

Equal Opportunities for Students Policy

Whole school including EYFS

Version	1	2	3	4	5
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Date approved by Governors	Mrs Wilcox	Mrs Wilcox	Mrs Wilcox	Email – 17.04.23	Governor Hub – May 2025
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This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy statement

The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse School community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Students will be taught to value and respect others and other cultures. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the School community.

In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under law to oppose discrimination on the basis of the following Protected Characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marital and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief);
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need or disability, or because English is an additional language.

The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes, behaviours and practices through staff leading by example, through the PSHEE, Relationships and Sex Education policy and programmes, through the supportive School culture and through the School's wider policies.

Discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. This policy covers the following forms of discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination:** direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in". This would be a decision based on grounds of their race and would be direct discrimination. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a student is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that student.
- **Indirect discrimination:** indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their

disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a student with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

Harassment

This policy covers the following forms of harassment:

- **Harassment related to a Protected Characteristic:** Harassment may occur where someone engages in unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for that person. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- **Sexual harassment:** Harassment may also occur where a person engages in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for that person. It is also harassment to treat someone less favourably because they have either rejected, or submitted to, sexual harassment.

The School will not tolerate harassment for any reason. Further information relating to the following types of harassment can be found in the relevant school policies below:

Harassment relating to a protected characteristic by a student is likely to be contrary to the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Sexual harassment relating to students and the School's response will be dealt with in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Victimisation

Victimisation may occur where a person is treated less favourably than otherwise may be the case, because of some action (referred to as a 'protected act') that they have taken, they may take or they are believed to have taken in connection with the Equality Act 2010. Protected acts are, broadly, any actions taken by a person in good faith in connection with the Equality Act, such as making or supporting an allegation of discrimination or harassment.

It is also unlawful to victimise a student for anything done in relation to the Equality Act by their parent or sibling.

It is important that no one is afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation. Further information may be found in the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Admission

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their gender, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief or special educational needs ('SEND').

Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School. The School will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs. The school will always act in the best interests of the child.

Financial circumstances

Branwood Prep School is a fee-paying school and as such, parents, guardians or other persons responsible for the payment of fees for a pupil are responsible for ensuring the punctual payment of all fees and extras as the Head, Bursar, Governors and Trustees may determine. Subject to this condition, the School shall ensure for all pupils attending the School, equality of opportunity and provision regardless of the social or financial circumstances of their families.

Educational services and opportunities

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The School commits to:

- Treating all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination;
- Endeavouring to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics;
- Ensuring that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support;
- Monitoring the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds;
- Challenging inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff;
- Offering all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of co-curricular activities;
- Working with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School;
- Ensuring that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices;

The School will also use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHEE to:

- Promote respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010; and
- Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

Religious belief

The School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from all religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community. It is fully understood and respected that pupils may be required to be absent on occasion during the course of the school year

in order to observe religious holidays. The Governing body, through the SLT, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Dietary requirements

The School employs their own catering staff who provide a nutritious and balanced diet with plenty of choice at mealtimes. Provision is made at all meals for pupils who have special dietary requirements based on preference, religion or medical advice. School Parliament discuss the school's food provision and influence future menu choice.

Sexual orientation

The School will ensure equality of opportunity regardless of a student's sexual orientation. The School seeks to be understanding of students irrespective of their sexual orientation and promotes social awareness via PSHE lessons, assemblies, Form 6 RSE presentations and the School Council/Parliament.

Requests for variation in the School uniform

All pupils are required to wear a uniform. The Head will consider formal requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the School's policy on health and safety and it is reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disability

The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils.

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's SEND Policy and the Accessibility Plan.

The School has an Accessibility Plan in place which can be found on the School website and a hard copy can be made available upon request. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled, subject to reasonable adjustment.

Special Educational Needs

The School will strive to make appropriate provision for students with SEN requirements and individual support lessons are available. In addition, SEN assessment is available at the School and access arrangements can be made for pupils with special requirements for examinations, e.g., ICT facilities, amanuensis, isolation, etc.

Equality policy for EYFS

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- a) Equality of opportunity throughout the EYFS is about providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest standards of achievement. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community – pupils, staff and parents.
- b) Our policy is based on the following core values as expressed in the School's mission statement:
 - EYFS children are encouraged to become their best selves.
 - We provide for the talents, strengths, interests and needs of a wide variety of children
 - We provide a broad and inspiring education across all subjects, in a cherishing and supportive environment.
- c) These statements are designed to ensure that the School meets the needs of all, taking account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, ability, and disability. It is important that we meet the needs of every pupil to ensure inclusion for all.
- d) We aim to respect all protected characteristics by promoting equality of opportunity, promoting racial equality and good race relations, and opposing all forms of prejudice and discrimination.
- e) To achieve these aims, we will make all members of the school community aware of our philosophy. In our school:
 - We believe that all our children matter.
 - We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and value each child's accomplishments.
- f) We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.
- g) We set each child realistic and challenging expectations to enable most children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children will progress beyond this point. We do this in order to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Resources

The provision of good quality resources and materials is a high priority. Where appropriate, resources and displays reflect the experiences and backgrounds of the range of people living in the UK. We endeavour to celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes.

Working with parents and other agencies

We feel that we work closely with all parents and with outside agencies where appropriate. We provide opportunities for all parents and other agencies to feel welcomed in School, work in partnership with teachers and be well informed by clear communication. Reference can be made to the Equality Act 2010 and the DfE's 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'.

Breach of this Policy

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy. The School is opposed to all forms of racism and xenophobia, including those forms that are directed towards religious groups and communities. In reported cases of racist behaviour, the School will contact all appropriate authorities.

Branwood Prep School will seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils in the areas outlined above at every possible stage. The School recognises the right of pupils or their families to express concern where they feel that this may not be the case. Use of the School's complaints procedure or of the normal mechanisms of raising concern by way of teaching staff and other members of staff is as applicable to concerns covered by this document as to other questions of welfare and academic progress.