



Equal Opportunities Policy

Reference documents

- **Equality Act 2010** (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>) which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination
- **The Equality Act and Schools** (DfE, May 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)
- **Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools in England** (EHRC, 2014, https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/psed_guide_for_schools_in_england.pdf)
- See also the School's **Accessibility Plan**
- This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association

In brief

This policy sets out the school's approach to promoting equality as defined in the Equality Act 2010, and in response to guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). As such, as an institution we are committed to:

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

We believe that all students and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstance. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation, and promotes a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school.

We recognise that improving outcomes for a specific group will help to improve our outcomes for all. Bournemouth School is committed to:

- Ensuring that all students and staff feel welcome and valued and achieve their full potential regardless of :
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation



These are called 'protected characteristics'. As a grammar school, we are also conscious of our responsibility to ensure that students are not discriminated against because of their socio-economic background.

- Opposing, and being proactive in tackling and eliminating all forms of prejudice, harassment and other forms of discrimination
- Respecting and valuing the difference between individuals and groups
- Preparing students for life in a diverse society
- Promoting good relationships between different groups within the school and the wider community
- Ensuring that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities, or gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing
- Analyse the data referenced above to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying)
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils

1. Introduction

At Bournemouth School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of protected characteristic or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of students will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Bournemouth School, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

2. What is discrimination?

Unlawful discrimination is defined in the Act as:

- direct discrimination (including discrimination based on perception or association);
- indirect discrimination;
- discrimination arising from disability;
- failure to make reasonable adjustments (for disabled people).

Direct discrimination occurs if someone is less favourably treated than someone else because of a protected characteristic. A very basic example would be refusing to admit a child to a school as a pupil because of their race, for example because they are Roma. Direct discrimination also occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic. This might occur when you treat a pupil less favourably because their sibling, parent, carer or friend has a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination also occurs when someone is treated less favourably because it is mistakenly thought that they have a protected characteristic.

It is also direct discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger. It is direct sex discrimination to treat a woman (including a female pupil of any age) less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied in the same way for all pupils or a particular pupil group, such as A-level physics students, but this has the effect of putting pupils sharing a protected characteristic within the general student group at a particular disadvantage.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and such treatment cannot be justified.

The reasonable adjustments duty as this was first introduced under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The reasonable adjustments duty under the Equality Act operates slightly differently and has been extended to cover the provision by a school of auxiliary aids and services. The object of the duty is the same: to avoid as far as possible by reasonable means, the disadvantage which a disabled person experiences because of their disability.

3. Disability and reasonable adjustments

We recognise that we must take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled students, adults and community users are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. We understand that, should we fail to take these reasonable steps then this would be discriminatory if it resulted in disadvantaging a disabled student.

We acknowledge that 'reasonable adjustments' go beyond the physical aspects of accessibility. We also will make adjustments with respect to other areas of school life such as:

- the curriculum;
- the timetable;
- break times and lunchtimes;
- classroom organization;
- homework;
- assessment and examination arrangements;
- school trips, and
- clubs and activities.

Whilst making reasonable adjustments it is acknowledged that we may take account of the following in assessing the level of the adjustment:

- standards;
- resources;
- cost implications;
- practicability;
- SEND provision;
- health and safety issues and risk assessments, and
- the interests of other students.

When deciding if a reasonable adjustment is necessary to avoid placing disabled students at a substantial disadvantage, we will consider the potential impact on disabled students in terms of:

- time and effort;
- inconvenience;
- indignity or discomfort;
- loss of opportunity, and

We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students at different levels of school life:

- for the individual disabled student;
- in our practices and procedures, and
- in our policies.

In making reasonable adjustments we will:

- work collaboratively with disabled students, their parents and others and plan ahead to identify potential barriers;
- identify practical solutions through a problem-solving approach;
- ensure that staff have the necessary skills, and
- monitor the effects of adjustments on a student's progress.

We will be mindful of quality standards to show we are succeeding in making reasonable adjustments. This will be evidenced by disabled students participating fully in school life, in particular to ensure that:

- disabled students feel part of the life of the school;
- disabled students are included by their peers in all parts of school life;
- parents feel their disabled child is part of the life of the school, and
- staff feel confident working with disabled students.

We will monitor the effectiveness of our approach through feedback from disabled members of our community (principally through the SEND review process, but also through student, parent and staff questionnaires and surveys).

Where students are not considered 'disabled' but are suffering from a medical condition that may affect their ability to move freely around the school, special care is taken to provide a suitable education for them.

The school takes into account of the needs of students and visitors with physical difficulties and sensory impairments when planning and undertaking future improvements and refurbishment of the site and premises, such as improved access, lighting, acoustic treatment and colour schemes, and more accessible facilities and fittings. At present, the school does not have the facility to move students in wheelchairs up or down stairs. In the event of an evacuation, any students (or visitor) in wheelchairs is assisted out of the building by a pre-assigned, responsible adult.

The school is able to provide information in alternative formats when required or requested.

4. Equality and students

The school provides all students with a broad and balanced curriculum, differentiated and adjusted to meet the needs of individual students and their preferred learning styles, and endorses the key

principles in the National Curriculum framework, which underpin the development of a more inclusive curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to diverse learning needs, and
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups.

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of students;
- monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;
- take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- seek to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;
- encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning, and
- including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our students.

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, gender, disability, or other factors.

Suspensions and exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any discrepancies are identified and dealt with.

6. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, development education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from

different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures

- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach

6. Equality and staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. As an employer we ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality is considered when appointing staff and particularly when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination.

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- monitoring recruitment to include the use of statistics relating to employment of staff according to gender, disability and ethnicity;
- monitoring retention and allegations of the bullying and harassment of staff;
- continued professional development opportunities for all staff, and
- senior leadership team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- we promote an understanding and appreciation of difference and diversity, tackling prejudice and the development of skills and attitudes to enable everyone to participate positively in the life of the school and community;
- all staff are aware of the school's Equality Act, and are regularly reminded of their responsibilities;
- student achievement is monitored by race, gender and disability and any trends or patterns in the data that may require additional action to narrow the gap are addressed;
- the talents of protected characteristics are recognised and, where possible, representation in any given activity fully reflects the school population in terms of those characteristics;
- there is an inclusive approach to ensuring all students are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of the school e.g. through involvement in the School Council (by election or co-option); assemblies; fund raising *etc*;
- as far as practicable, all students can take part in all aspects of the curriculum, including educational visits and journeys; lunchtime activities; PE and dance and assemblies, and
- extended school activities such as breakfast and after-school clubs take into account student needs and access issues and students attending reflect the diversity of the school population.

The school will provide:

- extra and additional support for students who are under-achieving, in order to make progress in their learning and their personal well-being, e.g. ensuring that children with visual impairment have accessible texts; that children with hearing impairment have an enhanced acoustic classroom environment;
- additional support for parents of under-achieving children (e.g. reporting progress; discussing needs), and

- additional support for disabled parents/carers and staff to help them to play a full part in the life of the school (e.g. providing a sign interpreter for a deaf parent; ensuring that meetings are held in the most accessible parts of the school to support wheelchair users).

The governing board will:

- Set a clear ethos which reflects the school's commitment to equality for all members of the school community.
- Set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs.
- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for, or undertaking, jobs at our school on grounds of a protected characteristic.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- Welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, or protected characteristic (acknowledging that only boys are admitted in Years 7 to 11).
- Ensure that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their protected characteristic.
- Evaluate school policies, analyse examination results, attendance, behaviour and participation data, the outcomes from student, parent and staff questionnaires and surveys and the SEND review process to identify specific actions to address equality issues.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher

The role of the headteacher

- It is the headteacher's role to implement the school's Equality Policy and any associated action plans and he is supported by the governing body in doing so.
- It is the headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Plan, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The headteacher ensures that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, with due seriousness.

The role of all staff: teaching and non-teaching

- Teachers ensure that the classroom is an inclusive environment in which students feel their contributions are valued.

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.
- When selecting classroom material, teachers' pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and do not provide material that is racist or sexist in nature. Teachers strive to provide material that gives positive images of ethnic minorities and that challenges stereotypical images of minority groups with protected characteristics.
- Teaching and curriculum development are monitored to ensure high expectations of all students and appropriate breadth of content is met in relation to the school and the wider community.
- All staff challenge any incidents of prejudice, and discrimination, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of senior staff.
- Teachers support the work of ancillary or support staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

The role of the student

- The student will treat everybody fairly, equally and with respect
- Any incident of unfairness or discrimination by other students must be reported to a member of staff immediately

8. Tackling discrimination

Harassment on account of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment.

All staff are expected to deal with any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances.

Incidents of prejudice, discrimination, harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to a class teacher / headmaster where necessary. All incidents are reported to the headmaster and racist and homophobic incidents are reported to the governing body and local authority on a termly basis.

Responding to and reporting incidents

Using the school's Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policies it should be clear to students and staff how they report incidents. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, should view dealing effectively with such incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school.

9. Review of progress and impact

This policy has been agreed by our Governing Body. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review this policy at least every 4 years.

The school routinely collects and analyses evidence and data on children's achievement, behaviour, attendance and participation by race, gender and disability, and use this to inform strategies to raise achievement. In addition to these analyses, the outcomes from student, parent and staff questionnaires and surveys, and the SEND review process will inform the development of this policy and any associated action plan.

10. Equality objectives

Objective 1

Undertake an annual analysis of recruitment data and trends in regard to race, gender and disability by July, and report on this to the Resources Committee of the governing board.

Objective 2

Have in place a reasonable adjustment agreement for all staff with disabilities to meet their needs better and make sure that any disadvantages they experience are addressed (reviewed annually).

Objective 3

Increase the representation of teachers from local black and minority ethnic communities over a 4-year period (from July 2023 to July 2027), so that this group increases to reflect the diversity in the student population.

Objective 4

Continue to train all members of staff and governors involved in recruitment and selection on equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Objective 5

Include the 'Two Ticks' positive about people with disabilities symbol on all job adverts, application forms and information by January of 2024, to help address the under-representation of people with disabilities in the school workforce.

11. Publishing the plan

This policy and any associated action plans will be published on the school website.

Awareness of our policy and practices will be raised through the school newsletter, assemblies, staff meetings and other communications.

Hard copies of this policy and any associated action plan are available upon request.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.