

# **Bledlow Ridge School**



## **Equalities and Cohesion Policy**

**Date agreed: March 2026**

**Review date: March 2028**

## **School Vision**

Bledlow Ridge School aims to be a strong, supportive community where every child and adult feels safe, valued and able to thrive. We are committed to providing an inclusive, caring and stimulating environment in which all pupils can learn, grow and succeed.

## **Equality Statement**

Bledlow Ridge School is committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers, regardless of race, gender, disability, faith or religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. We strive to develop a culture of inclusion and respect in which everyone connected to the school feels proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

We monitor the achievement and experience of pupils across a range of characteristics, including race, gender and disability, and use this information to support individuals, raise standards and ensure that teaching is inclusive and responsive. We actively challenge discrimination, bullying and stereotypes, and work to create an environment that champions fairness, dignity and respect for all.

We believe that diversity-whether visible within our school community or encountered through the curriculum-is a strength that enriches learning and broadens pupils' understanding of the world.

## **Legal Duties**

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010, which requires us to:

- **eliminate discrimination**
- **advance equality of opportunity**
- **foster good relations**

We understand the principles of the Act and the work required to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and have equal access to opportunities.

## Protected Characteristics

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

These duties reflect international human rights standards, including 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.

## Specific Duties

To meet our general duties, we must:

- publish equality information
- prepare and publish equality objectives (reviewed annually)
- consult stakeholders and report progress

## How We Meet Our Duties

We collect and analyse data relating to the protected characteristics and use this to identify priorities for our equality objectives. We assess this information across key areas of school provision, including:

- admissions
- attendance
- attainment and progress
- suspensions
- prejudice-related incidents
- curriculum access and representation
- complaints and compliments

We also consider the wider context of our local community, including demographic information and relevant local authority data.

Where evidence shows that other aspects of school life significantly affect equality, we will include these in our objectives and action planning.

## Promoting Equality Through the Curriculum

Our curriculum plays a central role in promoting equality, fostering good relations and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. We ensure that:

- pupils learn about diversity, respect and tolerance through PSHE, RSE, RE and assemblies
- opportunities to challenge stereotypes and broaden perspectives are embedded across subjects
- resources, displays and texts reflect a diverse range of people, cultures and experiences
- staff receive training to support inclusive teaching and positive identity development

We regularly audit curriculum content, resources and assessment processes to ensure they meet the needs of all groups.

## Our Approach to Fulfilling Our Duties

We will:

- recognise and respect diversity
- foster positive attitudes, relationships and a shared sense of belonging
- observe good equalities practice in recruitment, retention and staff development
- identify, reduce and remove inequalities and barriers
- consult and involve pupils, parents, staff and governors
- monitor and review our progress regularly

## Definitions

- **Discrimination** — unfair treatment of an individual or group based on a protected characteristic.
- **Direct discrimination** — treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by association** — treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.
- **Discrimination by perception** — treating someone less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** — a policy or practice that applies to everyone but disadvantages a group with a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** — treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination.
- **Harassment** — unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.
- **Prejudice** — conscious or unconscious negative beliefs or stereotypes about individuals or groups

## Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that promoting Equality is the whole school's responsibility

School Community	Responsibility
Governing Body	<p>Involve and engage the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these.</p> <p>Monitor progress towards achieving equality objectives.</p> <p>Publish data and publish equality objectives.</p> <p>Ensure that staff have access to appropriate training and resources.</p>
Head Teacher	<p>As above including:</p> <p>Promote key messages to staff, parents, and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day-to-day duties.</p> <p>Ensure that all in the school community receive adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice-related incidents.</p>
Teaching Staff	<p>Help in delivering the right outcomes for pupils.</p> <p>Uphold the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated.</p> <p>Design and deliver an inclusive curriculum.</p> <p>Record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice-related incidents.</p>

Non -Teaching Staff	Support the school and the governing body in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders. Uphold the commitment made by the Head Teacher on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated. Support colleagues within the school community. Record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice-related incidents.
Parents/Carers	Take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these. Take an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment given to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all. Uphold the commitment made by the Head Teacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated
Pupils	Support the school to achieve the commitment made to tackling inequality. Uphold the commitment made by the Head Teacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated. Report prejudice-based incidents to a trusted adult
Local Community	Take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the governing body of actions that can be taken to eradicate these. Take an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.

We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Equality Policy and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the school website.

## Preventing and Addressing Prejudice-Related Incidents

Bledlow Ridge School defines prejudice-related incidents and bullying as **derogatory or discriminatory language or behaviour** that targets an individual or group based on a protected characteristic. This includes racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist language or behaviour, as well as misogyny, misandry and sexist conduct. Such behaviour may be directed at someone because of their race, ethnicity or nationality; because they are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans; because they have a learning or physical disability; or because they are associated with someone who has one of these characteristics. Prejudice-related language is often used to imply that someone or something is inferior.

Bledlow Ridge School encourages open, age-appropriate discussions about difference, identity and respect. We actively challenge prejudice and celebrate diversity as part of our commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive and respectful school culture. We recognise that children who experience prejudice-related discrimination may achieve less well in education and may be at increased risk of harm.

Prejudice-related bullying is a form of **child-on-child abuse** and therefore a safeguarding concern, as outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to all incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse. We work closely with

families and external agencies to prevent incidents and to ensure that every member of our school community feels welcomed, accepted and safe. All pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and visitors have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and must not be subjected to prejudice or discrimination in any form.

We provide pupils and staff with regular opportunities to learn about the impact of prejudice and discrimination. Our curriculum is designed to be representative of a wide range of people, cultures and experiences, and we consciously embed positive role models and diverse contributions across subjects. Through this approach, we challenge stereotypes and work towards creating identity-safe classrooms where all pupils feel validated, accepted and a strong sense of belonging.

If incidents occur, they are addressed immediately. We ensure that appropriate support is provided to those affected, that all reports are thoroughly investigated, and that sanctions and educational responses are applied where necessary. All adults in our school community are expected to follow the school's Code of Conduct. Allegations against staff are investigated in line with our staff conduct and safeguarding policies. Any staff member, parent, carer, governor or visitor who experiences prejudice-based abuse will have their concerns taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and responded to in accordance with their wishes and the law.

Following each incident, we review our practice to identify what further preventative measures may be needed. We remain vigilant and reflective, regularly evaluating satisfaction levels and the effectiveness of our responses.

### **Pupils, Including Bystanders and Witnesses**

We regularly teach pupils about **trusted adults** and ensure they know who they can speak to if they are worried. We clarify the terms *victim*, *perpetrator* and *bystander* to develop a shared understanding of responsibility and the importance of reporting concerns.

All pupils—whether directly affected or witnessing an incident—are encouraged to report concerns to any member of staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, office staff or the headteacher. Staff will listen carefully, make an initial note of the concern, explain next steps and reassure the pupil that they will be supported.

A formal record will be made on the school's recording system (CPOMs), and relevant staff will be alerted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed immediately if the concern is urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Even when behaviour is assessed as *relational conflict* rather than bullying, staff will support pupils to resolve issues and rebuild relationships.

### **Parents and Carers**

We recognise that it can be distressing for parents or carers to learn that their child has been affected by bullying or prejudice-related behaviour, whether as a victim, witness or alleged perpetrator.

We ask parents and carers to report concerns directly to the school rather than discussing them with others in the community or online.

The following steps will be taken:

- Parents/carers should contact their child's class teacher to share their concerns.
- The class teacher will make an initial note and may arrange a meeting to discuss the matter in more detail.

- The DSL will be informed immediately if the concern is urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.
- A formal record will be made on the school's recording system (CPOMs).
- An investigation will be carried out and appropriate follow-up actions taken.

We support pupils and families in all instances of bullying or relational conflict. Even when behaviour is not classified as bullying, we will help pupils resolve concerns and rebuild relationships. We will keep all parties informed of progress while ensuring compliance with GDPR and confidentiality requirements.

## School Staff

Staff may notice changes in a pupil's behaviour or presentation before a concern is formally reported. If staff have any worries about a pupil's welfare or suspect that a pupil may be involved in bullying—either as a target or as a perpetrator—they must act immediately. Staff should follow the same procedures outlined for parents/carers, including recording concerns and informing the DSL where appropriate.

## Complaints

If a parent or carer is not satisfied with the school's response, they should follow the school's Complaints Policy and procedures. This policy is available on the school website or from the school office.

Online via the school website: [Bledlow Ridge School - Policies](#)

## Links with other policies

Policy	How it may link
Child Protection Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Behaviour Policy	Includes details about the school's behaviour system including potential sanctions for pupils
Anti-Bullying Policy	Includes information about bullying behaviours and vulnerable groups
Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy	Includes information about children's online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
Child-on-Child Abuse Policy	Includes links to bullying
PSHE Policy, including Sex Education, Relationships and Health	Includes information about our school's PSHE and RSHE programme and how we teach about healthy relationships, friendships, diversity and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school's response

## Staff Recruitment and Professional Development

Bledlow Ridge School is committed to fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment practices. All posts are advertised formally and are open to the widest possible pool of applicants. Those involved in recruitment

and selection receive appropriate training to ensure they understand their responsibilities, avoid discrimination and apply good practice throughout the process.

Access to professional development is monitored to ensure equality of opportunity for all staff. Our equalities policies and expectations are included in staff induction, and all supply staff are made aware of the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We work to reduce direct, indirect and institutional discrimination in staff recruitment, training and retention. We aim for our workforce at all levels to reflect local, regional and national diversity in terms of age, race, gender, disability, faith, ethnicity, social background and sexual orientation.

We provide ongoing training for staff, governors and school leaders to strengthen understanding of equality, diversity and community cohesion. This supports a culture in which all staff feel valued, respected and able to progress.

### **Partnerships with Parents, Carers and the Community**

Bledlow Ridge School values strong partnerships with parents, carers and the wider community. All parents and carers are encouraged to participate fully in school life and to contribute to the development of our inclusive culture.

The school plays an important role in supporting both new and established families within the community. We seek to increase consultation and engagement with community members to monitor the fairness, accessibility and effectiveness of our provision, including extended services.

We work to promote the equal contribution of people from different backgrounds, lifestyles and identities, and to foster positive relationships between pupils, staff, families and community groups. We recognise that individuals hold multiple, interconnected aspects of identity, and we aim to create an environment where these are understood and respected.

We encourage meaningful and sustained interaction between members of different groups and work to strengthen approaches that prevent, manage and resolve conflict. We also aim to increase awareness among pupils and families of the services available at county, district, parish and neighbourhood level, supporting a sense of shared responsibility and community cohesion.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing**

The school operates a rolling programme for reviewing policies. When policies are updated, governors ensure that due regard is given to the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination.

We regularly review the impact of our policies on the needs, entitlements and outcomes of pupils, staff and parents across the equality strands identified in this policy. Particular attention is given to the impact of policies on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils.

We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and use this information to track progress as pupils move through the school. As part of this process, we monitor the performance of different groups to ensure that all pupils are making the best possible progress. Where data indicates that progress is not

as strong as it should be, resources and support are directed accordingly. The governing body receives regular updates on pupil performance.

School performance information is compared with national and local authority data to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress in relation to all schools and to schools in similar contexts.

Our monitoring activities enable us to identify any differences in performance between groups. This allows us to take appropriate action to meet the needs of specific groups and to set targets within our strategic planning to secure improvement.

## **Appendix A**

### **Equality Act 2010 - Summary for Schools**

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect individuals from discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity.

The Act applies to all schools and covers:

- pupils
- prospective pupils
- staff
- parents and carers
- visitors to the school

Schools must ensure they do not discriminate against, harass, or victimise individuals because of protected characteristics. Schools also have responsibilities as employers, service providers and public bodies.

### **Protected Characteristics**

The Equality Act identifies nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin)
- Religion or belief

- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Protection applies to people who have a protected characteristic, are perceived to have one, or are associated with someone who has one.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

Schools are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

When carrying out their functions, schools must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- 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

Schools are also required to:

- publish equality objectives
- publish information demonstrating compliance with the duty
- review equality objectives at least every four years.

### **Forms of Discrimination**

The Equality Act identifies several forms of unlawful discrimination.

#### **Direct Discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Direct discrimination is generally unlawful and cannot normally be justified.

#### **Indirect Discrimination**

Indirect discrimination occurs when a policy, rule or practice applies to everyone but disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### **Discrimination Arising from Disability**

This occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be justified.

#### **Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments**

Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled pupils.

Adjustments may include:

- changes to policies or procedures
- adjustments to the physical environment
- provision of auxiliary aids or additional support.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that: violates a person's dignity, or

creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment may also include conduct of a sexual nature.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated unfavourably because they have:

- made a complaint about discrimination
- supported someone making a complaint
- raised concerns about equality issues.
- These actions are known as protected acts.

### **Positive Action**

The Equality Act allows schools to take positive action to support pupils who share a protected characteristic where they:

- experience disadvantage
- have particular needs
- are underrepresented in school activities or outcomes.

Positive action must be proportionate and designed to address identified disadvantage.

Positive action is different from positive discrimination, which is generally unlawful.

However, it is lawful to treat disabled pupils more favourably where this helps to remove disadvantage.

### **Disability**

A person is considered disabled under the Equality Act if they have:

a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This may include:

- physical impairments
- sensory impairments
- long-term health conditions
- learning difficulties

- neurodevelopmental conditions
- mental health conditions.

Schools must consider the needs of disabled pupils and ensure they can access education and school activities.

### **Gender Reassignment**

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

A person is protected if they are:

- proposing to transition
- undergoing transition
- have transitioned.

Protection applies whether or not medical treatment has taken place.

Schools must ensure that pupils are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from discrimination or harassment.

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

It is unlawful to treat a pupil less favourably because they are:

- pregnant
- have recently given birth
- breastfeeding.

Schools must ensure pupils are supported to continue their education where possible.

### **Community Cohesion and Inclusion**

Schools play an important role in promoting respect, tolerance and understanding between different groups.

Through curriculum, policies and wider school activities, schools should promote:

- equality and inclusion
- respect for diversity
- positive relationships between different communities.

This supports the wider aims of the Equality Act and the school's duties under education legislation.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The school will:

- monitor equality outcomes and participation
- review policies and practices to ensure fairness
- address any barriers to equality

