

Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Wycombe Abbey. The School believes that the educational experience can only be enriched if pupils are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing. The School's commitment to equal opportunities enriches the community and is vital in preparing pupils for today's world. The School concentrates on educating the individual and on providing a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each pupil feels valued and can flourish. Pupils are taught to value and respect others. The School is committed to equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, learning difficulty, body image or social background.
- 1.2 This policy has regard to the Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2023) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (December 2023)), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014).
- 1.3 All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy and all parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and ethos of trust, encouragement and mutual respect.
- 1.4 In the context of safeguarding, the School will consider how to support pupils with regard to their protected characteristics in order to meet their specific needs and make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

2. Admissions

- 2.1 The School is an academically selective, single sex school. The admissions process is based upon the selection procedure as set out in the Admissions Policy and each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with the published admissions criteria. Every application for a place at the School is treated in a fair, open-minded and equal way.
- 2.2 Applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible and from pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are welcomed. Parents are asked to refer to the policies covering Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Admissions, noting the need to inform the School of any special circumstances relating to their child which may either affect the child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School, so that reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage. All policies are available on the School website.
- 2.3 Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend the School due to financial circumstances. Bursaries are therefore offered in order to make it possible for as many pupils as possible who meet the admissions criteria to attend the School. Details of the provision for bursaries can be found on the School website or

obtained from the Admissions office.

- 2.4. Education for girls between the ages of 11 and 19 is offered and all reasonable measures to support a current pupil through the process of gender transition during their time at Wycombe Abbey will be provided.

3. Code of Conduct

- 3.1 All pupils are afforded access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (subject to reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School does not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation in any form, whether or not it was intentional. Discrimination, harassment and victimisation in all their forms are unlawful and unacceptable. The School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and Anti-Bullying Strategy Policy contain clear procedures for dealing with any misconduct or bullying type (including cyber, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) behaviour amongst pupils, which is related, for example, to a pupil's race, ethnicity or SEND. Both policies are published on the website. Staff who act in breach of this policy will be managed in accordance with the Schools Disciplinary procedures.
- 3.2 The Headmistress, the Executive Leadership Team, Housemistresses, the Chaplain, and the Health Centre staff play an active role in monitoring the implementation of the School's policy on equal opportunities. In assemblies, tutor periods, chapel services and enrichment events, as well as academic lessons (e.g. Wellbeing, Religious Studies, Drama, English) and co-curricular activities, the aim is to:
- promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the School's community, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
 - promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues;
 - foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures;
 - help pupils to understand why and how the School will deal with offensive language and behaviour;
 - help pupils to understand how the School will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner;
 - encourage pupils to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias.
- 3.3 All pupils, but specifically Boarders, are not discriminated against because of their cultural background, linguistic background, academic or sporting ability and an inclusive environment is promoted and care is sensitive to different needs. LGBTQ+ inclusion is part of the Relationship and Sex Education curriculum. For those pupils that feel vulnerable a trusted adult is available for pupils to open up to and a safe space is made available for pupils to speak out or share concerns.

4. Uniform

- 4.1 Parents should be aware that all pupils are required to wear a uniform until the end of LVI (Year 12). The Headmistress will consider requests from parents and pupils regarding variations to the uniform where necessary (such as on religious grounds) and will act reasonably through consultation and in dialogue with parties concerned.
- 4.2 Variations to the uniform will have to be consistent with the School's ethos and policy on health and safety and be reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations

under the Equality Act 2010. The Headmistress may take expert advice, and will normally arrange to meet the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

5. Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with a Disability

- 5.1 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. As such, the School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage, including during the admissions process and for external examinations. Where required to consider reasonable adjustments the School will consult with parents as appropriate about what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other pupils. Careful consideration will be given of any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policies are available via the School's website.
- 5.2 The School has an Accessibility Plan in place, available on request from the Bursar. The plan sets out to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum, to improve the physical environment for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided, and improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

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.

6. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

- 6.1 In order to manage the high academic and social demands of Wycombe Abbey, pupils must be fluent English speakers. Tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL) can be arranged at the parent's expense. Further information can be found in the EAL Policy, available on the website.

7. Special Dietary Requirements

- 7.1 All pupils are expected to eat School meals, but individual requirements based upon attested medical grounds will be catered for. The School is also alive to those with dietary requirements based on religion and will meet these where possible. Further detail is available in the Catering and Food Hygiene Policy.

8. Christian Ethos

- 8.1 Although the School has a Christian foundation and values, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths and none. The opportunity for each pupil to practise their own faith so far as is possible within the constraints of the School day are offered. Fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs are actively promoted.
- 8.2 Parents should also be aware that all pupils are expected to attend School Chapel services on weekday mornings, Whole School singing on a Friday evening, and full boarders are expected to attend Sunday services when in School. There are other occasions as well when all pupils would be expected to attend Chapel services (e.g. Whole School Carol Services). Day Boarders are welcome to attend Sunday services. Pupils from religious backgrounds other than Church of England are given the opportunity to pursue their religious beliefs. For example, arrangements for Catholic pupils to attend Sunday Mass and take Confirmation classes. The School will work with parents and pupils to provide

access to religious services and instruction as appropriate.

- 8.3 Saturday School is compulsory for all pupils; though special arrangements can be made for pupils to celebrate important religious festivals.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1 The School monitors the Equal Opportunities Policy regularly and report to Council in order to ensure its effectiveness. As part of that process, all pupils are invited to complete an ethnic monitoring survey. The survey uses the same ethnic categories as the Government uses in the national census. The School hopes that all pupils will feel able to participate in the diversity monitoring scheme.

- 9.2 The Privacy Notice for Parents and Pupils is available on the website.

10. Complaints

- 10.1 We hope that parents and pupils do not have any concerns or complaints about the operation of this Equal Opportunities Policy. If parents do have any complaints, these will be managed in accordance with the Complaints Procedure (which is available on the website).

Member of staff
Reviewed

Director of Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare
August 2024

Version - EQUL/17a/v13/24

Related Policies

Admissions
Bursaries Policy
Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions for Pupils
Safeguarding and Child Protection
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
Expulsion, Removal and Review of Pupils
Anti-bullying Strategy
Accessibility Plan
Catering and Food Hygiene
Equal Opportunities for Staff
Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures
Examination Policies
Complaints Policy