

Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils
Including our Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Authorised by	resolution of the Board of Governors
Date	Autumn 2022 (1-0-0) Autumn 2023 (1-0-1)

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of St Gabriel's.

The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils will be taught to value and respect others. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities school and is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity ("protected characteristics").

Aims

The aims of this policy and the School's ethos as a whole is to:

- Communicate the School's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for its pupils
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Promote equal treatment for all members of the School community
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment, free from discrimination
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010
- Remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist
- Enforce that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times. All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Staff at the School, particularly those working at a management level, have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2014)
- Working Together with Safeguarding Children (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Admissions policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Exclusions, Removal and Review policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities policy
- Equal opportunities for staff policy & Recruitment and Selection policy

Admissions

The School treats every application for admission in a fair, open-minded and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. Although we are an academically selective School, each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the School's selection criteria based on an applicant's ability and aptitude. The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their gender (up to year 6, and within the timetable for co-education within the Senior School), disability, gender reassignment (within the timetable for co-education within the Senior School), race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs ("SEN").

Please see the Equal Opportunities for Staff Policy & Recruitment and Selection policy in relation to our approach to staff recruitment and selection.

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 so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children. 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.

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the School's admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend the School due to financial hardship. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the bursar's office.

Educational services

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 will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Encourage children to work and play freely and have respect for all other pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE to:

- o Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- o Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- o Encourage children to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias.

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

Religious belief

Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other 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.

The governing body, through the senior leadership team, 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.

Requests for variation in the school uniform

All pupils are required to wear a uniform until Year 12, and a strict "business dress" code operates for Years 12 and 13. The Principal will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations to 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 that such request/s are reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn to School, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Principal, in advance.

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, including during the admissions process.

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 in comparison to other pupils. 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 SEN and Disability Policy.

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 of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Monitoring and review

The Principal regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to the governors on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

Breaches of this policy

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

If you believe that a child has received less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to a child's detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter with the School. Please contact the child's Head of School in the first instance. The School's complaints procedure is also available on the school website.

Appendix 1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Rationale

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) believes in valuing and celebrating the diversity within our community. We aim to develop good practice and positive attitudes in the Early Years and encourage an anti-discriminatory approach to the world in general, and other human beings in particular. We believe that all people should have equal opportunities to learn, develop and grow with dignity in a community of mutual respect. This Appendix must be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Implementation of the Policy and Early Years Foundation Stage Appendix

The Principal and Vice-Principal ensure that:

- New members of staff, including students and volunteers, have access to copies of the Equal Opportunities Policy and EYFS appendix and this availability is discussed with them during their induction meeting
- The Equal Opportunities Policy and EYFS appendix is made available to all parents and carers (on our website and in the School Office upon request)
- The Co-ordinator of Individual Needs and all Sandleford staff are involved in the implementation of the policy
- Parents who are experiencing problems with the English language, both spoken or written, are offered support
- Every effort is made to use the child's first language. When this is not feasible, the setting involves other agencies or takes advice and assistance wherever possible
- Every effort is made to obtain suitable specialist equipment, aids or resources
- Reasonable adjustments are made to the premises to cater for anyone with any form of disability
- Volunteers, local speakers or personalities who reflect the diversity of the local community are invited to visit the setting
- Parent groups who wish to hold classes or discussion groups on the premises are offered support and encouragement through the Bursar's Department

Our Practice

- The Equal Opportunities Policy and EYFS Appendix applies to every member of staff, parent, carer and child. Each person is valued as an individual, with differing social, intellectual and cultural backgrounds. Different needs, likes, dislikes, similarities and differences are respected and accounted for.
- Nobody in our setting is subjected to discrimination, racist comments or gender bias. Cultural or religious diversity is respected.
- We hold an interview with parents before their child starts the setting to establish their concerns about their child's specific emotional, medical, cultural or religious needs. This is part of the admissions process. The parents' contribution is recorded and relayed to other members of staff at a relevant staff meeting.
- We value parents as their children's first educators, and staff work closely with parents to share information, experiences, conversation and quality time, thus promoting positive role models for their children.
- The Catering Department is able to cater for cultural, religious and medical differences at mealtimes.
- We celebrate a variety of festivals and special events each year from cultures represented within our community and outside.
- Our curriculum plan takes into account each child's individual route to learning.
- We give the children equal opportunities and equal access to the full range of activities available, including visits and trips outside the setting.
- We monitor activities on a regular basis to ensure that every child has freedom of choice, time for discovery, and support, when it is necessary.
- During play we encourage the children to respect and value each other. We discourage them from making hurtful and unkind remarks. Staff ensure that children are helped towards understanding

that it is wrong to judge someone because of their gender, colour, beliefs, disability or social background. We explain why, talk things through and praise positive behaviour.

- We challenge and deal with inappropriate practices and attitudes promptly.
- We record any inappropriate racist or sexist comments made by the children and staff, including volunteers and students.

Staff Training

- We take great care to apply the Equal Opportunities Policy when advertising for, interviewing and appointing staff.
- Staff are kept informed and updated on new legislation and trained accordingly. We take note of information on new national initiatives and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCP) courses.
- We give the opportunity to attend courses for staff who:
 - Have identified an area in which they wish to improve their own knowledge and expertise
 - Have been identified through an inspection or appraisal as having a training need
 - Want to further their own personal development
- We expect all staff to behave in a professional manner, follow the above policy and try to be consistent, sensitive and fair. We expect them to challenge others who made inadvertent racist, sexist insensitive or discriminatory remarks.

Equipment

We purchase, organise and monitor equipment, toys, books and resources to reflect diversity in the immediate and wider society. We display positive images of differing races, cultures, religions, social groups, physical abilities and disabilities and gender in and around the setting.

Date	Version	Changes
Summer 2022	1-0-0	Distinct policies written for pupils and staff
Autumn 2023	1-0-1	Legislation updated