



# SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

Date reviewed:	January 2024
Date approved by Governors:	January 2024
Date for review:	January 2025

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out in detail how Southall School complies with the Equality Act 2010 along with outlining the Southall School's approach to inclusion.

### **1. Mission Statement**

At Southall School staff are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of **race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and age**. We adhere to the legal definitions of these protected characteristics as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) code of practice which can be found in annex A.

We develop a culture of inclusion and diversity, in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils is monitored by race, sex, age and disability and we use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit Southall School.

### **School Context**

Southall School is a secondary special school catering for 160 children aged between 11 and 16, all of whom are identified as having complex needs. The school is on a single floor with a variety of indoor and outdoor learning and recreation areas. The site and building are compact with a simple floor plan which is neither confusing nor intimidating to pupils. Subject rooms are grouped together with resource space, specialist equipment and ICT facilities.

### **2. Mainstreaming equality into policy and practice**

Whilst the Southall School operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice, which is highlighted throughout this policy, specific actions are set out in the School Improvement Plan and the Accessibility Plan.

### **Teaching and learning**

We provide all of our pupils with the opportunity to succeed and to reach the highest level of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;
- monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps, including providing targeted support where appropriate;
- take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- ensure equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- use materials that reflect the diversity of the school population and local community without stereotyping and expose pupils to a range of thoughts and ideas;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;

- provide opportunities for all pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;
- seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their child's education;
- encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;
- include teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils;
- seek to involve the community around the school in the celebration and raising awareness of cultural issues.

### **Admissions, fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions**

Our admission arrangements are operated by the Local Authority, are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on the protected characteristics or socio-economic factors.

Fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions are always based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We closely monitor fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions to avoid any potential adverse impact and ensure any disproportionality is identified and dealt with.

### **3. Equal opportunities for staff**

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment.

All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability and in compliance with the law. However, we are eager to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

#### **Employer duties**

As an employer we ensure that we eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment in our employment practice and advance equality across all groups within our workforce.

Decisions when considering appointing staff and when making amendments to contracts e.g. when allocating Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLRs) or re-evaluating staff structures, are free of discrimination with all equality strands (age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy, maternity and religion and belief).

Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- monitoring recruitment and retention including bullying and harassment of staff;
- continued professional development opportunities for all staff, which are monitored as part of the performance management process;
- the Senior Leadership Team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

#### **4. Equality and the law**

Southall School will ensure it does not unlawfully discriminate against its pupils, prospective pupils, staff, job applicants or parents/carers in the performance of its duties, policies and practices.

Discrimination means treating someone less (or more) favourably than a “comparator”. Harassment (which is one form of discrimination) means violating someone’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Victimisation means discrimination because of a previous complaint. We recognise that discrimination can occur in the following ways and actively work to it:

- Direct discrimination;
- Indirect discrimination;
- Discrimination arising from disability including failure to make reasonable adjustments and provide auxiliary aids and services;
- Harassment;
- Victimisation.

#### **Accessibility**

Southall School complies with the Building Regulations and the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 and is physically accessible for disabled pupils. We will:

- increase the extent to which disabled pupils can access the school curriculum;
- improve the physical environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can access education and associated services;
- improve access to written information which is provided to disabled pupils. This is done within a reasonable period of time and in formats which take account of the views expressed by the pupils and parents/carers about their preferred means of communication.

We review our accessibility targets at least every three years. The targets can be found in the School Improvement Plan and Accessibility Plan.

We work actively to anticipate the needs of disabled staff and pupils and ensure inclusion of disabled people by making reasonable adjustments. We consider the following in deciding when a reasonable adjustment request can be met:

- How effective the change will be in assisting the disabled person;
- Its practicality;
- The cost;
- The resources and size of the proposed adjustment;
- The availability of financial support;
- Any safety issues.

#### **5. The general equality duty and public sector equality duty**

In April 2011, the Equality Act 2010 introduced a single equality duty on all public bodies, including schools, which extended to all protected strands – age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief. This combined equality duty, which replaced the three previous public sector equality duties, has three main elements. In the discharge of our functions, we have due regard for the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Southall School will tackle discrimination by:

- recording and reporting all racist and homophobic/transphobic incidents and prejudice driven bullying incidents;
- the development and monitoring of this policy;
- dealing properly with complaints and grievances.

Southall School is committed to advancing equality of opportunity by:

- removing or minimising disadvantages;
- taking steps to meet the needs of pupils, parents/carers and staff;
- encouraging participation in any activity in which participation of protected groups is disproportionately low.

Southall School fosters good relations by:

- tackling prejudice and harassment including bullying;
- promoting understanding between different backgrounds.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Southall School) will:

### **5.1 Collect and publish school equality information annually (by 31<sup>st</sup> December)**

As Southall School is a local authority maintained school, Telford & Wrekin Council undertake routine equality monitoring of our staff and pupils by race, gender, age and disability. We will encourage parents/carers and pupils to disclose whether they have a disability by undertaking the following activity:

- Asking applicants as part of enrolment
- Publicising the provision that is made for disabled people, or providing opportunities for pupils to tell tutors or other staff in confidence
- Asking pupils once they are on the course whether they need any specific arrangements
- Explaining to pupils the benefit of disclosure
- Creating a safe culture for disclosure

We will also publish our equality objectives.

We will publish school equality information annually as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.

### **5.2 Undertake engagement activity with protected groups annually**

Southall School undertakes engagement activity annually with protected groups. We engage with the School Parliament, parent/carers and local community. Engagement activity includes:

- Surveys;
- Focus groups;

- Parents/carers evenings.

### **5.3 Identify and publish school equality and accessibility objectives**

Southall School develops specific and measurable equality and accessibility objectives based on the information and evidence gathered. Objectives will meet all three aims of the general duty.

The equality and accessibility objectives can be found in the School Improvement Plan.

### **5.4 Undertake equality analysis on the effects of school practices and policies**

Southall School undertakes equality analysis on all relevant school policies and decisions, as part of the school policy review process.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The role of governors**

The Governing Board has set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and prospective pupils, and responsive to their needs.

The Governing Board seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of the protected characteristics and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities and strives to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.

The Governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a pupil's socio-economic background, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, or pregnancy.

The Governing Board ensures that no pupil is discriminated against whilst at Southall School on account of any of the protected characteristics and ensures that all reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils.

It is also liable for the actions of its employees and agents of the school, unless it can show that it took all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment or victimisation taking place.

### **The role of the Headteacher**

It is the Headteacher's role to implement Southall School's Equality Policy and be supported by the Governing Board in doing so.

It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Policy and that they apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regards to this Policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.

The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and other opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.

The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

**The role of all staff:**

All staff ensure that all pupils and members of staff are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.

All staff strive to provide material that gives positive images and challenges stereotypical images.

All staff challenge any incidents of bullying, prejudice, racism or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the Headteacher.

Teachers encourage support staff to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents.

Staff are personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment, whether or not the employer is liable. However, an employee is not liable in relation to disability discrimination in schools.

We ensure that all staff fully understand our commitments to equality and inclusion and receive the necessary training and development to uphold their responsibilities.

**7. Review of progress and impact**

This policy has been agreed by the Policy Committee. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact. In line with legislative requirements, we will review progress against our Equality Policy annually and monitor our equality and accessibility objectives annually as part of school improvement planning.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track pupil progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making the best possible progress, and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

**8. Complaints and concerns**

All school users have the right to treat and be treated with respect, regardless of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, or age. Those who witness or experience discrimination or bullying should feel safe to raise and report their concerns. Complaints and concerns should, initially, be discussed with the Headteacher or a member of the School Senior Leadership Team. If a school user, for whatever reason, feels this is not possible then contact should be made with the Chair of Governors, details available from <http://southallschool.com/governors/>.

School users should also note that concerns can be raised via the Local Authority's 'Speak Up' Reporting Hotline. A copy of the policy is available in the school's 'Policies' folder and in the staff room.

## Annex A: Protected Characteristics

The protected characteristics for the school's provisions are:

- Age;
- Being married or in a civil partnership;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

### Disability

A person is a disabled person (someone who has the protected characteristic of disability) if they have a physical and/or mental impairment which has what the law calls 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. There is no need for a person to have a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment; what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause. In relation to physical impairment:

- Conditions that affect the body such as arthritis, hearing or sight impairment (unless this is correctable by glasses or contact lenses), diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, conditions such as HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis, as well as loss of limbs or the use of limbs are covered;
- HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis are covered from the point of diagnosis;
- Severe disfigurement (such as scarring) is covered even if it has no physical impact on the person with the disfigurement, provided the long-term requirement is met (see below);
- People who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or who are certified as being blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist, are automatically treated as disabled under the Act.

Mental impairment includes conditions such as dyslexia and autism as well as learning disabilities such as Down's Syndrome and mental health conditions such as depression and schizophrenia. The other tests to apply to decide if someone has the protected characteristic of disability are:

- The length the effect of the condition has lasted or will continue. It must be long term. 'Long term' means that an impairment is likely to last for the rest of the person's life or has lasted at least 12 months or where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months. If the person no longer has the condition but it is likely to recur or if the person no longer has the condition, they will be considered to be a disabled person;
- Whether the effect of the impairment is to make it more difficult and/or time-consuming for a person to carry out an activity compared to someone who does not have the impairment, and this causes more than minor or trivial inconvenience;
- If the activities that are made more difficult are 'normal day-to-day activities' at work or at home;
- Whether the condition has this impact without taking into account the effect of any medication the person is taking or any aids or assistance or adaptations they have, such as a wheelchair, walking stick, assistance dog or special software on their computer. The exception to this is the wearing of glasses or contact lenses where it is the effect while the person is wearing the glass or contact lenses, which is taken into account.



For example:

Someone who has ADHD might be considered to have a disability even if their medication controls their condition so well that they rarely experience any symptoms, if without the medication the ADHD would have long-term adverse effects.

Progress conditions and those with fluctuating or recurring effects are included, such as depression, provided they meet the test of having a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### **Gender reassignment**

Gender reassignment is a personal process (rather than a medical process) which involves a person expressing their gender in a way that differs from or is inconsistent with the physical sex they were born with.

This personal process may include undergoing medical procedures or, as is more likely for school pupils, it may simply include choosing to dress in a different way as part of the personal process of change.

A person will be protected because of gender reassignment where they:

- make their intention known to someone – it does not matter who this is, whether it is someone at school or at home or someone such as a doctor;
  - once they have proposed to undergo gender reassignment they are protected, even if they take no further steps or they decide to stop;
  - they do not have to have reached an irrevocable decision that they will undergo gender reassignment, but as soon as there is a manifestation of this intention they are protected.
- start or continue to dress, behave or live (full-time or part-time) according to the gender they identify with as a person;
- undergo treatment related to gender reassignment, such as surgery or hormone therapy;
- have received gender recognition under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

Any of the above will deem a person to be protected under the characteristic of gender reassignment.

This guidance uses the term 'transsexual person' to refer to someone who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

The Act lists pregnancy and maternity as a protected characteristic. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is covered in Section 2.

### **Age**

Age means a person belonging to a particular age (for example, 32 years old) or range of ages (for example, 18 to 30 years old).

### **Marriage or Civil Partnership**

Marriage is a union between a man and woman or between a same sex-couple

Same sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as civil partnerships. Civil partners must be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

## **Race**

Race means a person's:

- colour, and/or
- nationality (including citizenship), and/or
- ethnic or national origin.

A racial group is composed of people who have or share a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

A person has the protected characteristics of race if they belong to a particular racial group, such as 'British people'.

Racial groups can comprise two or more racial groups such as 'British Asians'.

## **Religion or belief**

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief.

A religion need not be mainstream or well known to gain protection as a religion. It must, though, be identifiable and have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within religions may be considered a religion. Cults and new religious movements may also be considered religions or beliefs.

Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.

'Religious belief' goes beyond beliefs and adherence to a religion or its central articles of faith and may vary from person to person within the same religion.

A belief which is not a religious belief may be a philosophical belief, such as humanism or atheism.

A belief need not include faith or worship of a God or Gods, but must affect how a person lives their life or perceives the world.

For a belief to be protected by the Equality Act it must:

- be genuinely held;
- be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on information available at the present time;
- be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour;
- attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance;
- be worthy of respect in a democratic society;
- be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

## **Sex**

A person's sex refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to either boys or girls.

## **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation means the attraction a person feels towards one sex or another (or both), which determines who they form intimate relationships with or are attracted to.

- Some people are only attracted to those of the same sex (lesbian women and gay men);
- Some people are attracted to people of both sexes (bisexual people);
- Some people are only attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual people).

Everyone is protected from being treated worse because of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation discrimination also covers discrimination connected with manifestations of that sexual orientation.