



Beaminster School

Policy and Procedures Statement

TITLE: Equality Policy	MANAGEMENT: Headteacher
DATE APPROVED: February 2025	REVIEW DATE: September 2026

Purpose of the Policy

On 1st October 2010 the Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

The Act introduced requires all schools to comply with the **Public Sector Equality Duty** and two **specific duties**.

Public Sector Equality Duty requires us as a school to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
3. Foster good relations between different groups.

The two “specific duties” require us to:

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty (reviewed annually)
2. Publish Equality Objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.

Our Equality Policy aims to demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty by:

- a. Taking into account the provisions relating to equality in the Ofsted inspection framework (EIF) 2019. The framework places a strong focus on actively promoting equality and diversity, tackling bullying and discrimination, narrowing any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners and actively promoting British values. It also makes clear that schools will be assessed in relation to compliance with their duties under the Act and the Human Rights Act 1998 and on the extent to which they promote equality of opportunity and take positive steps to prevent any form of discrimination, either direct or indirect, against those with protected characteristics.
- b. Informing the School Improvement Plan, self-evaluation processes, the school prospectus, website and our core values of Ambition, Service and Kindness (ASK), enabling the school to demonstrate how promoting equality and eliminating discrimination can help to raise standards, ensuring that equality and diversity are part of the school's core business, both as a school and an employer, and ensuring that the school's commitment to ensuring its position as a provider of the highest quality education supports the school's equality objectives.
- c. Ensuring this key school document for information about equality. It brings together all the school's previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality.

Terminology

In this policy the term “**equality**” refers to fair treatment of every individual, regardless of, and in respect of, any personal characteristic or individual need. The term “**diversity**”, has many definitions, but they all embrace the notion that our background, knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experiences are all different and that our differences should be valued and appreciated.

Introduction

Beaminster School is an inclusive school where we focus on the wellbeing and progress of every student, and where all members of our community are considered of equal worth.

The principles of this policy apply to all members of the school community – students, staff, Governors, parents/carers and all visitors to our school.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

The overall objective of the school's Equality Policy is to provide a framework for the school to pursue its equality duties.

This involves:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Promoting good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds in all its activities.

Through the Equality Policy, the school seeks to ensure that no member of the school community, or any other person, through their contact with the school, receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified.

This covers race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities or socio-economic background.

Our approach to promoting equality is based on the following principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

Every member of the school community is of equal value whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation. All individuals are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and should treat others in the same way.

Principle 2: We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength

We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which students and adults within our school setting may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit our school.

Principle 3: We will actively promote British values

The school will ensure that equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity is promoted and that students respect others and are well prepared to contribute to wider society and life in modern Britain. The fundamental British values are democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

Principle 4: We foster positive attitudes and relationships

We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities that are different from each other. The school will act to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language, including language that is derogatory about disabled people, homophobic or racist.

Principle 5: We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community, and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life. The school intends that its policies and procedures should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and by promoting greater participation in public life of all individuals from all groups including those with protected characteristics.

Principle 6: We observe good equalities practice for our staff

We strive to ensure that that policies and procedures benefit all employees, and potential employees, in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

Principle 7: We will consult and involve widely in relation to equality issues

When tackling equality issues, the school will consult and engage with those affected by its decisions and, where possible, with those people who have special knowledge who can inform the school's approach. The school will take into account the views of stakeholders in the implementation and the review of this policy and in particular in relation to the school's equality objectives.

Principle 8: We will address bullying and prejudice motivated incidents

The school takes bullying and prejudice motivated incidents seriously and any such conduct and behaviour will be carefully monitored and dealt with fairly and firmly. The school will take into account the specific guidance issued by the DfE on bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying, and bullying related to sexual orientation, transgender, disability, race and religion. Training will be given to members of staff to ensure they are aware of how to identify and to deal with such incidents.

Principle 9: We have the highest expectations of all our students

We expect all students to make good progress and achieve to their highest potential

Principle 10: We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable

We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of students ensures that these students are more likely to achieve high standards and improve their life chances.

These principles are lived out through the school's core values:

Ambition	for all students and staff;
Service	to oneself, each other and the wider community;
Kindness	to oneself, each other and the wider community.

The basis of these values can be found in the principle of 'love your neighbour, as you love yourself'.

Equality Statement

Our Equality Statement is based on the principles above and aims to ensure that:

All students and members of staff at our school understand protected characteristics and their rights and responsibilities in relation to these, both within the school and wider community.

All students and members of staff at our school are provided with opportunities to fulfil their potential whatever their sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

We are totally committed to ensuring that equality is a fundamental part of our drive to improve, and that all members of the Beaminster School community should support this.

What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

At all times we strive to take into account equality issues in relation to:

- Admissions and exclusions
- The way we provide education for our students
- The way we provide access for students to facilities and services.

We are aware of the reasonable adjustment duty and work towards enhancing access and participation for all students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and in ensuring that these students are not being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

The Governors ensure that all appointment panels give careful consideration to this policy so that no one is discriminated against regarding employment, promotion or training opportunities. We always have a member of staff or a Governor who has been safer recruitment trained on our appointment panels.

We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review a policy or procedure, and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school.

We actively promote equality and diversity through the implementation of a creative curriculum and by creating a learning environment which promotes respect for all.

Behaviour, exclusions and attendance

The school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying policies take account of the duties under the Equality Act. We monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups, and take action, when required, to address any concerns. The school aims to actively challenge all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality.

We treat all bullying incidents seriously and provide a report to the Governors about the numbers, types and seriousness of these incidents and how we have dealt with them. We review this data termly and take action, when required, to reduce incidents.

What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

We are aware of the needs of our school's population and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.

We have procedures, working in partnership with parents, carers and colleagues in primary schools, to identify children who are "vulnerable" through our transition meetings and induction days.

We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps.

We use a range of teaching strategies that ensure we meet the needs of all students and, where it is deemed necessary, we provide support to students at risk of underachieving.

We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in relation to race, gender, disability and sexuality.

We ensure quality of access for all students to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

We have an Accessibility Policy designed to:

- Increase the extent to which students with a disability can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

What we are doing to foster good relations

We aim to prepare our students for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students.

We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through our Life Studies lessons and also through citizenship across the curriculum.

We use materials and resources that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.

We promote a whole school ethos and values – Ambition, Service, Kindness - that challenge prejudice-based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviours.

We provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures.

We include the contribution of different cultures world history and that promotes positive images of people.

We provide opportunities for students to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences.

We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events and a whole array of curriculum enrichment opportunities.

Other ways we address equality issues

- We maintain records of all training related to equalities (training log)
- We keep minutes of meetings where equality issues are discussed
- We have a rolling programme for reviewing all our school policies in relation to equalities and their impact on the progress, safety and welling of our students. The implications for equalities of new policies and practices are considered before they are introduced.

How we ensure the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community

Review relevant feedback from parent questionnaires, parents' evenings and Governors' meetings.

Analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events.

Review feedback and responses from students and groups of students from the school council, Life Studies, whole school surveys on students' attitudes to self and school (PASS Survey).

Analyse issues raised in annual reviews or reviews of progress on personalised learning plans.

Ensure that we minute responses and feedback at Governing Body meetings and address actions.

Equality Objectives

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities, and are the outcomes of careful review and analysis of data and other evidence. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

Our Equality Objectives for 2022-2026 are to:

1. **Improve the attendance of all students, and groups of students, to 95%.** The Student Support and Guidance Centre (SSGC) will ensure that early attendance issues are followed up immediately, monitored effectively and disseminated to Heads of Year, Tutors and staff. Identified students, or groups of students, will receive additional support through pastoral, pupil premium or SEND routes and parents involved through our engagement events.
2. **Promote cultural understanding and a greater awareness of different beliefs (religious or none) between all ethnic groups across our school community.** This will include a broader range of cultural events and assembly themes and the engagement of our local community in school activities. At KS4 the new Religious Studies 9 – 1, which covers Christianity and Judaism, also explores values Christianity has in common with Atheism, Agnosticism, Humanism and Secularism. At KS3 the Religious Studies course is named Ethics and Beliefs and has been developed to provide high quality RE, as recognised by our most recent SIAMS report.
3. **Actively close gaps in achievement between students and all groups of students, especially Pupil Premium students, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Looked After Children and students from minority ethnic groups.** Initiatives to do this are firmly embedded in our School Improvement Plan and will ensure a relentless focus on the needs of all our students.
4. **Eliminate the incidence of the use of homophobic, sexist and racist language by students in the school.** The strong pastoral care and education through our Life Studies programmes will continue to be adapted to meet the needs of our school community in an ever-changing world.
5. **Support pupils with gender identity.** We recognise that a very small number of students may question their gender identity. Where this is the case we will work with others to ensure that the community can understand and celebrate difference, creating an inclusive learning environment where all students feel welcome, safe and understood.

Monitoring and reviewing objectives

We review our equality objectives every year and report annually to the Governing Body on progress towards achieving them. We update our Equality Objectives at least every 4 years. We involve and consult staff, students, Governors, parents and carers as appropriate throughout the year.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

A designated Governor will take the lead but the Governors as a whole are responsible for:

- Making sure the school complies with the relevant equality legislation
- Monitoring progress towards the equality objectives and reporting annually.

The Headteacher will:

- Implement the school's stated equality objectives
- Ensure that the equality objectives and access plans are written, and that they are readily available to Governors, staff, students and parents/carers
- Ensure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Take appropriate action in case of harassment and discrimination, including prejudice related incidents
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are made in relation to disability in regard to students, staff, parents/carers and visitors to the school.

All staff within the school will:

- Advance equality in their work
- Foster good relationships between groups and deal with prejudice related incidents
- Be able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Take up training and learning opportunities.

Students will be encouraged to recognise that they have a role and responsibility to themselves and others so they understand and are able to:

- promote equality, inclusion and good community relations
- challenge inappropriate language and behaviour
- tackle bias and stereotyping
- work to promote anti bullying strategies
- respond appropriately to incidents of discrimination and harassment and understand the action needed to report these;
- regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance
- support the school's approach and commitment to equality and comply with the provisions of the Act and this policy.

Visitors (including parents, carers and contractors) are also responsible for supporting the school's approach and refraining from engaging in any behaviour which is unlawful under the Act whilst on school premises.

Dealing with breaches

Equality is a matter which is high on the school's strategic agenda and it takes breaches of the Act and of this Policy seriously. The school is committed to ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to stop individuals from taking any form of discriminatory action or from engaging in any form of discriminatory or other unlawful behaviour as detailed in the Act.

The school will ensure that any complaints and evidence of a failure to comply with the Act or this Policy are promptly and thoroughly investigated and are dealt with as determined by the Headteacher (or Governing Body, as appropriate) in accordance with the relevant school policy/procedure.

Where appropriate, discriminatory acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the school's disciplinary procedure.

In addition to being an employment issue, sexual harassment may also amount to 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).

Serious acts of discriminatory behaviour, including acts of harassment, could amount to gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.