



Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils

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Prepared by: KED, JOH

Next Review 12-26

Approved by: TZL

This Policy applies throughout the School from EYFS to Year 6.

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of The Cavendish School. The School acts on the guidance from The Equality Act, granting exemptions for single sex education. The School is a multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multi-cultural community of people, including pupils and staff. It is a school aim to celebrate each member of the community as an individual. Inclusion and equity are at the heart of the school's ethos and practice. The School is committed to its safeguarding responsibilities as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance. This policy also supports the School's duty to demonstrate due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, as good practice for independent schools. This policy underpins our duty to ensure that all pupils are safe, supported, and provided with equal opportunities to succeed. The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse School Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. The School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are equally valued.

The school opposes discrimination, both of work and action, against members of the community on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (pupils are protected from discrimination related to gender reassignment whether or not they have socially or medically transitioned)
- Marriage or civil partnership status
- Nationality or national or ethnic origins
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race or colour
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Some of these protected characteristics do not directly apply to pupils.

The School recognises that discrimination may arise indirectly, including through policies or practices that inadvertently disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics. The policy will remain responsive to evolving societal issues such as neurodiversity, intersectionality and mental health awareness and vulnerabilities linked to safeguarding concerns, ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The school also opposes and works to combat racism, sexism, misogyny, misandry and all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual:

- Has a special educational need or learning difficulty
- Is perceived to have a protected characteristic
- Associates with someone who has a protected characteristic

Aims

The aims of this Policy and of the School's ethos as a whole are to:

- Communicate the School's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for its pupils
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Promote equality of opportunity and equal treatment for all members of the School
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment that is free from discrimination
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010
- Remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist
- Enforce the message that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- Record, monitor and respond to prejudice-based incidents, including those relating to protected characteristics, in accordance with KCSIE

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.

All parents, guardians and carers (hereafter 'parents') are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Staff at the School, particularly those working at a management level, have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

Admissions

The School treats every application for admission in a fair, open-minded and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The School operates lawful single-sex admissions in accordance with Schedule 11 of the Equality Act 2010. The School accepts applications for girls who will be aged 3 to 11 during their time at the School and admits all such prospective pupils irrespective of their race or colour, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief), nationality or national or ethnic origins.

The School does not unlawfully discriminate in any way regarding entry. The School welcomes pupils with disabilities and/or special education needs, provided we can offer them any support that they require, cater for any additional needs and that our site can accommodate them. Parents must inform the School when submitting the registration form of any disabilities and/or special education needs or

special circumstances relating to their child that may affect their child's engagement in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children. The School will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School feels that they cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs that the prospective pupil is not going to be able to meaningfully access the education offered, or that their health and safety, or those of other pupils or staff, may be put at risk.

Bursaries

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the School's admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend the School due to financial hardship. The Cavendish School is committed to supporting pupils who, for financial reasons, may not consider or have access to independent preparatory school education. In line with our ethos, we offer a number of generous bursaries in order to enable as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found in the School's Bursary Policy, which is available on the School's website. The process for awarding bursaries is applied fairly and transparently, without discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.

Educational services

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The School will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all pupils and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language (who require additional support because of this) and pupils with a special education need, including those with an Education Health Care Plan, receive the necessary educational and welfare support to meet their needs
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Ensure that no pupil is subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the basis of any protected characteristic
- Encourage children to work and play freely and have respect for all other pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic
- Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion through the curriculum and by creating an environment and ethos that champions respect for all
- Ensure compliance with Part 2 of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2014, including the requirement to present political issues in a balanced manner and to ensure teaching does not discriminate against pupils

- Teaching and learning resources are monitored for possible bias and reinforcement of stereotypes and appropriate action will be taken whenever possible to ensure that they reflect concepts, themes and information which seek to eliminate prejudice and discrimination
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School
- Ensure compliance with the Prevent Duty by promoting resilience to extremist narratives, discriminatory extremism and intolerance
- Monitor online platforms for prejudice-based harm and teach online equalities in line with UKCIS Education for a Connected World framework
- The School also actively monitors the use of technology and digital platforms to ensure all pupils are safeguarded from online discrimination, harassment and cyberbullying. This includes regular updates to online safety policies, teacher training and pupil education on respectful digital communication
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of policies and practices which promote inclusiveness
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE to:
 - Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
 - Promote an understanding of neurodiversity, mental health awareness and inclusivity to ensure all pupils feel seen and valued
 - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues
 - Encourage children to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias
 - Categorise and action any incidents of child on child abuse/bullying on CPOMS (where appropriate and proportionate, incidents recorded on CPOMS may reference relevant protected characteristics in order to identify patterns of discrimination and ensure effective safeguarding responses)
 - Promote a diverse and inclusive curriculum

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms, including cyber-bullying, is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policies. These policies make clear the seriousness of bullying, victimisation and harassment and that appropriate sanctions will be applied to any pupil who displays inappropriate behaviour.

Religious belief

While we were founded as a Catholic school, we are not a faith school and we welcome children irrespective of religion (or none). Indeed, our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible, to enrich our community and prepare our pupils for today's world, subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community. Reasonable accommodations for religion or belief, such as dietary needs, religious holidays, or modesty requirements, will be considered in line with the Equality Act.

The Governors, through the Senior Leadership Team, subject co-ordinators and class teachers, actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures. We include contributions of different cultures to world history that promote positive images of those represented.

Requests for variation in the School uniform

All pupils are required to wear a uniform. The Head will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform provided they are consistent with the School's Health and Safety Policy and are reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn to School, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Head in advance.

Reasonable adjustments for pupils with disability

The School is committed to treating all pupils fairly and in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the School will seek to ensure that pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage, by comparison with pupils who are not disabled, including during the admissions process. As such, the School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability which includes:

- Making reasonable adjustments to our policies, criteria and practices (i.e. the way the School does things)
- Providing auxiliary aids and services (i.e. provision of additional support or assistance)

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents and where appropriate the pupil, the School's Learning Support Team and (with the parents' consent) any appropriate third party, which may include for example, a medical practitioner or educational psychologist. The School will discuss what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's Learning Difficulties & Disabilities/Special Educational Needs (SEND) Policy.

The School is not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils or prospective pupils. Similarly, the School is not required to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with its provision of education and services.

The School has an Accessibility Policy and Plan in place, a copy of which can be found on the School website. The Accessibility Plan is reviewed on a three-year cycle, with updates taking place at least annually, in line with statutory requirements. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to

which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Monitoring and review

The Head regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this Policy and reports annually to the Education Sub-committee of the Governors should any concerns arise.

Breach of the policy

If a pupil feels she has been discriminated against she should report the matter immediately to a member of staff. All pupils can expect to be listened to, supported by the school and have their complaints investigated.

Pupils who are in breach of this Policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

The school will discuss with parents any incidents of discriminatory behaviour in which their daughters have been involved.

If you believe that a child has received less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to a child's detriment, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's Complaints Procedure, a copy of which can be found on the School website. If concerns remain unresolved, parents may escalate the matter to the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). See the Complaints Procedure for more detailed information.

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's obligations under the:

Equality Act 2010

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf

Children and Families Act 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800615/Independent_School_Standards_-_Guidance_070519.pdf

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england>

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/contents>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2014, updated 2025)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/technical-guidance-schools-england>

Working Together with Safeguarding Children (December 2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65803fe31c0c2a000d18cf40/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

Linked policies

- Accessibility Policy and Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy for Pupils
- Behaviour Policy
- Bursary Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy for Employees and Other Adults
- EAL Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Learning Difficulties & Disabilities/Special Educational Needs (SEND) Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy