

Now that you are registered you may be interested to know that your school may apply to be accepted under the teachers' pensions' regulations. Enquiries should be made, in writing, to Teachers Pensions, Mowden Hall, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 9EE.

You should also note that the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 make it illegal for employers to recruit staff, or treat them differently on religious grounds, unless they can demonstrate they have a genuine occupational requirement to do so. However, the regulations provide an exception, with regard to teaching staff only, for schools designated as having a religious character by the Secretary of State. Schools which discriminate against non teaching staff should be aware that they will be acting unlawfully unless they can demonstrate they have a genuine occupational requirement to do so and that it is proportionate to apply that requirement in the particular case.

The Religious Character of Schools (Designation Procedure) (Independent Schools) (England) Regulations 2003, which accompany this letter, set out in detail how independent schools can become designated as having a religious character. If you wish to apply for an order designating the school as having a religious character you should complete the enclosed application form. If an order is not made and you adopt employment practices in respect of teaching staff which in any way apply religious grounds, you will be liable to challenge under The Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 and may have acted unlawfully.

In addition you must be aware that Section 162 of the Education Act 2002 requires that all registered independent schools must gain approval from the Secretary of State before making any of the changes listed below.

1. change of proprietor
2. change of school premises
3. the age range of pupils
4. the maximum number of pupils
5. propose to admit boys instead of girls or girls instead of boys or become co-educational
6. introduce or make changes to boarding facility
7. admit pupils with special educational needs

Application for approval must be made in writing, and in the case of approval of a change of proprietor, must be made by the proposed new proprietor. The Secretary of State has the right to remove a school from the register if it has not obtained approval prior to making material changes.

Finally the enclosed Annex sets out information about the schools duties and responsibilities in relation to Fire Safety.