



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

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Introduction

“Diversity is a Fact, Equality is a Choice, Inclusion is an Action, Belonging is an Outcome”

Sevenoaks Preparatory School is an independent mainstream day school for boys and girls aged from 2 to 13 years. The school is open to children of all faiths and committed to providing a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum for all. The School is committed to taking positive and proactive steps to ensure that we provide a safe and caring environment free from discrimination for everyone in our community. This policy outlines our commitment to creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere where every individual is valued and respected, and where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are celebrated and included throughout the school and curriculum.

We recognise that the needs of individuals and groups of pupils are many and varied, and that when addressing educational inclusion it is crucial to incorporate equal opportunities for all, whatever their race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, religion, colour, ethnic origin or nationality, as well as those with special educational needs or those who may need support to learn English as an additional language. Equality underpins the value system and school's way of life at The Prep.

The ethos of the schools is one of tolerance, respect, understanding and striving for excellence in all. All members of the Prep's community are encouraged to understand, appreciate and value the differences between us and to embrace the outcome.

As a school we are aware that discrimination can be direct or indirect and includes victimisation and harassment. Promotion of equality, celebration of diversity and therefore inclusion must exist in our employment procedures and in our dealings with pupils, parents. Whilst the ethnic backgrounds of our pupils and teaching staff are predominantly white; we recognise a particular responsibility to promote an understanding of and respect for the diverse and multi-ethnic wider society of Kent and the country as a whole and to increase admissions from under-represented minority groups.

Linked Policies

Admissions policy

Behavioural policy

PSHEE policy and Curriculum

RSE Year 7 and 8 policy

Academic and curriculum policies

SEND Policy

Employment policy

Aims

Our School actively promotes equality of opportunity, tolerance, fairness and anti-discriminatory practice towards all children, families, members of staff, students or volunteers. We believe that every child, regardless of their background, has the right to access high-quality education and to be treated with dignity and respect. Our commitment is to ensure that:

- **Equality:** All individuals have equal access to educational opportunities and resources, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or socio-economic status.
- **Diversity:** We celebrate and embrace the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of our students, families, and staff. We recognise the importance of reflecting this diversity in our curriculum, resources, and activities.
- **Inclusion:** We are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and able to participate fully in school life.

The Governors and the Head ensure that we do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs nor do we discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics.

In the provision of equal opportunities, the School fully and wholeheartedly adheres to both the spirit and detail of the Equality Act 2010, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and opposes discrimination on the basis of:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief (including lack of religion and belief)

- gender
- sexual orientation and (in the case of adult members of the school community) marital or civil
- partnership and age
- neurodiversity

These can be called the **Protected Characteristics**.

The PSED places a general duty on schools and colleges to have, in the exercise of their functions, due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. The duty applies to all protected characteristics (see paragraph 85) and means that whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed, specific consideration must be given to the equality implications of these such as, for example, the need to eliminate unlawful behaviours that relate to them, such as sexual violence and sexual harassment, misogyny/misandry and racism. This is one reason why good record-keeping and monitoring of all forms of abuse and harassment is essential

Objectives

- **To Promote Fairness:** We will ensure that our policies and practices are fair and equitable, and that no individual is discriminated against or excluded based on personal characteristics.
- **To Enhance Understanding:** We will provide training and resources to staff, students, and families to increase understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. We have provisions and resources such as 'Tooled Up' and a robust and comprehensive PSHE/RSE curriculum. Across all subjects EDI is a focus in our Schemes of work, we ensure we look at inspiration and source material from multiple sources and backgrounds in line with the curriculum.
- **To Support Needs:** We will provide appropriate support and accommodations to meet the diverse needs of our students and staff, including those with disabilities or additional learning needs. We have dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing, Pastoral and Safeguarding Teams who are trained to identify, and support these needs.
- **To Engage Community:** We will work actively to involve families and the wider community in promoting and celebrating diversity and inclusion. We will do this by running community events, awareness days, educational assemblies.

Forms of Discrimination

- **Types:** Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as stated in our aims above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.
- **Indirect discrimination:** Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Admissions

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The school accepts applications from, and admits, prospective pupils irrespective of their disability, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs. We will ensure that our admissions process is transparent and non-discriminatory.

Our school accepts its duty to try to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. All staff and children at the school are entitled to an environment free from harassment and discrimination, as outlined in the Equality and Diversity policy. We will recruit staff based on merit and suitability for the role, without discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics.

The school is open to children of all cultures, religions, linguistic backgrounds and abilities. All children are treated as individuals with equal concern, in order that they should feel

equally valued regardless of their sex, disability, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. Any publicity will state our commitment to Equal Opportunities and promote positive images of those groups in the community who suffer discrimination. All staff work to encourage each child's self-esteem and respect for others by promoting the positive values of diverse cultural identities through activities and resources.

Religious Belief

Sevenoaks Preparatory School follows a broadly Christian ethos but is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith). This is subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the School Community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare. We seek to celebrate and recognise the diverse cultural identities of our school community and to celebrate and acknowledge festivals from a range of faiths.

The Governors, through the Head ensure that we do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs nor do we discriminate against pupils with protected characteristics.

School Uniform

Sevenoaks Prep School's uniform policy, which was introduced in 2018 reflects our belief of equality for all, allowing each child to select either a skirt or trouser uniform regardless of gender. It is consistent with this policy allowing equality for all pupils irrespective of their gender, gender assignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

Disability and special educational needs

Definitions: Children have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A disability is a physical or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'(Equality Act 2010).This also includes pupils with significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age, or a disability which means that a pupil cannot make full use of the general educational facilities as stated in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Our school is aware that some children have disabilities/additional needs and is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. We are committed to taking appropriate action to make sure that all children are able to access our services, made to feel welcome, and that our activities promote their welfare and development in partnership with parents/carers and other relevant parties.

The school is committed to the integration of all children with disabilities/additional needs and comply with the current special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, and the Disability Discrimination Act.

The school also believes that children with disabilities/additional needs have a right to play, learn and be able to develop to their full potential alongside other children.

Our school will do all it can to ensure children with disabilities/additional needs have access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities as their peers. Everybody stands to gain if all children are allowed to share the same opportunities and are helped to overcome any disadvantages that they may face.

Identification of Children with Disabilities/Additional Needs and Support

The School has an on-going duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' and the Head of Learning Support will manage provision for children with disabilities/additional needs. This individual will be fully trained and experienced in the care and assessment of such children.

All staff are responsible for identifying children's needs and supporting their learning. Any concerns will be discussed with the Head of Learning Support in consultation with the parent/carers.

All members of staff will also be expected to assist the Head of Learning Support in caring for children with disabilities/additional needs.

In EYFS, the child's Key Person is responsible for maintaining observations, record keeping and assessments of a child's progress in all areas of learning and development. It is also their responsibility to identify any areas of additional needs and inform the Head of Learning Support through the procedures in the SEND policy.

Detailed records of progress are maintained by the Key Person working closely with the Pre-Prep Support Co-ordinator. Regular progress reviews will be made.

Detailed and accurate observations and assessments of children's progress are regularly made and properly recorded.

Staff will work together with parents/carers as partners to give day to day care for the child. Parents/carers will be given support by the staff team. Parents/carers are consulted on a continuous basis and information exchanged regarding their child's progress.

All children will be treated as equals and are encouraged to participate in every aspect of the school.

All children will be involved in the daily activities e.g.: outdoor play.

When outings are being planned, children with disabilities/additional needs will always be accommodated and included following a risk assessment if or when necessary.

Wherever possible we will promote positive images of those with disabilities/additional needs.

The school will ensure that all staff are aware of all legislation, regulations and other guidance on working with children with disabilities/additional needs.

Children with disabilities/additional needs are fully considered when activities are being planned and prepared.

The school will liaise with other agencies and seek advice, support and training for themselves and other staff as is necessary.

The school will support other members of staff to become more skilled and experienced in the care of children with disabilities/additional needs.

The school's equal opportunities procedures aim to help everyone involved to counteract and eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination in decision making, employment practices and service provision and to ensure that our services strive to achieve equality of opportunity for all.

The school will endeavour to challenge any offensive behaviour, language or attitudes with regards to race, ethnicity, nationality, class, religion, culture, gender, language, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and disability towards staff, parents/carers, children and visitors.

Our response to any complaint or challenge will be handled in such a way as to demonstrate the school's development to being an equal opportunities school.

We recognise that the active involvement of parents/carers in the development and monitoring of our Equality & Diversity policy is vital to its success. As such, the school will both welcome and encourage parents and carers to get involved in the running and management of the school, and to comment on the effectiveness of its policies and procedures.

The school will facilitate regular opportunities for consultation with parents/carers about the service that the school provides, as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity policy.

Curriculum and Resources

- Our curriculum will reflect a wide range of cultures, perspectives, and experiences to promote understanding and respect for diversity.
- We will select teaching resources that are inclusive and free from bias.
- Audio-visual and display resources will be selected to ensure that positive images of all protected characteristics are promoted.

POLICY OBJECTIVES:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that: The legal duties placed on schools and colleges, in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, governing bodies and proprietors should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils and students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

Provisions within the Equality Act allow schools and colleges to take positive action, where it can be shown that it is proportionate, to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils or students with certain protected characteristics in order to meet their specific need. A school or college, could, for example, consider taking positive action to support girls if there was evidence that they were being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or sexual harassment. There is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people.

In light of this our objectives are:

- To ensure that all children attending the school have equal access to activities that will support and extend their knowledge and experiences in all areas of learning and development
- To identify children with disabilities/additional needs as early as possible through continuous observation and assessment.
- To ensure that any child with a disability/additional need has access to all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- To keep parents/carers informed and encourage them to work in partnership with the school.
 - We will make reasonable adjustments to support students with disabilities or additional needs, ensuring their full participation in school life.
 - We will provide a clear and accessible process for students and families to raise concerns related to equality and inclusion

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROCEDURES

To realise the school's objective of creating an environment free from discrimination and welcoming to all, the school will:

- Ensure that all children, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, will be included and supported – with reasonable adjustments made for them.
- The SEND policy includes details about the welfare and educational provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs/EHCP.
- Ensure each child, parent and staff member knows that they are valued, and that their background (culture and religion) is understood, respected and reflected.
- Ensure that its services are open and available to all parents/carers and children in the local community.
- Ensure that issues of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, religion, culture, gender, language, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and disability do not inhibit a child from accessing the school's services.
- Treat all children and their parents/carers with equal concern and value.
- Have regard for promoting understanding, respect and awareness of diversity and equal opportunities issues in planning and implementing the school's programme of activities.
- Promote the positive values of diverse cultural identities through anti-racist activities and resources.
- Help all children to celebrate and express their cultural and religious identity by providing a wide range of appropriate resources and activities.
- Encourage positive role models displayed through toys, imaginative play, resources and materials that promote nonstereotyped images. Books will also be selected that promote and encourage such images.
- Encourage all children to access all areas of learning and participate in all activities; activities are planned to reflect the interests of the range of children.
- Ensure that the school's recruitment policies and procedures are open, fair and non-discriminatory.
- Endeavour to recruit a staff team that reflects the make-up of the school's local community.
- Ensure that all members of staff, children and their parents/carers are aware of, and understand the ethos of the Equality and Diversity policy, as it relates to all aspects of its work.
- Encourage and support staff to act as positive role models to children by displaying and promoting tolerant and respectful behaviour, language and attitudes and challenging any discriminatory incident, according to the provisions set out in the Staff Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures and the Behaviour policy.

- Treat seriously any member of staff found to be acting, or have been acting, in a discriminatory way, according to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures policy
- Work to fulfil all the legal requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- We will ensure that our childcare practice is regularly reviewed in order to remove those practices which discriminate unfairly on the grounds of gender, culture, religion or sexuality.
- Ensure that policies and procedures for consultation and participation are in place and understood.
- Ensure the services offered will support opportunities for staff to recognise discrimination, seek to address areas of inequality, promote understanding and awareness

The Head and Head of Pre-Prep will also be responsible for ensuring that the Equality policy is implemented and that its effectiveness is regularly monitored. They will be responsible for ensuring that:

Staff receive appropriate training. All staff will receive regular training on equality, diversity, and inclusion to ensure they are equipped to support and promote these values.

We will provide ongoing professional development to help staff address and challenge any form of discrimination or bias.

- The Equality and Diversity policy is consistent with current legislation and guidance.

All the school's policies and procedures will be kept under review to ensure they do not operate in a discriminatory manner or in any way against its commitment to equal opportunities.

Preventing Racial Harassment and Discrimination

Proactive steps can be taken to prevent racial harassment and discrimination, and the school believes that this is more effective than tackling a situation once it has already occurred. Therefore, alongside the procedures outlined later in this policy to deal with incidents of racial harassment and discrimination, the school will:

- Ensure that all children are valued, irrespective of their race, colour, nationality or ethnicity.
- Encourage individuals to treat each other with respect, regardless of their race, colour, nationality or ethnicity.

- Acknowledge the existence of racism in society and take steps to promote harmonious race relations in our community.
- Promote good relations between different ethnic groups and cultures within the school and in the wider community.
- Ensure that different cultural and religious needs are met, understood and communicated to all individuals involved in the school.
- Actively look at promoting inclusive education throughout the curriculum.

Examples of Racial Harassment and Discrimination

Racial harassment and discrimination can manifest itself in a variety of ways, some overt and others much less so. Some examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- The use of patronising words or actions towards an individual for racial reasons, including name calling, insults and racial jokes.
- Threats made against a person or group of people because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnicity.
- Racist graffiti or any other written insults or the distribution of racist literature.
- Physical assault or abuse against a person or group of people because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnicity.

All staff and children will be encouraged to actively take responsibility for promoting racial tolerance and for protecting each other from racial harassment and discrimination by reporting any suspected incident to the Head or a member of SMT.

THE SCHOOL AS AN EMPLOYER

As an employer, the school is committed to ensuring that the workforce reflects the multicultural community that it serves. To this end, the school will:

- Advertise job vacancies in a variety of media sources and outlets and in a variety of places.
- Ensure that the school's human resource procedures prohibit racial discrimination and harassment, and investigate any concerns when this is suspected of failing.
- Investigate any allegation of racial discrimination or harassment according to the provisions of the Staff Disciplinary Procedures, Equality and Behaviour Management policies.
- Collect and monitor information about the ethnic background of the staff team and children.

Addressing Racial Harassment and Discrimination

If a member of staff or a child becomes aware of an incident of racial harassment or discrimination occurring at the school, they will be encouraged to report the incident to the Deputy Head.

Any allegation made against a member of staff or a child will be investigated thoroughly. The individual concerned will be told that such behaviour will not be tolerated, and steps will be taken to ensure that it does not happen again.

Each incident will be fully investigated and details will be recorded in racism log held in the safeguarding online folder.

In the case of **children**, incidents will be reported to their parent/carer and a course of action agreed upon to resolve the situation, in accordance with the provisions of the Behaviour policy.

In the case of **staff**, provisions within the Staff Disciplinary Procedures policy will be activated and a record of the incident will be kept and made available to statutory authorities if appropriate.

The Head is responsible for ensuring that all incidents are handled both professionally and sensitively. All incidents will be kept confidential, with initials being used in the place of names in the Incident Record book. In cases where the Head is involved in an allegation, the Chair of governors will handle the incident, or nominate a senior member of staff in their place. Governing bodies and proprietors should be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998²³, the Equality Act 2010²⁴, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty²⁵), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In all cases, continued racial harassment or discrimination from any individual will result in exclusion from the school, where all other efforts have failed to provide a satisfactory resolution.

Further advice:

Guidance to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act can be found at [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools.GOV.UK](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools) it may also be useful for colleges. For further information see [Guidance | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy pays due regard to the following statutory guidance and other government advice.

GIDS 'Supporting gender non-conforming and trans-identified students in schools' (2018)

DfE 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years' (2017)

DfE Statutory guidance 'SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years' (January 2015) The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations (2014)

Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance 'What equality law means for you as an education provider: schools' (2014)

DfE Departmental advice 'The Equality Act (April 2010) and Schools' (May 2014)

DfE 'Improving the spiritual moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils (November 2013 and 2014)

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

Safeguarding Policy	Anti-Bullying Policy Recruitment policy
Online safety Policy	Health & Safety Policy Mental Health & Wellbeing policy
Curriculum Policy	Behaviour Policy
Employee Manual	PSHE & RSE Policy
SMSC Policy	SEND/HLP/EAL Policies
Admissions Policy	
Accessibility Plan	