EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Our Vision:

We are committed to quality learning in a positive, happy and Christian atmosphere where everyone within the school community is valued as an individual.

We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.'
(Matthew 7:12-14).

We have high expectations of all and strive to provide a safe, challenging, exciting and stimulating environment.

Our Values:

To foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, through our school values of:-

Respect – by recognising and respecting diversity.

Compassion – by considering the needs of each person as an individual, valuing diversity and celebrating differences.

Creation – creating a positive, safe and secure environment which allows the whole school community to thrive and flourish equally.

Perseverance – To persevere in providing an inclusive, welcoming and friendly environment in which Christian and caring values are central to the ethos of the school, ensuring all children feel equal, valued and secure.

Service – by ensuring equal opportunities and fairness for all the children and families we serve and to integrate equality in our day to day decision making.

Willaston C of E Primary School understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality between different groups;
- Foster good relations between different groups; and
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our school's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our pupils. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

Our school's demographic state is directly linked to our overall aims for achieving equality. Specifically, we aim to:

Foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn, free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school
- Promoting community cohesion
- Promoting parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of pupils with protected characteristics

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Gender Separation in mixed schools'
- DfE (2014) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

A key measure in the Equality Act 2010 – the public sector Equality Duty came into force on 5th April 2011. The Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all. A significant piece of terminology is 'protected characteristics'.

This policy is related to the following other school policies:-

- LAC Policy
- SEND Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Emotional Health & Well Being Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- RSE Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils and potential pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:-
    - Admissions.
    - The way the school provides and education for pupils.
    - How pupils are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
    - The exclusion of a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans in collaboration with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will:-

- Implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.
- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.

Staff will: -

- Be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities, inclusivity and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole school community.

Data protection

The school will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.

The school will gain consent from pupils and parents before any sensitive personal data is processed.

The school will respect all pupils' right to privacy and will not disclose a pupil's trans[1]* status or sexual orientation to any other pupils, staff members or third parties.

The school holds a Data Protection Policy containing further information addressing data protection.

Protected characteristics

We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their:

- Sex.
- Race.
- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated.

We will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

We will regularly review our school practices to ensure that they are fair with regard to all the protected characteristics listed above.

Sex

For the purpose of this policy, sex refers to their biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. Our school understands that some pupils identify as a gender different to the sex they were assigned at birth, and we will support pupils through their transitioning phases.

We will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to pupils of other sexes.

[1] Trans* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum.

To achieve this, there may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as RSE, but we will ensure that such classes do not give pupils an unfair disadvantage when compared to pupils of the other sex in other classes.

The school will only separate pupils by sex where there is reasonable justification or if one of the following applies:

- Girls or boys will suffer a disadvantage connected to their sex
- Girls or boys have needs that are different from the needs of the other sex
- Participation in an activity by girls or boys is disproportionately low

The school will consider non-statutory exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and regularly review the impact of any separation to ascertain whether it remains lawful.

Boys and girls will be offered an equal opportunity to undertake any activity in the school, e.g. in relation to technology lessons all pupils will be allowed to choose which skills they learn.

Occasions where boys and girls are separated to be taught in single-sex classes will be documented and the separation justified to ensure parents, Ofsted and, where necessary, the wider community can understand the reasons behind segregation.

Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, pupils undergoing gender reassignment will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender they identify with.

Pupils' age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams

Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities; where segregation is deemed necessary, the single-sex sports teams will receive the same quality and amount of resources.

Race and ethnicity

We will ensure that pupils of all races and ethnicities (including those who have EAL) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

Staff will ensure pupils with EAL are treated equally and fairly, while ensuring they are supported at all times.

We will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' will not be tolerated, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

Disability

We will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with a disability by implementing a rule for all pupils that could have an adverse effect on pupils with disabilities only (for example, making physical fitness a basis for admission, or asking all pupils to deliver a presentation, as this could be unfair towards pupils with anxiety), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will ensure that we do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for him/her to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

We will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the pupil also has SEND but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan.

We will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.

The school adheres to our SEND Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

Religion and belief

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that pupils are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.

Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy.

The school will liaise with local religious leaders of all faiths to inform the amount of leave pupils will be granted in relation to religious observance.

Sexual orientation

We will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.

We will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to pupils in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.

RSE lessons will be taught in accordance with our Relationships and Sex Education Policy.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

Gender reassignment

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably in relation to gender reassignment, i.e. because they are trans or have trans parents, siblings or other family members. The school recognises that gender reassignment does not necessarily involve physical change, and can be solely social and emotional.

We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of trans* pupils by external sources, e.g. charities such as Stonewall. Any such absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively by the SENCO to ensure the privacy of the pupil.

Pupils have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our school uniform list.

We will ensure that there are suitable toilet and changing facilities for pupils to use, including:

- Unisex toilets and changing facilities
- Gender specific toilets and changing facilities

- Private changing facilities

The facilities will be made available to all pupils and pupils can use the facility they feel most comfortable in e.g. a trans* pupil using a private changing room.

We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where trans* pupils can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

Looked after children (LAC)

Looked after children are given the highest priority for admissions through the Local Authority admissions policy.

We will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all looked after children, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

We will ensure that any SEND, that a looked after child has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school adheres to our LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

The Curriculum

We believe that pupils should be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, however challenging or controversial, and will not make any unjustified changes to our curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a pupil may have.

We will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.

- Difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- Social cohesion. We are committed to supporting social cohesion within our school and within our local community.
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, our nation and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

The observation of inclusive teaching strategies is a key aspect of the SLT's annual programme of monitoring.

We will respect the right of parents to withdraw their child from RSE.

Promoting inclusion

We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

- Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our Governing Body and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling in pupils an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
- Providing a variety of educational and residential visits that expose pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extra-curricular activities and the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.

- Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.
- Ensuring admission arrangements will not unfairly disadvantage a pupil from a particular social or racial group, or with SEND.

Supporting pupils with medical conditions

We will ensure that any medical conditions related to a pupil with a protected characteristic is fully supported in line with our Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Pupils that have left school

Our responsibility not to discriminate, harass or victimise does not end when a pupil has left school. It will continue to apply with regards to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

We will meet our duty to publish:-

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics.
- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

Bullying and discrimination

Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Safeguarding Policy.

It the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services, and/or the police, of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Policy.

Staff training

New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their HR induction.

Whole-school staff training will be mainly delivered in-house.

Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:-

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, such as Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, PRIDE, and International Women's Day.

Approved by Governors , July 2025



Signed Chair of Governors