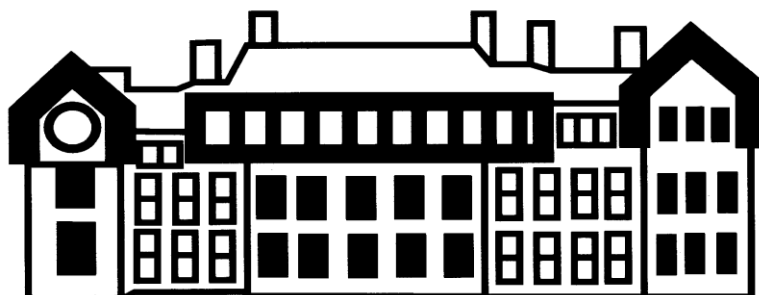


**GORDON**



**SCHOOL**

# **Equality Statement**

**Ratification date: February 2024**

**Review date: February 2026**

**Agreed: Jason Taylor (Headteacher)**

**Agreed: Lynsey Christini-Clay (Chair of Governors)**

## Equality Statement

Please see the documents listed within this policy for further details.

### 1, The purpose of this statement

The purpose of this statement is to provide clarity on:

- the school's legal responsibilities in relating to the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010;
- how all members of the school community should respond to and behave within the Equality Act 2010;
- the terms used in the Act and in relation to the Act;
- how we acknowledge and celebrate the equality, diversity and inclusion of all stakeholders within the school community.

### 2, The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

*The Equality Act 2010* provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination that are unlawful. It means that schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils, families, carers, staff, governors and other visitors to the school because of any protected characteristics that they have.

*The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)* requires public bodies – including schools – to demonstrate that they are acting on equality in policy-making, the delivery of services and in employment. The PSED requires public bodies to take steps not just to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, but also to actively advance equality.

The school's general duties, with regard to equality are:

- eliminating discrimination
- fostering good relationships
- advancing equality of opportunity

Actions we take to comply with the PSED include:

- **eliminating discrimination**
  - ensuring school leaders and the governing body actively consider equality when developing, implementing and reviewing policies
  - discussing equality, diversity and inclusion as a staff team and with the governing body
  - providing training for staff
- **fostering good relationships**
  - designing a curriculum that promotes tolerance, friendship, and an understanding of a range of religions and cultures
  - raising pupil awareness of our values – resilience, empathy, ambition, curiosity and honesty
  - involving all members of the school community (and where possible, the local community) in events, consultation and policy making
- **advancing equality of opportunity**

- embedding a high-quality curriculum that fits the needs of all pupils
- reviewing and evaluating the achievements of all pupils and providing additional support to enable all pupils to be successful
- implementing initiatives designed to promote equality for particular groups

### **3, Protected characteristics**

The *Equality Act 2010* identifies characteristics which must not be used as a reason to treat some people worse than others. “Reasonable adjustments” can be made to address needs relating to protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics are:

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

### **4, Sensitivity regarding protected characteristics**

It is important to be sensitive to the possibility that a person might have a protected characteristic that cannot be seen. All members of the school community should be treated with respect. This includes not making jokes about the protected characteristics. Whether or not they are personally affected, another person may find the remarks upsetting and offensive. This may be seen as harassment.

### **5, What is meant by discrimination?**

Discrimination in the Equality Act 2010 means that one person is treated worse than someone else because they have one or more protected characteristic.

- **Direct Discrimination**

Direct discrimination arises when an action is taken which is deliberately intended to treat a person worse because of a protected characteristic. An example of this might be the allocation of tasks to a staff member based solely on their sex.

- **Indirect Discrimination**

Indirect discrimination arises when a rule is in place which has a worse impact on someone because of a protected characteristic and the school cannot justify the rule. An example of this might be disciplining a disabled child for breaking a rule on punctuality despite their mobility being adversely affected.

- **Associated Discrimination**

The law also protects people who are associated with a person with a protected characteristic. An example of this is not appointing someone who has a disabled child because it is perceived that this may impact on their attendance.

- **Combined Discrimination**

Combined discrimination occurs when the combination of some protected characteristics is perceived negatively. For example, there may not be direct racial, age or sex discrimination, but if young black men are perceived negatively this is a case of combined discrimination.

- **Assumed Discrimination**

People who are discriminated against because it is assumed they have a protected characteristic, whether correctly or not, are protected by the law.

## **6, What is meant by harassment?**

Harassment in the *Equality Act 2010* means there has been unwanted behaviour which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating the dignity of another person; or
- creating for that person an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

### **Unwanted Behaviour**

Unwanted behaviour can include: spoken or written words or abuse, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a person's surroundings or other physical behaviour.

For the unwanted behaviour to be against the *Equality Act 2010*, it must be related to a protected characteristic. If the person receiving the unwanted behaviour does not have the protected characteristic the behaviour could still be seen as harassment. If a third party is offended by unwanted behaviour relating to a protected characteristic the behaviour could be seen as harassment.

## **7, What is meant by victimisation?**

Victimisation is when someone is treated badly or is subjected to a detriment because they have complained about discrimination. Victimisation is against the law. Protection covers anyone, whether or not they have a protected characteristic, if they do something in relation to making a complaint of discrimination and are then treated unfavourably, unfairly or unkindly. An example of this might be the ill-treatment of a pupil because their parent has complained that the child's disability has not been acknowledged, respected and supported.

## **8, Reasonable adjustments**

Some people's needs in relation to their protected characteristics are such that they may need reasonable adjustments to remove barriers. For pupils, this will be in order for them to access their education; for staff, this will be for them to be able to fulfil their contractual requirements.

## **9, The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people**

Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. This may involve treating disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils. The duty contains three requirements that apply in situations when a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled. The requirements cover:

- **changing provision, criteria or practices** (for example, a rule on wearing a particular piece of school uniform which a disabled person cannot manage independently);
- **changing barriers created by the physical features of the premises** (for example, changing tables and desks so a wheelchair user can sit at them comfortably);
- **providing auxiliary aids and services** (for example, installing special computer software).

The reasonableness of adjustments must be carefully considered and the impact on the school as a whole must be considered. The local authority has the responsibility to ensure there are schools with suitable provision within the borough whilst taking account of pupils' disabilities and the preferences expressed by pupils and their parents. It may not be deemed as a reasonable adjustment to install a lift in a four storey school if other schools have existing, and more suitable, provisions. However, the needs of disabled people must be addressed for all new building work.

## **10, Accessibility plan**

All schools must develop a written accessibility plan which will increase the access of disabled pupils to the school curriculum, improve the physical environment for such pupils and improve the provision of information to them.

## **11, Positive action**

Positive action means the steps that the school is allowed (but not required) to take to encourage people with a protected characteristic. An example of this is encouraging boys to stand as School Council Reps if it is discovered that despite an equal gender balance in a school, the School Council is made up predominantly of girls. The pupils would still be allowed to vote to decide who is elected.

This is not the same as positive discrimination which means favouring someone with a protected characteristic, even if they are less well-qualified than someone else who does not have the protected characteristic.

## **12, What does the Equality Act 2010 mean for pupils?**

The school and any of its representatives must not:

- discriminate in the way we provide education for a pupil;
- discriminate in the way we give a pupil access to any benefit, facility or service;

- refuse to provide education for a pupil for discriminatory reasons;
- refuse to give a pupil access to a benefit, facility or service;
- harass a pupil;
- victimise a pupil.

The Equality Act 2010 refers to all activities covering the life of the school. The life of the school includes:

- admission;
- teaching and learning;
- classroom organisation;
- grouping of pupils;
- homework;
- access to school facilities;
- activities to supplement the curriculum, e.g. a drama group visiting the school;
- school sports;
- school policies;
- breaks and lunchtimes;
- the serving of school meals;
- assessment and exam arrangements;
- praise and rewards;
- discipline and sanctions;
- suspension and exclusion procedures;
- school clubs and activities;
- school trips;
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies;
- school uniform;
- bullying;
- guidance and advice;
- preparing pupils for the next phase of education;
- working with parents and carers.

### **13, What does the Equality Act 2010 mean for staff?**

Equality of opportunity and non-discrimination extends to the treatment of all members of the school community. The school does not discriminate against staff with regards to their protected characteristics.

All staff members are obliged to act in accordance with the school's various policies relating to equality.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are mindful of the positive impact to be had when the staffing of a school reflects the diversity of its community.

The highest standards of conduct are expected from staff. If it is necessary to follow disciplinary procedures, there will be no direct or indirect prejudice. All disciplinary procedures are non-prejudicial, whether they result in warnings, dismissal, or any other disciplinary action.

Prejudice is not tolerated and we are continuously working to promote an accepting and respectful environment for our school community.

#### **14, How we build a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion**

We ensure the diversity of our pupils is reflected in our lesson plans and activities. We ensure learning resources are not only non-discriminatory, but that they positive promote diversity. We adapt and provide support for those students who need extra help and we incorporate our understanding of how children learn most effectively into our teaching.

We use lessons and assemblies to share information around key groups and events. These include Black History Month, International Women's Day, LGBT History Month, LGBT Pride, religious festivals and stories and disability awareness. We discuss, and consequently raise pupils' understanding of physical disabilities and neurodiversity.

#### **15, Failure to meet the Requirements of the Equality Act 2010**

The importance of effective staff training cannot be underestimated. All staff members, whether they are teaching or support staff, need to be fully aware of the requirements under the Act and the implications of this for our education provision and delivery. Equality and diversity are features of Ofsted inspections and inspectors judge how well schools promote equality, celebrate diversity and the extent to which they deal with incidents of discrimination. A school's effectiveness in these areas contributes to the grading given for *Personal Development*.

If a member of staff, a parent or any other visitor to the school feels that discrimination, harassment or victimisation has taken place they need to raise their concern with the Headteacher. If their complaint is in relation to the Headteacher, they should address their concern to the Chair of Governors.

The school's complaints policy will be followed.

#### **16, Evaluation and Review**

Everything the school does needs to be non-discriminatory and this requires regular reviews of practices, policies and procedures to ensure we do not discriminate against anyone with a protected characteristic. Issues relating to equality will be discussed when reviews take place. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure the school adheres to the duties of the *Equality Act 2010*.