

Willingdon Community School

Equality Policy

June 2025



Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy is a single policy for all protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to developing cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The **characteristics** that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity and
- foster good relations between groups.

It explains how we will listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Date adopted by the Governing Body: 19th June 2025
To be reviewed: June 2026
Staff Responsible: SENCO/Equalities Lead
Link Governor: VLRG Chair

Our Vision Statement about Equality

At Willingdon Community School, central to our school's ethos are our personal excellence values: ambition, respect, courtesy, compassion and honesty. We are committed to celebrating diversity of our students, staff, visitors, parents and partner agencies. We seek to prevent discrimination and promote equality for all in a safe and welcoming environment.

Our goal is to educate young people to become global citizens. We believe education is central to both understanding society and developing a personal identity. Our learning environment is built on respect. We want our learners to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, based on an informed world view.

We are conscious that similarities and differences exist within our community and we are determined that these shall not be a barrier to any aspect of school life. We recognise that, in the spirit of equity, not all individuals can be treated the same to achieve universal equality.

We know that true equality and a community where tolerance is upheld comes from fostering good relations between all. This involves us using education to develop mutual understanding and create a purposeful and harmonious community where all of our learners succeed together.

We are Willingdon

We are a united, vibrant community which demonstrates personal excellence in all that we do. Learning at Willingdon transforms lives by igniting curiosity and expecting the very best from staff and students alike. We value opportunities, aiming for success today to prepare for challenges and opportunities tomorrow. We are respectful, honest and courteous to empower each other on our unique learning journeys. We look after ourselves and each other, and show empathy, respect and compassion to all people and our environment along the way. We encourage tolerance, resilience and reflection, which in turn allows everyone to make progress every lesson. We work together as a harmonious community to be the very best versions of ourselves.

This makes us Willingdon

Willingdon Community School Ethos:

At Willingdon Community School, we aim to develop Personal Excellence in all our students. Personal Excellence comprises five key values and behaviours:

Ambition

To strive to do your best on all occasions. Take on new challenges and challenge yourself to reach the highest possible standards and be personally successful.

Respect

To respect and value all members of our community, recognising and celebrating our differences. Respect ourselves, valuing what we can each bring to our community.

Compassion

Understand the needs of others and support those who sometimes need our help. Contribute to charitable work which supports those less well-off in the world.

Courtesy

Be well mannered in all situations, displaying the basic courtesies that we all value. Greet those you work with regularly; be particularly welcoming and polite to visitors and show appreciation for those who support and work closely with you.

Honesty

Always be honest, even when it may appear difficult. Be honest to yourself - know your strengths and your weaknesses.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, race and ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and social deprivation.

As a school, we are committed to knowing our diverse community and obtain evidence analysis of information, which provides evidence of the backgrounds of the members of our school community and the attainment and wellbeing of our students and groups of students.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins & sexual orientation.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes.

The themes are reflected in our *Accessibility & Equality Objectives*.

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life as identified in our equality objectives.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process of developing this policy in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately, negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster

good relations between and within different groups of pupils/students and the wider school community.

We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as recognising and accepting our duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (The Prevent Duty 2023) and 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 will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities:

- preparation for entry to the school through our transition process
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam access arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils and transition for post-16 study
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation e.g. preferential seating
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare
- the involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- school policies
- CEIAG.

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors are informed about the Equality Policy and give consideration to feedback received
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure all staff have ongoing professional development on equality, diversity and inclusion which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available

- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that the senior leadership team (SLT) is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it.

Our governing body will:

- support the Headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every four years.

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy.

Our school staff will:

- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements.

Our pupils/students will:

- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- have access to the policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the policy
- be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child.

How we developed our Policy - Using information

We know our school well because we regularly collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways and other people help us to do this. These include collecting information from students, staff, governors, parents/carers and other groups. All these groups contribute to us developing equality and diversity in the school.

Ofsted inspectors visit us regularly and report on how we are actively promoting equality and diversity, tackling bullying and discrimination and narrowing any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners, as well as how we are promoting British Values and preventing radicalisation and extremism, preparing students to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.

We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through student voice mechanisms, less formally or even anonymously.

We make use of:

- Parental Surveys carried out and responded to at all parents' evenings
- Parent Forums on a variety of topics
- In-house student voice activities such as the transition questionnaire, student council discussions and focused student voice activities undertaken as part of our ongoing quality assurance model

- Professional advice and support e.g. Sensory Needs Service and occupational therapy
- Governor Scrutiny

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Within the school there is a facility for students with profound sensory needs. The Deaf Support Facility is funded by the local authority's Service for Children with Sensory Needs (SCSN). All students accessing the support of the facility have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan). These students are integrated into mainstream classes, with varying levels of support and use their preferred mode of communication, be it a Total Communication (TC) approach (through signing and lip reading, British Sign Language or lip reading and braille). Students with sensory needs enjoy an inclusive education and those with additional learning or communication difficulties benefit from support from the Deaf Support Facility to differentiate work as required.

Commissioned services

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services. We work closely with the local authority on procurement – buying in services - to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When buying goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Further information about procurement can be found on the ESCC website (CZONE)

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, Learning Support Professionals, supervisors and Initial Teacher Training) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made¹ or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively and take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment. An example of this would be that we have modified aspects of the school building in order to provide for profoundly visually and hearing impaired students.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, negative views of disabled people or people who practise a religion or follow a faith. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities. The equality leads will then identify and deliver interventions, training and mentoring opportunities to reduce the risk of further incidents of hate.

We expect students and staff alike to take an active stand against all forms of discrimination and always to report it:

- To any teacher

¹ Unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties.

- To the form tutor
- To a member of the senior leadership team
- To a line manager
- To a school prefect.

Furthermore, staff are required to have due regard for the implications for people with protected characteristics when making decisions and shaping policy in order to advance equality of opportunity.

All incidents of a racial nature are logged and dealt with as they occur and reported to ESCC termly. Regular monitoring of bullying takes place through our governing body. Please refer to our Anti-Bullying policy.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy will be actively promoted and disseminated through our website, parent forums and the school council.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

Equality Objectives

Using the views of a variety of stakeholders we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. Reviewed every 4 years, the *Accessibility & Equality Objectives 2024-28* are available in a separate document.

The next review of this will be in September 2025.