

# **Bowden House School**

## **Equal Opportunities Policy for Students**

## Contents:

### Statement of intent

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
3. [Data protection](#)
4. [Protected characteristics](#)
5. [Sex](#)
6. [Race and ethnicity](#)
7. [Disability](#)
8. [Religion and belief](#)
9. [Sexual orientation](#)
10. [Gender reassignment](#)
11. [Pregnancy and maternity](#)
12. [Looked after children \(LAC\)](#)
13. [The curriculum](#)
14. [Promoting inclusion](#)
15. [Supporting students with medical conditions](#)
16. [Students that have left school](#)
17. [The Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
18. [Bullying and discrimination](#)
19. [Staff training](#)
20. [Monitoring and review](#)

## Statement of intent

Bowden House 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 student receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our students. 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.

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 students with protected characteristics
- regularly reviewing our equality policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Governors

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Date: 30 June 2020

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Review date : June 2022

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## **1. Legal framework**

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including but not limited to, the following:
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Equality Act 2010
  - Data Protection Act 2018
- 1.2. This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:
  - DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act advice for schools
  - DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
  - DfE (2018) 'Gender Separation in mixed schools'
  - DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- 1.3. This policy is related to the following other school policies:
  - SEND
  - Teaching & Learning
  - Assessment & Target Setting
  - Anti-bullying
  - Safeguarding & the Protection of Children
  - Behaviour & Behaviour Management
  - Data Protection
  - Complaints Procedures for Students Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1. The Governing Body will:
  - be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations
  - take all reasonable steps to ensure students and potential students will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
    - admissions.
    - the way the school provides an education for students
    - how students are provided with access to the additional support and services available within and outside the school
    - the exclusion of a student 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.

2.2. The Headteacher will:

- implement this policy, ensuring that all staff and students 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 or support is made available for students who require immediate interventions.

2.3. Staff will:

- 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
- carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities, inclusivity and pertaining to their specific roles
- have due regard to the sensitivities of all students and not provide material that may cause offence.

### **3. Data Protection**

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

### **4. Protected characteristics**

- 4.1. We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student, or prospective student, because of their:
  - Sex
  - Race
  - Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health

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<sup>1</sup> Trans\* is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum.

- Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation
  - Gender reassignment
  - Pregnancy or maternity
- 4.2. 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
- 4.3. 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
- 4.4. we will regularly review our school practices to ensure that they are fair with regard to all the protected characteristics listed in 4.1.

**5. Sex** (Bowden House School is an all boys' school but for the purposes of clarity of the policy and continuity, reference to girls will remain)

- 5.1. for the purpose of this policy, sex refers to their biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. We understand some students may wish to identify with another gender and we will support students through their transitioning phase
- 5.2. 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. – to achieve this
- 5.3. there may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, such as RSHE but we will ensure that such classes do not give students an unfair disadvantage when compared to students of the other sex in other classes. The school will only separate students 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
- 5.4. 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
- 5.5. boys and girls will be offered an equal opportunity to undertake any activity in the school, e.g. in relation to technology lessons all students will be allowed to choose which skills they learn
- 5.6. occasions where boys and girls are separated to be taught in single-sex classes will be documented and the separation justified to ensure parents/carers, Ofsted and where necessary, the wider community can understand the reasons behind segregation.

- 5.7. 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 they identify with
- 5.8. students' age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams
- 5.9. 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.

## **6. Race and ethnicity**

- 6.1. we will ensure that students 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 students, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure that they are fair
- 6.2. we will not segregate students 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
- 6.3. we may, however, take positive action, e.g. organising open days for students and families of a specific race that is under-represented, 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.

## **7. Disability**

- 7.1. we will ensure that students with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other students simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair
- 7.2. 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, or asking all students to deliver a presentation, as this could be unfair towards students with anxiety), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim
- 7.3. 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
- 7.4. we will make any reasonable adjustments and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of students with disabilities, especially where the student also has SEND
- 7.5. we will meet our duty to undertake accessibility planning for students with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary

- 7.6. the school adheres to our SEND Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for students with SEND.

## **8. Religion and belief**

- 8.1. 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
- 8.2. 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
- 8.3. absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the authority's school attendance policy
- 8.4. the school will liaise with local religious leaders of all faiths to inform the amount of leave students will be granted in relation to religious observance.

## **9. Sexual orientation**

- 9.1. we will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual students or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual 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.
- 9.2. we will ensure that students are taught about the nature of marriage, including same-sex marriage by presenting the facts of English and Welsh law – teachers will not offer personal opinions when discussing marriage in RSHE
- 9.3. we will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to students in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.
- 9.4. RSHE lessons will be taught in accordance with our Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy
- 9.5. we will ensure that there is a designated safe space within our school where students can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

## **10. Gender reassignment**

- 10.1. 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
- 10.2. we will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for treatment and support of trans\* students by external sources, e.g. charities such as Stonewall. Any such absences will be recorded accurately and sensitively by the school to ensure the privacy of the student
- 10.3. students have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code
- 10.4. we will ensure that there are suitable toilet and changing facilities for students to use, including private/single room changing facilities



- 10.5. the facilities will be made available to all students and they can use the facility they feel most comfortable in, e.g. a trans\* student using a private or single changing room
- 10.6. 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 .

## **11. Pregnancy and maternity** (as for section 5)

- 11.1. 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
- 11.2. we will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for the treatment and support of students who are pregnant or have just given birth
- 11.3. to ensure all school-age parents/carers and pregnant students are properly supported

## **12. Looked after Children (LAC)**

- 12.1. LAC and previously LAC (PLAC), will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our Admissions Policy
- 12.2. we will ensure that students are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after or have previously been looked after
- 12.3. a Personal Education Plan will be created, and implemented, for all LAC and PLAC, 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
- 12.4. we will ensure that any SEND that a LAC or PLAC has, are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without an EHC plan
- 12.5. the school adheres to our LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

## **13. The curriculum**

- 13.1. 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
- 13.2. 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
- 13.3. we will ensure equality, diversity and tolerance is taught and promoted throughout each subject area
- 13.4. the observation of inclusive teaching strategies is a key aspect of the SLT & ELT's programme of monitoring

13.5. we will respect the right of parents/carers to withdraw their child from RSHE.

## **14. Promoting inclusion**

14.1. 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 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 that expose students 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 the whole school team 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 Student Council
- promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.

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

15.1. we will ensure that any medical conditions related to a student with a protected characteristic is fully supported in line with our Health & Well-being Policy.

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

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

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

17.1. 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
- 17.2. 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.

## **18. Bullying and discrimination**

- 18.1. 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 & the Protection of Children Policy
- 18.2. it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services and/or the Police, of any incident
- 18.3. concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in our Complaints Procedures Policy.

## **19. Staff training**

- 19.1. new staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their Induction
- 19.2. whole-school staff training will be delivered via on-line courses
- 19.3. 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 students with protected characteristics
  - provide support for education staff 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/carers, 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.

## **20. Monitoring and review**

- 20.1. This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and Governing Body every two years and updated where appropriate – any amendments will be duly communicated to staff members.
- 20.2. This policy will next be reviewed in June 2022