



ST. EDWARD'S
OXFORD

EQUALITY POLICY

AUGUST 2024

Document History

Document History	
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Linked Documents:	Equality Plan; Admissions Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Pupil Behaviour Policy; Exclusion Policy; Curriculum Policy; Wellbeing Policy; EAL Policy; Learning Development Policy; Assessment Policy; Accessibility Plan; Recruitment and Selection Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Staff Disciplinary Policy; Grievance Policy; Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work; Bursary Policy
External Documents	<i>The Equality Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)</i>

Purpose

St Edward's Oxford is dedicated to ensuring that all members of the school community and the wider community are treated equally, fairly, and with respect by the school and by each other. This applies to the school as a place of education, a business, and an employer.

Prejudice, discrimination (direct or indirect), and victimisation are not tolerated, and we work hard to instill in our pupils a strong understanding of right and wrong, including the importance of inclusion, acceptance, and compassion towards others. The school's main priority is to provide the best education and care that we can and establish a cooperative working relationship between all members of the school and the wider school community, and to aid the development, progress and needs of all the children in our care.

This document sets out how the school will satisfy its duties under the Equality Act to:

- work towards ensuring no discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other behaviour prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- foster good relations between persons with and without protected characteristics;
- promote equality of opportunity regardless of whether a person has a protected characteristic (such as race, gender, transgender, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation).

The school aims to comply with this duty, in both the delivery of its services and the employment of its staff. This policy has been created by the Sub-Warden for the Governing Body of St Edward's Oxford, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and underpins other policies, as indicated on the front of the document.

This document will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is being effectively implemented and remains focused and up to date on issues surrounding equality both within the school and nationally. The reviews will take place at least every four years, any time there is an update or change to equality legislation, or when there is a serious incident in the School involving equality as defined in this plan.

The School will maintain an active annual **Equality Plan**, which will set out in detail specific actions and the monitoring processes by which the success of those actions will be measured. Through the Heads of Social Responsibility, the Senior Management Team will report against this Plan annually, reporting actions taken, progress made, trend analysis across various categories and recommendations for next steps within the updated plan.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act of 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Roles and Responsibilities

Creating a school environment that promotes equality and denounces discrimination is a whole-school responsibility and requires all members of the school community to be actively involved in breaking down barriers to learning and barriers to social and emotional development that prejudice can create.

Individuals in the school are expected to take responsibility for supporting and promoting equality in school beyond the responsibilities listed below.

The Governing Body

The governing body will:

- create and approve an Equality Plan with the help of the Warden and Sub-Wardens and ensure that it is adopted correctly throughout the school;
- ensure the school complies with all equality legislation and the school's equality objectives as set out in this document;
- nominate a governor to oversee the Plan, who will work with the Senior Management Team to monitor equality outcomes, suggest improvements and report annually to the Compliance and Safeguarding Committee of the Governing Body.

The Warden and Senior Management Team

The Warden, with the support of the rest of the Senior Management Team, will:

- promote the Plan both within the school and externally to the rest of the community;
- ensure that all staff are aware of their role and responsibilities regarding the promotion and delivery of equality in school through inset training, house staff meetings and departmental

discussions;

- put in place appropriate monitoring processes to measure progress against the Plan;
- report back to the Governing Body on how the Plan is working and any amendments that they feel should be made, as well as feedback from staff, pupils and parents;
- ensure that the objectives of the Plan are actively promoted in all aspects of the curriculum (academic and co-curricular);
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;
- tackle bias and stereotyping;
- take appropriate action where discrimination or victimisation occurs.

School staff will:

- ensure that they are up to date and aware of the contents of this Policy and the Equality Plan and the school's policy towards all types of discrimination;
- be aware of the absolute necessity to avoid discrimination against any group or individual;
- seek opportunities to encourage pupils to see the world through lenses other than their own (or the majority) ethnic/cultural group;
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour wherever they see it within the School community;
- tackle bias and stereotyping;
- work to promote anti-bullying strategies as outlined in the school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies;
- show a commitment to undertake development and training within this area;
- engage with the school in eliminating any discrimination and act as a good example to pupils;
- promote a positive working environment;
- actively work to ensure that all pupils engage positively in eliminating discrimination;
- actively work to ensure that pupils feel safe and confident in reporting any incidents of inappropriate language or behaviour, discrimination or victimisation that they know to have occurred;
- report back to their managers immediately on any incidents relating to discrimination or victimisation, either by staff, pupils, or any other member of the school community, so that these incidents can be reviewed, and action taken where necessary.

Parents, volunteers and other visitors

- Everyone working with, or engaging with, pupils at the School is expected to support our commitment to equality;
- Any member of staff inviting an outside speaker into the school must have that visit approved by the Sub-Warden;
- Any member of staff hosting a visitor (e.g. a visiting teacher) is responsible for ensuring that their visitor respects our commitment to equality when visiting the School;
- Parents are expected to respect our commitment to equality and to work with the school to resolve any incident relating to discrimination or victimisation that their child is involved in.

Equality relating specifically to employment of staff

Staff Recruitment

The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures, and terms of appointment, will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, nationality, gender, religion, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel it will be declared before shortlisting takes place, it may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

More information about our recruitment procedures can be found in the school's **Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure**.

The annual report to Governors will include a report on diversity within the staff body, including recruitment, promotions, leavers and any disciplinary proceedings.

Equal opportunities for staff

As part of our commitment to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment, the school will ensure that:

- all staff appointments and promotions are made because of merit and ability and in compliance with the law;
- staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community wherever possible;
- as an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce including the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- we ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

Pay

In line with statutory requirements, the school reports on pay and gender.

Dignity at work

The school is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The school's detailed procedures for dealing with workplace bullying and harassment can be found in the **Dignity at Work** policy document.

Staff discipline and suspension

The school is committed to ensuring that all school staff are treated fairly and consistently and anyone not adhering to these values is held to account through our **Disciplinary Procedure**. Any member of staff who creates a barrier to learning for our pupils will be disciplined. We hope that staff will feel confident to voice complaints and grievances in the confidential environment of the school and that they will trust the school to deal with their grievances fully, promptly, and fairly.

We will record and report on protected characteristics pertinent to any member of staff involved in disciplinary proceedings or any case of bullying/harassment.

Equality relating to Pupils

The school welcomes a diversity of pupils into the community. Teachers should be aware of the absolute necessity to avoid discrimination against any individual or group in any context within the school (including in the classroom, in the boarding house, or during activities and games). Teachers should, in appropriate circumstances, confront pupils with the reality of stereotyping and encourage their critical analysis of its implications for all members of the School and for wider society.

Equal access to the Curriculum

All pupils, irrespective of their background, should have equal access to all parts of the wider curriculum offered by the school. We will work hard to fight against stereotyped subject and activity choices and all Heads of activities and games will include a section on diversity and equality in their annual reports to the Sub Warden.

We will monitor the take-up of optional sports and activities to check for potentially damaging biases. We will track and monitor pupil progress carefully, including the performance of particular groups. The way we do this is described in the Assessment Policy.

Bullying based on protected characteristics

Any form of abuse based on protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act, whether verbal, through social media, explicit or implied, or passed off as “banter,” will be challenged. Our first response will be to explain and educate, but further transgressions will be dealt with through the school’s discipline policy (relating to pupils or to staff). Protected characteristics of those involved (as perpetrator or as victim) will be recorded and reported annually, with commentary on trends.

Training in how to identify and challenge such abuse is part of the school’s regular Inset Training; any member of staff may be asked to take part in additional awareness training – this applies to teachers, support staff and sports coaches. Details of planned training will be given in the annual **Equality Plan**.

Teachers will be trained to support colleagues or pupils in calling out abuse and/or any form of ridiculing differences. Records of training planned and undertaken will form part of the annual report to Governors. Challenging stereotypes and encouraging diversity is a key component of the PSHE programme for all age groups. The details of what is currently planned is specified in the **Equality Plan**.

The Sub-Warden records incidents of bullying related to protected characteristics; trends are monitored by age, house, and gender and from year to year. This will be reported in the annual report to Governors.

Gender

A genuinely co-educational School is one in which all pupils have the same opportunities and same breadth of experience, regardless of their gender. It is our long-term goal to have co-educational Houses, minimising times when pupils are separated by gender. We will measure differences in academic outcomes as well as well-being and mental health (using, for example, pupil surveys). We are committed to equal access to sports and activities, including equal status of gendered sports and activities – all Heads of Sports will be required to have a plan for this, and to report against it.

Race

Racial discrimination and bullying can be subtle and under-the-radar. Teachers need training in how to identify and challenge racial slurs and to be aware of unacceptable comments and tropes that can become normalised. This includes comments based on ethnicity, culture or national identity.

Teachers must be very conscious of the behaviour they are modelling, from major areas like assignments and activities to what might seem trivial things like the correct pronunciation of forenames and surnames. All staff must be vigilant in identifying any racist behaviour involving name-calling, insults and jokes, graffiti or incitement by others to racist behaviour. Care must be taken to watch out for the ridiculing of cultural differences in such things as dress, food, music and the deliberate spreading of prejudice and misinformation. We will always seek to educate and explain when faced with unacceptable behaviour but will follow through with disciplinary action when this does not work (for staff and for pupils). Records of all such incidents, actions taken, and final outcomes will be included in the annual report to governors.

Our pupils must have a clear sense of global perspectives and be exposed to voices and views from a different perspective. We actively promote diversity in the curriculum where appropriate; specific actions will be detailed in the Equality Plan – these are fully integrated, not an add-on.

Sexual Orientation

The school has an active LGBTQ+ Society, which welcomes all pupils and staff, who, irrespective of their own sexual orientation, support a fully diverse and inclusive community.

We will record all instances of homophobic bullying and attempt to educate before resorting to disciplinary action. We will use survey data to measure how safe pupils feel when they identify as LGBTQ+. Specific actions and trends will be included in the annual report.

Disability

It is the aim of the school to reduce and, where possible, eliminate barriers which prevent pupils and prospective pupils with a disability, as defined by current legislation, from accessing the curriculum and participating fully in the life of the school. Our progress towards this is detailed in the School's

Accessibility Plan.

Information relating to SEN provision including reasonable adjustments, can be found in the Learning Development Policy.

Transgender or non-binary

We welcome applications to the school from anyone. If a pupil at St Edward's questions their gender, the School seeks to support them on a case-by-case basis. Pupils are, however, always placed in boarding houses and required to use facilities designed and intended for pupils of their biological sex. The same principle applies in sport, in which we follow the most current advice from the relevant governing body.

Religious belief

The school welcomes pupils and staff from any religious heritage and none. The school is an Anglican Christian Foundation, but the Chapel is a place where spiritual matters can be explored in a variety of ways and the Chaplaincy team will support pupils who wish to continue to explore their own faith. The school makes it clear to parents and pupils that all pupils are required to attend regular religious gatherings, not necessarily ones involving worship. Pupils of other Christian denominations or other faiths may, with permission, attend services of worship or specific instruction outside of the school.

All pupils will be expected to attend religious education lessons which are wide-ranging in scope and though they involve knowledge of Christianity at certain stages of the course, are not used for proselytizing.

The school makes provision for special dietary requirements as required. We record the religious faith of all pupils when they enter the school.

Discipline and Exclusions

The Pupil Behaviour Policy takes full account of the duties under the Equality Act 2010. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustments for pupils with SEND. We closely monitor data on serious disciplinary sanctions and exclusions for evidence of over-representation of different groups and will act to address any concerns that arise in this area. This is part of the annual report to Governors.

