criteria
1	Publish and promote the 'Equality Plan' through the school website, newsletter and staff meetings. All staff are aware of the school's 'Single Equality Plan' Staff to continually be involved in the future development of the plan	Website will be updated regularly. Termly newsletter. Designated staff meetings.	Head of School Designated Member of Staff	Throughout each school year – once a term	Staff are familiar with the principles of the Equality Plan and use them when planning lessons, creating classroom displays. Parents are aware of the Equality Plan
2	Admissions criteria are not discriminatory and do not exclude anyone.	Use entrance exams or assessments to select the intake. Provide appropriate adaptations as necessary to ensure no-one is discriminated against.	Head of School School Director	Throughout the academic school years	Prospective pupils will be selected based on academic ability only
3	Monitor and analyse pupil achievement by race/ethnicity, gender, disability and act on any trends or patterns in the data that require additional support for pupils. Extra support will be provided for those pupils who are under-achieving in order to make progress in their learning and their personal well-being.	Achievement data analysed by race/ethnicity, gender and disability. Interventions to support agreed at pupil progress meetings.	Head of School Deputy Head of School School Director	Five times a year.	Analysis of teacher assessments/annual data demonstrated that there is no gap between various groups or that the gap is narrowing for equality groups
4	Ensure that the curriculum promotes the role models and heroes that young people positively identify with, which reflects the school's diversity in terms of race, gender and disability. This in turn will help pupils to understand and value others and value diversity.	Increase in pupils' participation, confidence and achievement levels – monitor through lesson evaluations, assessments, progress tracking, the student council and annual pupil questionnaires.	Subject teachers	Throughout each academic school year. Annual reviews of schemes of work and audit of resources.	Notable increase in participation and confidence of targeted groups
5	Provisions are made to ensure no pupils are discriminated against when taking examinations.	The school will provide for the needs of all pupils when talking their examinations within the adaptations accepted by the examination boards.	Head of School Adults working in the school	Throughout each academic year	All staff are familiar with pupil needs and requirements.
6	Ensure when recruiting new members of staff that no discrimination is made against	All absences will be recorded and monitored and staff	Head of School	Throughout each school	All staff are aware of procedures regarding absences.

	pregnancy (absence for medical visits; sickness; maternity leave). Ensure that female pupils who are pregnant are not discriminated against.	will not be penalised for any absences due to such circumstances.		year – once a term	
7	Ensure that displays in classrooms and corridors promote diversity in terms of race, gender, ethnicity and disability to highlight the diversity of the school and the wider diversity of the community in which they live.	Increase in pupil participation and positive identity – monitor through PSHCE, other subjects (ex: English, art, DT), student council, pupil questionnaires, and parent questionnaires.	Head of School All adults working in the school	Throughout each academic year.	More diversity reflected in school displays across all year groups, particularly to reflect the diversity of the wider community
8	Ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to make positive contribution to the life of the school, e.g. through involvement in the Student Council by election or co-option), class assemblies, fund raising, etc.	Student council representation monitored by race/ethnicity and disability.	Head of School	Throughout the academic school year	Dedicated commitment to diversity in student council membership.
9	Celebrate cultural events throughout the year to increase pupil awareness and understanding of different communities.	Planning curriculum enrichment activities Monitor quality of displays throughout the school. Preparation in lessons (PSHCE, art, DT, English, etc.).	Academic coordinator Deputy Head of School Subject teachers	Throughout each academic school year	Increased awareness of different communities shown in lessons.
10	Extend school activities such as after school clubs and booster classes to take into account pupil needs and access issues and pupils attending reflect the diversity of the school and population in terms of race, disability and socio-economic status.	Monitor extra-curricular and club attendance registers for different groups of pupils and present data to the Head of School and School Director.	Deputy Head of School	Throughout the academic school years	More diversity reflected in uptake of extended services All those who wanted to join have been able to do so
11	The school has an all-inclusive approach to ensuring ALL pupils are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council, class assemblies,	Monitor extra-curricular and club attendance registers for different groups of pupils and present data to the Head of School and School Director	Deputy Head of School	Throughout the academic school year	Notable increase in participation and confidence targeted groups

	positions of responsibility and extra-Curricular activities and clubs.				
12	Monitor and analyse attendance and behaviour data by race/ethnicity, gender and disability and act on any trends or patterns in the data that require additional support for pupils. Extra support will be provided for those pupils who are poor attendees or arrive late in school. Monitor records of incidents, including racial and bullying incidents and act on any trends in the data that indicate over-representation of any of the equality groups.	Attendance and behaviour data analysed by race/ethnicity and disability. Interventions to support agreed at staff meetings.	Head of School School Director	Five times per year	Analysis of school attendance and behaviour/exclusion data demonstrates that no particular group is over-represented.
13	Make the premises accessible to all users.	Check that all users can access the ground floor.	Proprietors and Staff	Review at the end of each academic year	Currently all pupils can safely access the school.
14	Identify parents/guardians and visitors who have disabilities that could affect their interaction with the school.	Write to parents an explanation to request information	Parents regular visitors	Twice a year	School aware of and able to meet the need of disabled parents in relation to their child's progress in school
15	Assess and improve the working environment for any pupils or staff with visual or hearing impairment, or other identified disability	e.g. review signage around the school; incorporate appropriate colour and lighting schemes when refurbishing Ensure support for pupils with visual impairment or dyslexia	Seek advice from the school surveyors	Semester 1 of each academic year	Disabled pupils able to work independently in all teaching areas disabled staff able to fulfil their responsibilities