Model Whole School Equality Policy & Guidance

September 2025

This model policy and procedure has been produced by One Education's HR and People service. The HR and People team provides management and HR support and advice to schools and academies purchasing their services under an agreed Service Agreement. For further information please contact the HR and People team via the Helpline: 0161 276 0153 or Email: hrpeople@oneeducation.co.uk Website: www.oneeducation.co.uk

This policy is recommended for adoption by all maintained schools including community, voluntary controlled, community special, maintained nursery, foundation, foundation special and voluntary aided schools. It is also recommended for adoption by academies and free schools (modified as appropriate and taking into account the particular circumstances of the relevant academy or free school). Some school or academy specific provisions are included. This policy should therefore be adapted as necessary and inappropriate provisions deleted. The HR and People team can assist in adapting this policy to fully reflect a school's status including their academy or multi academy trust (MAT) status.

References in this policy to schools include a reference to academies and free schools unless otherwise stated. References in this policy to the Headteacher include a reference to an academy or free school Principal and references to the governing body include references to governing boards and/or trust boards as applicable.

Document Control	
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Equality Statement: - Under the public sector equality duty (PSED), all schools/academies must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. This means schools/academies must take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented.

The One Education HR and People team regularly reviews all policies and procedures which are recommended to schools/academies to ensure compliance with education and employment legislation including the Equality Act 2010. Consultation with schools/academies is an important part of this review process. Headteachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are asked to contact the HR and People team via the Helpline if they believe there are any negative equality impacts in their school/academy in relation to the application of this policy/procedure.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCHOOL COMMITMENT

1.1 The Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") applies to all schools. The Act created a single legal framework to protect individuals with protected characteristics from different types of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. It also created a Public Sector Equality Duty ("PSED") which is made up of a general equality duty supported by specific equality duties. The PSED applies to all public bodies including schools.

1.2 The general duty is set out in S149 of the Act and requires schools to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; to advance equality of opportunity and, to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The specific equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 ("the 2017 Regulations") require schools to publish equality information and to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives. They also require schools with 250 or more employees to publish gender pay gap information about those employees

1.3 This policy takes account of the legal requirements placed on the school by The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 which creates a duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace (the preventative duty). This policy also takes into account the provisions relating to sexual harassment in the Equality Act 2010 and the recommendations set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in their technical guidance document (Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work – Technical Guidance 2024)

1.4 Schools have many duties and obligations which overlap and interlink with their equality duties under the Act. These include the duty placed on Governing Bodies of maintained schools to promote community cohesion; the duty to promote British values; the duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 not to act incompatibly with rights under the European Convention for the protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedom; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Equality is intrinsic to the personal and professional conduct of all those working in schools and is relevant to the Teachers' Standards issued by the Department for Education ("DfE") and the non-statutory core Teaching Assistant standards issued by Trade Unions in 2015. Equality is also integral to the Ofsted Inspection Framework 2019 which places strong focus on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, tackling bullying and discrimination and preparing learners for life in modern Britain. The Framework makes clear that Inspectors will assess the extent to which schools comply with the relevant legal duties as set out in the Act including, where relevant, the PSED and the Human Rights Act 1998.

1.5 North Ridge School recognises and accepts its legal duties under the Act and under the interlinking statutory and other obligations referred to above. By adopting this policy, the Governing Body of North Ridge School confirms its commitment to its statutory equality duties under the Act and to acting in accordance with its statutory equality obligations. The

Governing Body also confirms its commitment to taking all reasonable steps to ensuring no individual working in this school acts or behaves in a manner deemed unlawful by the Act.

1.6 In the application of this policy, the Headteacher and all those responsible for making decisions in school will be guided as appropriate by the Department for Education ("DfE") non-statutory advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010 and the various technical and other guidance documents produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission ("EHRC") and by ACAS. Regard will also be given to the EHRC's Employment Statutory Code of Practice on the Equality Act 2010, the EHRC's Technical Guidance for Schools and the EHRC's guidance for Schools on the Public Sector Equality Duty (November 2022).

1.7 This policy is the key school document for information about this school's approach to equality. It will inform our School Development Plan and brings together all the school's previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 This policy details North Ridge School's overall approach and commitment to equality. It details how this school complies with its duties under the Act and how as an educator, employer, service provider and a buyer of goods and services the Governing Body and the Headteacher, with support from members of the Senior Leadership Team ("SLT") will strive to ensure equality, diversity and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life for the benefit of the whole school community.

2.2 This policy applies to all members of school staff (full time or part time, permanent or temporary), to pupils and to school governors. It also provides guidance and information for parents, carers, school visitors, contractors and other members of the wider school community. It sets out this school's expectations and the required standards of behaviour with regard to equality issues.

2.3 This policy applies to staff in relation to their conduct during the course of their employment with the school which may also include conduct and behaviour outside the school environment and outside their normal working hours if it is connected to school or to their role in school. This might, for example, include after school meetings with colleagues, social events or other social interactions with colleagues either in person or via social media platforms.

2.4 The gender pay gap reporting provisions detailed in the 2017 Regulations do not apply to our school as we do not employ 250 or more employee.

2.5 This policy should be taken into account in the application of all other school policies (staff, pupil or otherwise) whenever and wherever equality issues or implications arise.

3. SCHOOL APPROACH

3.1 In this school we integrate equality and fairness into all aspects of school life. We are committed to ensuring equality of education for our pupils and equality of opportunity for all. We aim to create a fully inclusive school environment free of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation, where dignity and respect are promoted, where individual differences and diversity are recognised and where the contributions of all our staff are valued. We want all our staff to feel respected and to be able to give their best. This school will not tolerate any discriminatory conduct or any behaviour that contravenes the Act or which compromises the school's aims or approach or which compromises the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

3.2 In this school we understand that equality law is about treating people fairly and that this does not always necessarily mean treating all people in the same way. We acknowledge that sometimes, in order to meet our general equality duty and to meet our duty to make reasonable adjustments for members of our school community with a disability, this may involve treating some people more favourably than others. We are committed to taking positive action where this is necessary and appropriate and where it complies with the statutory requirements for such action as detailed in the Act (see section 11 below).

3.3 In everyday school life and in the application and implementation of all our policies and procedures, this school will be guided by the following Key Principles: -

- **Principle 1: All members of our school community are of equal value and should be treated with dignity and respect.** Every member of our school community is of equal value, whatever their age, sex, gender identity, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation and whether or not they are disabled. All members of our school community are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and should treat others in the same way.

- **Principle 2: This school respects and values diversity and difference.** In this school we respect, value and embrace diversity and difference and we understand the kind of barriers and disadvantages some people with protected characteristics may face. We will make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices in relation to pupils and staff with a disability including the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services. The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be appreciated and valued. Diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn and teach in this school.

- **Principle 3: This school will prepare learners for life in modern Britain.** The school will ensure our pupils are well prepared to contribute to wider society and life in modern Britain. The school will equip learners to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society by developing understanding of British values, by developing understanding and appreciation of diversity and by promoting respect for difference and the protected characteristics under the Act.

- **Principle 4: This school fosters positive attitudes and relationships.** The school intends that its policies, procedures and activities should actively promote and foster positive attitudes, good relations and mutual respect between all groups of individuals who are different from each other. The school will act to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language and behaviour including but not limited to language or behaviour that is homophobic, racist, sexist or that is derogatory about people with a disability

- **Principle 5: This school fosters a strong shared sense of community cohesion and belonging.** The school will strive to ensure that all pupils, members of staff and school governors feel a sense of belonging within the school and within the wider school community and that they feel valued and respected and are able to participate fully in school and in public life.

3.4 The Headteacher with support from the SLT will take all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils, members of staff, governors and members of the wider school community are aware of and conduct themselves in accordance with the above Key Principles.

3.5 The school's approach for dealing with grievances, bullying, complaints of harassment, victimisation and/or other forms of discriminatory conduct is set out in the school's Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

3.6 The school's approach for dealing with complaints about sexual harassment is set out in the schools Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 **The Governing Body will: -**

- ensure governors are aware of their responsibilities under the Act and attend regular equality training;

- have due regard to this policy and the general equality duty when making decisions;

- ensure this policy is implemented by the Headteacher and support the Headteacher in implementing any necessary actions;

- nominate a link equality governor who will liaise with the nominated SLT Equality Lead to review and monitor the school's compliance with its equality duties;

- ensure specific and measurable equality objectives are prepared and published in line with the school's obligations under the Act and that these are included within the School Development Plan;

- ensure progress towards achievement of the school's current equality objectives is monitored and that objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years;

- ensure the outcomes and progress towards the achievement of past equality objectives are published;

- ensure the school's equality information is published and updated on a regular basis and no less than on an annual basis;

- evaluate and review this policy at least annually;

4.2 **The Headteacher (with support from the SLT) will: -**

- oversee the effective implementation of this policy including communicating the policy to pupils, staff, parents, carers and the wider school community;

- appoint a member of SLT to assume day to day responsibility for coordinating the implementation of this policy, for monitoring equality outcomes and for liaising with the link equality governor as appropriate;

- engage and consult with pupils, staff, parents, carers and the wider school community as appropriate in the development and review of this policy and in the development of the school's equality objectives;

- oversee the school's Equality Working Group;

- ensure the school's equality objectives are published and actively pursued;

- monitor whether the school's equality objectives are being met and whether sufficient progress is being made;

- produce information about the school's equality objectives and the work that is being done toward achieving them so that it can be published and made available to members of the school community;

- ensure reasonable adjustments are made where appropriate for pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors to the school with a disability;

- ensure the school publishes and follows its disability Accessibility Plan;

- make sure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Act and ensure staff receive regular equality training;

- ensure that appropriate and relevant action is taken in any case (relating to pupils, staff or the wider school community) where discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other conduct deemed unlawful under the Act comes to light or is reported;

- ensure that all members of staff and pupils are aware of the procedure for reporting and following up discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying, hate and prejudice-related incidents;

4.3 **All members of staff will: -**

- be aware of their responsibilities under the Act and this policy and recognise that they have a role and responsibility in their day-to-day work to promote equality, inclusion and good community relations;

- highlight any training or development they require to carry out their roles and responsibilities under the Act or this policy and attend any related training or learning opportunities;

- promote equality of opportunity and good relations and will not take part in any discriminatory or other unlawful behaviour as detailed in the Act;

- foster good relations between groups of people with and without protected characteristics;

- deal fairly and professionally and in accordance with school policy in relation to any incidents of bullying, prejudice or discrimination;

- be responsible for recognising and challenging prejudice, bias, discrimination, stereotyping and any other inappropriate language or behaviour;

- be responsible for promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos in lessons and for being role models for equality, diversity and inclusion through their words, actions and deeds.

Pupils must be encouraged to recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and to others so they understand and are able to: -

- promote equality, inclusion and good community relations and act in accordance with this policy;

- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour;

- tackle bias and stereotyping;

- act in accordance with the school's anti bullying strategies;

- respond appropriately to any incidents of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying they witness and to understand what they need to do to report these;

- regard people of all faiths, races, religions, cultures and with other protected characteristics as their equal and to treat others with respect and kindness;

- support the school's approach and commitment to equality;

- be involved in the development and review of this policy and understand how it applies to them appropriate to their age and ability;

- be involved in producing a simplified version of this policy to be displayed in classrooms and other areas in school as appropriate.

4.5 **Visitors (including parents, carers and contractors) are expected to: -**

- support the school's approach and commitment to equality and to comply with this policy;

- take part in the development and review of this policy and attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy;

- refrain from engaging in any behaviour which is unlawful under the Act whilst on school premises.

5. GENERAL DUTY

5.1 The general equality duty is contained in S149 of the Act and requires schools to have "due regard" to the need to: -

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

5.2 The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 requires schools to take reasonable steps to actively prevent sexual harassment ("preventative duty") rather than address incidents after the occur. Schools are now legally obligated to actively take steps to prevent sexual harassment including harassment by third parties such as contractors or clients. The Act requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment such as but not limited to:

- Implementation of relevant policies including a Sexual Harassment Policy
- Regular mandatory training of all staff
- Set out clear procedures for reporting sexual harassment

- Conduct regular risk assessments
- Regular reviews of the effectiveness of processes

5.3 Guidance is attached at **Appendix A** which provides a brief overview of the provisions of the Act, information about the Protected Characteristics and information about the different types of discrimination and other forms of unlawful behaviour. It is provided as part of our commitment to eliminating all forms of conduct and behaviour deemed unlawful by the Act.

5.4 Information about how this school complies with its general duty and how we incorporate all three strands of the general duty into school life on a daily basis is detailed in **Appendix B**.

5.5 We will assess equality implications in relation to all new school policies, procedures and projects as part of our on-going duty to have due regard to our general duty. This will help to ensure the school is not unlawfully discriminating against certain individuals or groups with protected characteristics in line with our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and in line with the Key Principles in section 3.3 of this policy.

5.6 The Governing Body, the Headteacher and SLT (as appropriate) will endeavor to keep written records of all relevant decisions and actions where equality issues have arisen. This will help us to show that equality implications have been considered and that the school's equality duties have been actively considered before, and at the time decisions have been made.

6. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

6.1 The school's current equality objectives are set out in **Appendix C.** Our objectives are specific, measurable and achievable. They relate to people with protected characteristics and cross reference the three strands of the general duty. They represent our school's priorities and also take account of local/national equality issues.

6.2 The school's objectives are the outcome of a careful review and analysis of our school data and other information. We have chosen a combination of short, medium and long-term objectives. Our objectives have been reached following engagement and consultation with staff, pupils, governors, parents and carers.

6.3 We have detailed the reasons why we have chosen each objective and the relevance to the school's general equality duty. We have also developed an Equality Action Plan ("EAP") to be read in conjunction with our objectives which is set out at **Appendix D.** The EAP sets out the school's plan in relation to how we propose each objective will be achieved and includes a timeframe. It also names the person with allocated responsibility for monitoring and review. The school's EAP will be reviewed regularly and may be modified or changed as necessary and appropriate. The overall aim is that the school achieves or makes significant progress towards each specific objective within the timeframe specified.

6.4 The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body [on a termly basis] in relation to the progress we have made towards achieving our objectives. The Governing Body will ensure

the school's equality objectives are reviewed annually and that they are updated at least every four years.

6.5 Our current equality objectives will be published on the school's website together with the EAP and also with information about the progress we have made towards achieving them. We will also publish our past objectives, with a summary of what steps/actions were taken to achieve them and outcomes.

7. ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

7.1 Schools have specific duties under Schedule 10 of the Act to implement accessibility plans for disabled pupils which are aimed at: -

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school;
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled

7.2 The school's current Accessibility Plan is attached at **Appendix E.** Our plan also takes account of our duty to make reasonable adjustments for our staff who are disabled and therefore includes steps we are taking to support our members of staff with a disability. We will keep our Accessibility Plan under review and if necessary, we will revise it. It will be updated at least every 3 years. We will have regard to the need to allocate adequate resources for implementing the plan to ensure we can comply with our statutory obligations.

8. EQUALITY INFORMATION

8.1 As part of our specific duties under the 2017 Regulations, information will be published on the school's website to show how we are meeting our equality duty. The information we publish will relate to people who share protected characteristics and who are affected by our school policies and practices.

8.2 The information we publish may include statistical and other data such as school performance data, school staff and pupil policies, the school development plan, curriculum materials and details of equality and diversity initiatives the school is taking part in. It may also include information such as minutes of meetings where equality issues have been discussed, parent and pupil surveys and details of equality training attended by our staff and our school governors.

8.3 Our published information will be reviewed and updated regularly (at least annually) and will show how, on an ongoing basis, this school is complying with its general equality duty.

8.4 The Headteacher supported by the SLT will take all reasonable steps to ensure the whole school community knows about the school's commitment to equality and is aware of this policy and the school's equality objectives. This will be done in a number of different ways, including via school newsletters, school assemblies, staff meetings, parents' meetings, school council meetings etc and also on our school website.

8.5 This policy will be made available: -

- on the school website;
- as a paper copy from the school office;
- as a paper copy in the staff room;
- on display for visitors including parents and carers;
- in summary form in the school's prospectus;
- as part of the school's induction process for new staff;
- as part of equality training for staff.

9. OUR STAFF

9.1 The school will ensure equality of opportunity for all our staff and will observe good equality practices in all aspects of employment including in recruitment, the terms upon which a job is offered, promotion, training opportunities, professional development, benefits, facilities and services offered and also in relation to day-to-day employment matters.

9.2 The school will comply with the Act in relation to the application of all its staff policies including but not limited to the school's, Appraisal Policy, Attendance Policy, Capability Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Flexible Working Requests Policy, Pay Policy, Recruitment Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy and Whistleblowing Policy. All staff policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure they take equality considerations into account.

9.3 If any member of our staff who is disabled is placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other members of staff who are not disabled, we will take reasonable steps to try to avoid that disadvantage in line with the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments. We accept this may mean the school may need to modify or change certain aspects of a school policy, process or practice or may require the provision of an auxiliary aid or service or consideration of an alteration to the physical features of the school if reasonable. In relation to any formal school processes where an employee is entitled to be accompanied by a companion or a representative from their Trade Union, the school will make reasonable adjustments to assist an employee's companion or Trade Union representative with a disability.

9.4 If there are any language issues affecting an employee and/or their companion or Trade Union representative during any formal school process, these will be reasonably addressed so that all meetings or hearings can take place fairly under the relevant school policy or procedure.

9.5 The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all job applicants and members of staff and will monitor appointments and promotions on an annual basis to ensure that no group with a particular protected characteristic appears to be disadvantaged. Decisions concerning staff will be based on merit (apart from where any necessary and limited exemptions and/or exceptions apply under the Act). The school will also monitor the make-up of its staff regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion and meeting the school's aims under this policy. The aim is for our school staff to be truly representative of all sections of society. The school will take full account of its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 when we collect, store and publish data.

9.6 We are committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of our staff and will take seriously and act upon any incidents of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators. We interpret our equality duties positively and will take whatever actions we reasonably can to remove barriers to inclusion and to ensure a safe, positive, welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

9.7 In accordance with our obligations under the Act, we will not enquire about the health of an applicant for a job until after a job offer has been made (unless one of the exceptions in the Act applies, for example, if questions are related to an intrinsic function of the work for the job). We will not require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. Any necessary health questions will be asked after a job offer has been made and, in all cases, any health-related questions will be targeted, necessary and relevant to the job applied for.

9.8 The Governing Body and the Headteacher are committed to ensuring all members of staff in school (teaching and non-teaching) and governors undergo equality training on a regular basis to help them understand their equality duties and/or the differing needs of people with protected characteristics within our school community. We recognise that members of school staff who are involved in recruitment processes and those with line management and decision-making responsibilities should receive equality training relevant to their roles.

10. OUR PUPILS

10.1 This school will not to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way the school provides education, access to any benefit, facility or service or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. We closely monitor our pupil data including our exclusions data and we will consider and address any equality implications if it appears one or more protected group is over represented.

10.2 We will have due regard to the Act in relation to the application of all our pupil policies including but not limited to the school's Admissions Policy, Exclusions Policy, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Curriculum Policy, Uniform Policy, Religious Education, RSHE Policy and PSHE Policy. All pupil policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure they take equality considerations into account.

10.3 The school will consider whether any flexibility or adjustment is required where any school policy, rule or practice might indirectly discriminate against a particular group of pupils with a protected characteristic and where the relevant rule, policy or practice cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. In schools, a legitimate aim might include safeguarding concerns, health and safety concerns and maintaining academic or other standards.

10.4 The school will make reasonable adjustments to its policies, processes and practices where relevant and appropriate for pupils with disabilities in accordance with the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments. This may include changing the way things are done, making changes to the school environment and/or providing auxiliary aids or services in line with the school's current Accessibility Plan.

10.5 We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice-based bullying are often driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are often then directed against an individual or a group, based on difference (real or perceived) and linked to for example racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, negative views of disabled people or people who practise a religion or follow a faith. We are committed to taking action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour in our school community. We want our pupils to understand better the diversity that exists in society and to respect, value and embrace people who are different to them so they are well prepared to contribute to wider society and to life in modern Britain.

10.6 The school takes bullying, sexual harassment and hate or prejudice motivated incidents very seriously and any such conduct or behaviour will be carefully monitored. All such incidents will be recorded and will be dealt with fairly and firmly in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. We will use this information to identify trends or patterns so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in term of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our pupils and the whole school community as appropriate.

10.7 We will take account of guidance issued from the DfE on dealing with incidents of harassment including sexual harassment, bullying including homophobic and transphobic bulling and bullying related to sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, race and religion. Training will be given to members of school staff to ensure they are aware of how to identify and to deal with all such incidents.

11. POSITIVE ACTION

11.1 The school recognises that in some circumstances, we may need to meet the needs of pupils with protected characteristics in different ways to ensure they receive the same standard of education as everyone else. This may arise when pupils experience disadvantage connected to their protected characteristic or have needs that are different from the needs of pupils who do not share their protected characteristic or where pupils have disproportionately low participation in an activity compared to pupils who do not share their protected characteristic.

11.2 Positive action enables the school to take proportionate steps to help particular groups of pupils with protected characteristics to address need/disadvantage/low participation. It could for example include targeted support or catch-up classes. Although positive action is not mandatory under the Act, this school is committed to taking such action where it is lawful under the Act. We recognise that provided our actions are proportionate, taking positive action will support compliance with the school's general duty.

11.3 The school is also committed to taking positive action where the relevant conditions under the Act are met and in appropriate circumstances for members of staff with protected characteristics.

12. BUYING GOODS AND SERVICES

12.1 The school will take account of its general duty when buying or engaging in contracts for goods and services such as ICT, services, the provision of supply staff, consultants, school meals, learning resources, training and administrative supplies. Whenever we intend to buy goods or services we will ask ourselves whether the aims of the general duty are relevant to the proposed purchase or contract and if so, how they might apply.

12.2 We will consider whether there is a need to include equality requirements within any contracts we enter into. We will ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the Act and with the school's equality policy. We will ensure that supply staff know about this policy and related pupil policies and that they are aware of the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

13. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

13.1 Equality is high on the school's strategic agenda. The school regards breaches of the Act and of this policy very seriously. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation or conduct that contravenes the Act or which compromises the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, our Key Principles and/or our equality duties.

13.2 Members of staff who wish to raise a concern or make a complaint about a breach of this policy involving another member of staff should do so by following the process detailed in the school's Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure or Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure. Complaints may also be raised through the school's Whistleblowing Policy in appropriate cases. In cases not involving another member of staff, concerns or

complaints should be raised with the Headteacher or a member of the SLT. Concerns or complaints about the Headteacher should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

13.3 The school will ensure that any concerns or complaints are promptly and thoroughly investigated and are dealt with as determined by the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) as appropriate in accordance with the relevant school policy/procedure depending on the nature of the complaint and whether the complaint concerns a member of staff or a pupil or someone else.

13.4 Breaches of the Act and this policy by a member of staff will be treated seriously. In appropriate cases, action may be taken against an employee under the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and could result in a sanction up to and including dismissal. Serious acts of discriminatory behaviour, including acts of harassment, could amount to gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal without notice.

13.5 Members of staff should be aware that they may be held legally liable for their own acts of discrimination carried out in the course of their employment. Where a complaint involves an allegation of sexual harassment, in addition to being an employment issue this may also amount to a safeguarding issue and/or a criminal offence and may lead to police involvement. Harassment may also be an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where the harassment relates to a protected characteristic).

13.6 Pupils will be made aware of the procedure to follow should they wish to raise a concern or complaint about an equality related matter or incident in line with the school's Behaviour Policy (see paragraph 10.5 above). The Headteacher (or member of SLT with delegated responsibility) will be responsible for investigating and dealing with equality related incidents between pupils.

13.7 Parents, carers or members of the wider school community who wish to raise a concern or complain about any equality related school matter or incident should follow the procedure detailed in the school's Complaints Policy.

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW

14.1 The school will review this policy annually and will endeavour to ensure that the views of all interested parties are sought in relation to the ongoing development and review of this policy.

14.2 We will evaluate the success of the school's equality work by using quantitative and qualitative data and by assessing the extent to which the school achieves improved outcomes for different groups of staff and pupils with protected characteristics.

14.3 We will monitor and regularly review all school policies, procedures and practices to ensure compliance with the Act and this policy and to assess whether any changes need to be made.

APPENDIX A

GUIDANCE ON THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 ("THE ACT")

An Overview

This guidance is provided with a view to preventing pupils, staff, parents, carers and the wider school community from engaging in any form of behaviour or conduct which is deemed unlawful under the Act. The guidance is intended to create a general awareness and understanding of the school's obligations and duties under the Act, including any exemptions and exclusions which may apply.

The Act provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, replacing all previous anti - discrimination **laws** and extending protection from discrimination in some areas. The Act defines types of **unlawful behaviour** in relation to people with **protected characteristics**. The Act applies to all schools and academies including maintained and non-maintained special schools.

The Act applies to schools as **educators**, **employers** and as **service providers.** It applies to the way schools treat their pupils and potential pupils, and in limited circumstances, former pupils. As employers, schools must not discriminate against potential employees in respect of whether to offer a job or the terms on which a job is offered. Schools must also not discriminate against existing employees in respect of benefits, facilities and services offered including training opportunities, promotion or dismissal.

In relation to pupils, schools must not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, in the way education is provided, in the way pupils are provided with access to any benefit, facility or service and by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The school's "Responsible Body" must ensure compliance with the Act. The Responsible Body is the Governing Body (and the Local Authority in maintained schools) and the proprietor in independent schools, academies or non-maintained special schools. Any person acting on behalf of the Responsible Body, including school employees may be liable for their own discriminatory actions**.** The Responsible Body may also be liable unless it can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop an individual from doing the discriminatory action or from doing anything of that kind.

Types of Unlawful Behaviour and Protected Characteristics

Types of **unlawful behaviour** under the Act are: -

- direct discrimination,
- indirect discrimination,
- harassment,
- sexual harassment,
- victimisation.

The **Protected Characteristics** under the Act are: -

- age,
- disability,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex,
- sexual orientation,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity**.**

All the protected characteristics apply to staff but the protected characteristics of **age, marriage and civil partnership** DO NOT apply to pupils**.** It is not a breach of equality law therefore for schools to admit and organise pupils in age groups and to treat pupils in a way that is appropriate to their age.

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when because of a protected characteristic a person treats another less favorably, than they treat, or would treat other people. Direct discrimination involves *comparing* how you treat a person with the protected characteristic compared to how you treat someone else. In most cases there is no defence to direct discrimination. Motive or intention are irrelevant.

Direct discrimination can also be **by association** (when a person is treated less favorably because of their association with someone who has a protected characteristic) or **by perception** (when a person is treated less favorably because it is believed they have a protected characteristic even if that is a mistaken belief).

Indirect Discrimination

This occurs when a "provision criterion or practice" (PCP) is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. It is possible to defend a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown that the PCP is a "proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim" and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate. In the context of schools, examples of legitimate aims might be maintaining academic or other standards, safeguarding or ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Harassment

This has a specific legal definition in the Act based on the definition from the European Convention on Human Rights. It is *unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic or of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.* It is also *treating someone badly because they have submitted to or rejected sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender*.

Motive or intention are irrelevant. Harassment is about the perception of the victim provided it is reasonable for them to feel that way.

Unwanted conduct covers a wide range of behaviours including but not limited to:

- spoken/written words
- banter
- physical gestures
- facial expressions
- mimicry
- posts or contact on social media
- imagery
- jokes or pranks
- aggression
- physical behaviour towards a person or their property.

A person does not have to possess the protected characteristic to bring a claim under the harassment provisions. Harassment can also be **by association** (harassing someone because they **associate with** someone with a protected characteristic) or **by perception** (harassing someone because you it is thought or perceived they have a protected characteristic even if that is wrong).

Sexual Harassment

This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature. The conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. This can include verbal, non-verbal, or physical behaviour and can occur in person or online. Conduct of a sexual nature includes a wide range of behaviours including but not limited to:

- sexual comments or jokes
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- sexual gestures
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

- wolf whistling and cat calling

Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted. However, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted. The person directly affected by sexual harassment does not have to be the person to report an incident. A person who is witness to or becomes aware of conduct that constitutes sexual harassment are encouraged to report it. Conduct does not need to be specifically directed at a particular person to constitute sexual harassment as it may still have the effect of creating intimidating, hostile, humiliating or defensive environment.

Victimisation

This occurs when a person is treated badly or treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because they have completed "a protected act" or because the school believes that a person has done or is going to do a protected act. A protected act might involve, for example; making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information or doing anything else under or in connection with the Act.

Additional Provisions Relating to Disability

With regard to disability, there are two further types of unlawful behaviour, these are: -

- Discrimination arising from a disability,
- A failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Discrimination Arising from A Disability

This occurs when a disabled person is treated *unfavourably* because of something arising in consequence of their disability. This is unlawful unless the discrimination can be objectively justified.

Duty To Make Reasonable Adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments means that where something a school does places a disabled pupil or member of staff at a disadvantage compared to other pupils or members of staff, the school must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage. The duty applies to the way things are done, to the physical features of a school and to the provision of auxiliary aids and services. The Act extended the duty to provide auxiliary services and aids to pupils. Auxiliary aids or services are things or persons which help an individual. Whether a school should provide an auxiliary or service is a question of reasonableness in all the circumstances of the case. They may already be provided for a disabled pupil under the terms of their EHC Plan.

More favourable treatment for people with disabilities. The overriding principle of the equality legislation is one of equal treatment but schools may, and often must, treat disabled pupils and disabled members of staff more favourably than non-disabled pupils or non-disabled members of staff

by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils and members of staff without disabilities and to comply with their public sector equality duty.

Schools must also carry out **accessibility planning** for disabled pupils and members of staff under the Act. With regards to pupils, schools must implement accessibility plans which are aimed at increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum; improving the physical environment of school to enable disabled pupils to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided; and improving the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils. With regard to staff, schools are under a duty to consider alterations to physical features of the school as part of their duty to make reasonable adjustments where it is reasonable to avoid disadvantage caused by their disability.

Exceptions and Exclusions

There are some exceptions in the Act which apply to all schools and some which apply specifically to schools with a religious character (faith schools) and to single sex schools.

The daily act of collective worship is an exemption which applies to all schools in relation to the Act's religion or belief provisions. Schools are permitted to have acts of worship or other forms of collective religious observance and will not be acting unlawfully if an equivalent act of worship is not provided for other faiths. Schools are permitted to celebrate religious festivals.

The content of the school curriculum is excluded from the Act but the way, in which schools provide education, i.e., the delivery of the curriculum is not. Schools must ensure that the curriculum is not delivered in a discriminatory way and that it is delivered in accordance with the public sector equality duty. Schools should provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and should ensure that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. When a school's Curriculum Policy is reviewed, due regard must be given to equality considerations.

The Act does not deal specifically with school uniform or other aspects of appearance such as hair, jewellery and make up. The school's Governing Body determines uniform policy and the rules relating to appearance but must have due regard to equality law and to obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 when making decisions in this regard. Governing Bodies should be sensitive to the needs of different groups and should act reasonably in endeavoring to accommodate those needs without compromising other school policies and requirements including requirements relating to health, safety and discipline.

Faith Schools

Certain exceptions apply to the religion or belief provisions in the Act which mean that faith schools may conduct themselves in a way which is compatible with their religious ethos. Faith schools may discriminate because of religion or belief in relation to admissions and in the access to any benefit, facility or service.

Faith schools may give priority in admissions to pupils of the school's own religion although this may only be done when a school is oversubscribed. Faith schools may also choose to allocate some places to children of a specific faith if the school wishes for example to ensure a mixed intake to reflect the

diversity of the local population. Any such selection would be on the basis of faith only and not on the basis of ethnic background.

There are also exemptions in relation to how education is provided to pupils in faith schools and the way in which faith schools allows access to other aspects of school life which are not necessarily part of the school curriculum. If for example, a faith school was to organise a visit for pupils to sites of particular interest to the school's faith, the school would not be discriminating unlawfully by not arranging trips to sites of significance to the faiths of other pupils. Nor could a pupil of a different faith claim they were being treated less favourably because objects symbolic of the school's faith are given special status in school.

Faith schools must not treat a pupil less favourably because they do not (or no longer) belong to the school's religion. They must not discriminate in relation to other protected characteristics.

There are some specific exceptions for faith schools in relation to the employment of staff. The provisions differ for voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a religious character, and voluntary aided independent schools, academies and free schools with a religious character. Further information about the exceptions in relation to the employment of staff in faith schools can be found in the DfE's non-statutory advice for schools on the Equality Act 2010 and these are reflected in the schools' recruitment and other relevant staff policies.

Single Sex Schools

There is an exception to the sex discrimination provision in the Act for single sex schools which means that schools are able to refuse to admit pupils of the opposite sex. The exception also permits single sex schools to admit a small number of pupils from the opposite sex on an exceptional basis or in relation to particular courses or classes.

The Public Sector Equality Duty and Supporting Specific Duties

The Act introduced a single **Public Sector Equality Duty** (PSED) made up of the **general** duty and supporting **specific duties**. The PSED applies to public bodies, including all schools and academies but not independent schools.

The general duty is contained in S149 of the Act and requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have **due regard** to the need to: -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
- foster good relations across all characteristics.

Having due regard means that the Governing Body and the school's leadership team must ensure that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, thought will be given to

equality considerations. Equality will not just be an afterthought and will never be just a matter of ticking boxes. Decisions and actions will be made with an open mind and an assessment will always be made as to whether a particular decision or action may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.

The first aim of the PSED applies to all the protected characteristics. The second and third aims apply to all the protected characteristics except marriage and civil partnership. The protected Characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership do not apply to pupils.

Specific equality duties are detailed in the **Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017**. In order to comply with their specific duties, schools are required to: -

- publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with their general duty;
- prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives;
- publish gender pay gap information if they employ 250 or more employees.

Schools are required to update published equality information at least **annually** and to publish objectives at least once every **four** years.

The school's current equality objectives can be found in **Appendix C.**

APPENDIX B

HOW WE ARE COMPLYING WITH OUR GENERAL DUTY

1. What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010.
The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct. Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act – for example, during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes. New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every year. A report is provided to the finance personnel committee annually regarding Equality Act issues
2. What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
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 above data 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

3. What we are doing to foster good relations across all protected characteristics.
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, social, health and economic (PSHE) 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

APPENDIX C

OUR CURRENT EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

1. OBJECTIVE: - Continue to improve pupil and staff wellbeing **Timeframe: 12 months** **Leads: SJ/SJR**
Why we have chosen this objective: *To support members of our school community that require support around their mental health* To achieve this objective we plan to: • Provide counselling for pupils and staff requiring this • Continue to provide a staff wellbeing programme and further develop the staff wellbeing group • Improve our outdoor areas • Undertaking a staff well- being survey termly • Set up a staff well- being group to look at reducing workload •
2. OBJECTIVE: - Improve our understanding of equality and diversity **Time frame: 12 months** **Leads: SJ/SD/KA**

Why we have chosen this objective:

To ensure that staff and pupils have the knowledge they need to understand the importance of equality and diversity and help us to implement our learning into everyday practice
To achieve this objective we plan to:
- Develop a clear Equality and Diversity school statement
- Provide training for pupils using external providers
- Achieve reassessment of RRSA Gold Award

3. OBJECTIVE: - Ensure we are meeting all pupils' needs by implementing the recommendations from the National Autistic Society

Time frame: 18 months
Leads: **SJ/SD/KA**

Why we have chosen this objective:

The number of pupils with autism in our school is growing and we need to ensure that their needs are considered and met within the whole school environment as well as in the classroom
To achieve this objective we plan to:
- Use symbols on lanyards to support communication across school
- Provide more bespoke training and workshops for families of ASD pupils
- Increase communication of pupil progress where our families using photos and clips of their children engaging in learning in school,
- Further develop the use of PECs and TEACCH

OUR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Action Plan

Physical Access

Aim	Recommendation	Timescale	Cost	Responsibility
Corridors	Ensure clear of all obstructions	Immediate/Ongoing	None	All staff

Curriculum Access

Aim	Recommendation	Timescale	Cost	Responsibility
Adapt assessment tools to reflect change of pupil population and match to the curriculum	Teachers within the sensory structured classes will utilize the 'evidence for learning' platform to capture and monitor pupil progress Evidence for learning will be rolled out to other 'structured' class including the experiential department	To be embedded in the sensory structured department by July 2026 July 2027	Evidence for learning already purchased	S. Darby (department lead) and Mahbia Iqbal (assessment lead)
Sensory processing incorporated into the school day for ASD/ ADHD learners	Room set up, all staff trained in using the room, support form OT on a weekly basis – 1 day a week	On going	£15,000	S.Darby / Geraldine Wilson
Emotion coaching within the school day/during learning to help pupil self-regulate and access lessons without the need to come out of the classroom	Zones of regulation and regulation stations to be set in every SLD class and some structured classes as appropriate.	July 2026	£0	K.Allely
Specialist equipment purchased for learners to support in the classroom	AAC users- communication systems- low tech and high tech Specialist seating and positioning for physically disabled pupils	On going	£10,000	Mahbia Iqbal/ Danielle Collinge/ Head Teacher

Written Information

Aim	Recommendation	Timescale	Cost	Responsibility
Use of translation for website/parental communication	Review home languages to ensure all are covered. Where necessary translate hard copies.	Immediate/ongoing	None	Business Support/TA for website
Access for visually impaired students	Enlarged resources e.g. symbols and worksheets	Immediate/ongoing	Usual procurement costs	All staff
Use of natural reader to support 6th form students in accessing information when out in the community	Purchase of three non-sim mobile devices Download of natural reader app	To be embedded by July 2027	£250	Mahbia Iqbal, Elaine Redpath, Laura Brewer