

# Equality Statement Policy



# Wheatley Hill Community Primary School

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## Equality Objectives and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

### 1. Legal Framework and Principles

We welcome our duties under the **Equality Act 2010** to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in relation to the protected characteristics. We recognize that these duties are essential to reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

While there is no longer a statutory requirement to produce a specific "Equality Scheme," we recognize that it is best practice to publish a clear statement defining the principles by which we assess the impact of our policies and practice on equality.

### 2. The Public Sector Equality Duty (General Duty)

Under the general duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), in the exercise of our functions, we have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- **Advance** equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- **Foster** good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

We will give relevant and proportionate consideration to the PSED. This duty applies to all pupils, staff, and others using our school facilities.

### 3. Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals from discrimination based on the following characteristics:

- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Age (*Applicable to staff only*)
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships (*Applicable to staff only*)

**Note:** Age and Marriage/Civil Partnership are **not** protected characteristics for the school's provisions for pupils.

#### **4. Consideration of Socio-Economic Disadvantage**

Although **Pupil Premium** status is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, due to the nature and context of our school, we recognize the significant impact of socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore, we treat Pupil Premium pupils (and those facing socio-economic hardship) as a priority group, ensuring they receive proportionate consideration regarding equality of opportunity, inclusion, and academic outcomes.

#### **5. Advancing Equality of Opportunity**

We will have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity, which includes making serious consideration of the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
2. Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
3. Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

## 6. Decision Making: The 'Brown Principles'

To ensure robust governance and compliance, we take into account the six 'Brown Principles' of *due regard* in our decision-making processes:

Principle	Application in School
<b>Awareness</b>	All staff and governors know and understand what the law requires.
<b>Timeliness</b>	Implications are considered <i>before</i> policies or decisions are implemented, not afterwards.
<b>Rigour</b>	Decisions are based on open-minded and rigorous analysis, including parent/pupil voice.
<b>Non-delegation</b>	The PSED is a core duty of the Governing Body and cannot be delegated.
<b>Continuous</b>	Equality is an ongoing consideration throughout the academic year, not a "tick-box" exercise.
<b>Record-keeping</b>	We keep clear notes and records of decisions, meetings, and the equality considerations made.

## 7. Our Specific Duties

We welcome the opportunity to be transparent and accountable. To this end, we fulfil the specific duties of the Act by:

- **Publishing Equality Information:** Updated annually to demonstrate how we are complying with the PSED.
- **Publishing Equality Objectives:** Specific, measurable objectives prepared and published at least every four years.

We aim to make this information accessible, easy to read, and easy to find on our school website.

## **Guiding principles**

In fulfilling the legal obligations cited above, we are guided by nine principles:

### **Principle 1: All learners are of equal value.**

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value.

### **Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference.**

Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face.

\*There are some areas where a school with a religious character can make exceptions on some certain prescribed grounds. These are discussed at the end of the document.

### **Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.**

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between boys and girls, and women and men, and an absence of sexual, homophobic and transphobic harassment.
- positive attitudes and understanding of those women pregnant or during maternity.

### **Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development**

We ensure that policies and procedures should benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

\*There are some areas where a school with a religious character can make exceptions on some certain prescribed grounds. These are discussed at the end of the document.

### **Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist**

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist.

**Principle 6: We consult and involve widely**

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies, and in the review of existing ones. We consult and involve all sectors of the school community.

**Principle 7: Society as a whole should benefit**

We intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in public life.

**Principle 8: We base our practices on sound evidence**

We maintain and publish quantitative and qualitative information about our progress towards greater equality.

**Principle 9: Objectives**

Every four years we formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives, based on the evidence we have collected and published. The objectives which we identify take into account national and local priorities and issues, as appropriate. We keep our equality objectives under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

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## 8. The Curriculum

We keep each curriculum subject and area under continuous review to ensure that teaching and learning reflect our Equality Principles and the diverse nature of society.

- We ensure that resources and teaching materials portray a positive and positive range of images of people with protected characteristics.
- We actively seek to decolonise and diversify our curriculum to ensure it represents a wide range of perspectives and histories.
- We ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils, making reasonable adjustments where necessary for pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

## 9. Ethos and Organisation

We ensure that our Equality Principles apply to the full range of our policies and practices, including those concerned with:

- **Pupil Outcomes:** Progress, attainment, and achievement.
- **Wellbeing:** Personal development, welfare, and pastoral support.
- **Pedagogy:** Teaching styles and strategies.
- **Admissions & Attendance:** (Subject to specific religious character exceptions—see Section 16).
- **Staffing:** Recruitment, retention, and professional development (Subject to specific religious character exceptions—see Section 16).
- **Inclusion:** Care, guidance, and support.
- **Behaviour:** Discipline, exclusions, and re-integration.
- **Partnership:** Working with parents, carers, guardians, and the wider community.

## 10. Addressing Prejudice and Prejudice-Related Bullying

The school adopts a robust approach to all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling our legal duties. We acknowledge that prejudice-related incidents can constitute safeguarding concerns (Peer-on-Peer abuse) as outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

- **Guidance:** Our Staff Handbook and Behaviour Policy provide clear guidance on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded, and dealt with.
- **Recording:** We take seriously the importance of recording the numbers, types, and severity of prejudice-related incidents.
- **Analysis:** We investigate potential patterns and trends (e.g., spikes in racist or homophobic language) to inform our PSHE curriculum and assembly themes.

## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

Equality is a whole-school responsibility. The table below outlines specific accountabilities:

Role	Responsibility
<b>The Governing Body</b>	Responsible for ensuring the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures are implemented. A specific <b>Link Governor</b> is identified to support and challenge the school regarding equality.
<b>The Headteacher</b>	Responsible for operational implementation; ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities; ensuring appropriate training is provided; and taking appropriate action in cases of non-compliance.
<b>All Staff</b>	Expected to promote an inclusive ethos; respond to prejudice-related incidents immediately; incorporate equality principles into their teaching/work; and keep up-to-date with relevant legislation.

## 12. Information and Resources

We ensure that the content of this policy is known to all staff and governors and, as appropriate, to all pupils and their parents/carers.

- All staff and governors are signposted towards resources that discuss and explain concepts of equality, diversity, and community cohesion.
- Key equality documents are published on the school website.

### 13. Religious Observance

We respect the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, and parents. We aim to comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice (e.g., prayer times, dietary requirements, and authorised absence for religious festivals), provided they do not unduly disrupt the education of others or the efficient running of the school.

### 14. Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development around equalities, including:

- Unconscious bias training.
- How to handle prejudice-related bullying.
- Adapting teaching for diverse needs.

### 15. Monitoring and Evaluation

We collect, study, and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy and make adjustments as appropriate. Specifically, we analyse data regarding:

- Admissions and Attendance.
- Exclusions (Fixed Term and Permanent).
- Achievement and Progress gaps.
- Bullying and Behavioural incidents.

This data is analysed by **protected characteristic** to ensure no group is disproportionately disadvantaged.

### 16. Exceptions for Schools with a Religious Character

As a school with a religious character, we acknowledge that the Equality Act 2010 provides specific exceptions that allow us to maintain our distinct ethos.

These exceptions apply to:

1. **Admissions:** Prioritising applicants of the faith in times of oversubscription.
2. **Employment:** Preference given to practising members of the faith for certain reserved posts (e.g., Headteacher, RE Lead) where being of the faith is a "genuine occupational requirement."
3. **Collective Worship:** The content of our assemblies and worship.

**Note:** These exceptions do **not** allow the school to discriminate on other grounds (such as race, disability, or sexual orientation) in the way pupils are treated, excluded, or taught.

Reference Documents:

For further information on the Equality Act 2010 and exceptions for schools with religious character, we refer to:

- DfE: Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (Updated)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>