



**JOSEPH PAXTON CAMPUS**

# Equality and Diversity Policy for Students

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## **1. Statement of intent**

We have created this Equal Opportunities Policy because, unfortunately, the conditions and prejudices which fuel inequality are still prevalent in our society. This creates considerable barriers that prevent the full access of children and young people to the rights and services which are guaranteed to them through both national and international law.

We hope that, by establishing a clear framework in which to govern the treatment of all students at our school, we can remove human prejudice from the decision-making process and overcome any inequality, ensuring that every young person that attends our school receives an education which offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential.

Wirral Council's Vision:

Wirral Council's vision is to work closely with its partners to ensure that everyone living, visiting and working in the Borough will be treated fairly and with respect regardless of their ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or faith.

## 2. School Context

Wirral Hospitals' School, Joseph Paxton Campus is situated in Claughton Village, Birkenhead and caters for children from the Wirral and surrounding areas. The ethnic background of most staff and students is White British and a significant minority identify as LGBT+. However, the cohort of students changes significantly, both from year to year and throughout the year, due to the way students are admitted to the school and reintegrated back into a mainstream setting wherever possible. As a result, it is impossible to give an accurate picture of the ethnic composition or gender balance of the school, although there are typically a larger number of boys than girls. There are currently no students with EAL on roll.

For the reasons outlined above, the socio-economic background of the students, and their academic ability, is also an ever changing picture. Many children arrive at Wirral Hospitals' School having struggled with their social interactions, and often having faced incidents of bullying, in their mainstream schools. Most have experienced significant periods of absence from education prior to their admittance.

As a result of all of the above, all students are treated as individuals, both academically and pastorally.

## 3. Legal framework

- a. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Equality Act 2010
- b. This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - DfE 'The Equality Act and schools' 2014
  - DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children' 2014
- c. This policy is related to the following other school policies:
  - **Looked After Children Policy**
  - **SEND Policy**
  - **Reporting Racist Incidents Policy**
  - **Curriculum Policy**
  - **Anti-bullying Policy**
  - **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

- **Behavioural Policy**
- **Data Protection Policy**

#### **4. Roles and responsibilities**

- a. The **Headteacher** will implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and students apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.
- b. The **Headteacher** will conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- c. It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to the possible harassment of students, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority.
- d. The school will have measures in place to ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for students who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.
- e. The **Headteacher** will review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- f. Teachers will have due regard to the sensitivities of all students, and not provide material that may cause offence.

#### **5. Data protection**

- a. The school will adopt secure controls on sensitive personal data, ensuring all data is accurate, secure and processed fairly and lawfully.
- b. The school will gain consent from the student and parents/carers before any sensitive personal data is processed.
- c. The school will respect all students' right to privacy and will not disclose a student's trans\* status or sexual orientation to any other students, staff members or third parties.<sup>1</sup>
- d. The school holds a **Data Protection Policy** containing further information addressing data protection.

## **6. Protected characteristics**

- a. We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student, or prospective student, because of their:
  - Sex
  - Race
  - Disability
  - Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender reassignment
  - Pregnancy or maternity
- b. We will not discriminate against a student, or prospective student, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent/carer, with whom the student or prospective student is associated.
- c. We will not discriminate against a student, or prospective student, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

## **7. Sex**

- a. We will ensure that students of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to students of other sexes, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- b. There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as sex and relationship education (SRE), but we will ensure that such classes do not give children an unfair disadvantage when compared to children of the other sex in other classes.
- c. Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, students undergoing gender reassignment will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender role in which they identify.
- d. Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities.

## 8. Race and ethnicity

- a. We will ensure that students of all races and ethnicities (including those who have English as an additional language) are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other students, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- b. We will not segregate students on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' cannot be sustained, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.
- c. We may, however, take positive action to address the particular challenges affecting students of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

## 9. Disability

- a. We will ensure that students with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other students simply because they have a disability, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.
- b. We will ensure that we do not discriminate against students with a disability by implementing a rule for all students that could have an adverse effect on students with disabilities only (for example, making physical fitness a basis for admission), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- c. We will ensure that we do not discriminate against students with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a student 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.
- d. We will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of students with disabilities, especially where the child also has a special educational need (SEND), but does not have a SEND statement or education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- e. We will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for students with disabilities, and ensure that any accessibility plan is duly implemented, and reviewed where necessary.
- f. The school holds a **SEND Policy** containing further information addressing equal opportunities for students with SEND.

**10. Religion and belief**

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

**11. Sexual orientation**

- a. We will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bisexual students, or the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents/carers, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other students, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- b. We will ensure that students are taught about marriage of same-sex couples whilst meeting our legal requirement to teach about the nature of marriage in SRE lessons.
- c. We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

**12. Gender reassignment**

- a. We will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they have undergone, or are proposing to undergo, gender reassignment, or have trans\* parents/carers, regularly checking our school practices to ensure that they are fair.
- b. We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of trans students by external sources. Any such absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively to ensure the privacy of the student.
- c. Students have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code
- d. We will ensure that there are unisex toilets available on-site which are accessible for all students, including those who identify as trans.
- e. We will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where trans students can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

### **13.Pregnancy and maternity**

- f. We will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they become pregnant, or have recently given birth, or because they are breastfeeding.
- g. We will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for the treatment and support of students who are pregnant, or just given birth.

### **14.Children who are looked after**

- a. We will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.
- b. A personal education plan will be created, and implemented, for all CLA and PCLA, 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.
- c. We will ensure that any SEND that a CLA or PCLA has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.
- d. The school holds a **Children who are Looked After Policy** containing further information addressing equal opportunities for CLA.

### **15. The curriculum**

- a. Each area of the curriculum is planned to incorporate the principles of equality and to promote positive attitudes to diversity. All subjects contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.
- b. The content of the curriculum reflects and values diversity. It encourages students to explore bias and to challenge prejudice and stereotypes.
- c. Extra-curricular activities and special events cater for the needs and capabilities of all students and take account of parental concerns related to religion and culture.
- d. The curriculum offer has been designed to ensure that we fully adhere to UNCRC article 29 - Education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It should encourage them to respect human rights, as well as their parent, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

- e. We believe that students 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 student may have.
- f. We will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way as to prevent discrimination, and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.
- g. The observation of inclusive teaching strategies is a key aspect of the school leadership team's annual programme of monitoring.
- h. We will respect the right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from religious education classes.

## **16. Promoting inclusion**

- a. We will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:
  - Ensuring that students 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 school staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
  - Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
  - Instilling in students an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
  - Providing a variety of educational and residential visits which expose students to a wide range of cultural experiences.
  - 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 students, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
  - Communicating our policy to parents/carers to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
  - Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.

## **17. Supporting students with medical conditions**

- a. We will ensure that any medical conditions related to a student with a protected characteristic is fully supported.

## **18. Students that have left school**

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

## **19. The Public Sector Equality Duty**

- a. 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 students who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in [section 4](#).
  - Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how we may further equality in our school.
- b. There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and students will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

## **20. Bullying and discrimination**

- a. Our **Anti-bullying Policy** will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.
- b. Any incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**.
- c. It will be up to the **Headteacher** to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services, and/or the police, of any incident.
- d. Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our **Complaints Policy**.

## **21. Staff training**

- a. New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their staff induction.
- b. Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training which will:

- 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 students with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards students 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 students 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.