

<b>The Chiltern School</b>	<b>Equal Opportunities at Work Policy</b>	
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Date Policy Reviewed	Next Policy Review Date	Author
February 2026	February 2027	Lisa Leonard

### ***The Chiltern School Vision***

*Where we learn and achieve together, where we dare to be different. Our vision is to be a centre of excellence, to inspire, innovate and promote the best practice in inclusive pedagogy, that is recognised locally, regionally and nationally for SEND development and provision, where we put the pupils at the heart of all decision making. Our children will leave being happy, confident, inquisitive and independent.*

#### **Statement of intent**

The Chiltern School is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. We recognise that all employees have the right to work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. The school acknowledges its statutory duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. This extends to preventing harassment by **third parties** (e.g., parents, contractors, visitors), as failing to address known risks can constitute a failure in our preventative duty.

We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills. This policy sets out our commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all staff, in line with statutory requirements and best practices.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their position within the school. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat pupils, parents, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

#### **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'The Equality Act and schools' 2014
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy

### **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**

PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

### **Principles**

We are committed to:

- Providing a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Ensuring no employee or job applicant is treated less favourably on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Ensuring all employment decisions, including recruitment, promotion, training, and benefits, are made based on merit, competence, and suitability for the role.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- **Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** Responsible for ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and promoting an inclusive work culture.
- **All Staff:** Expected to uphold this policy and treat colleagues with respect.
- **Line Managers:** Responsible for ensuring fair treatment in recruitment, training, and career development.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

- All job applicants will be treated fairly, and recruitment decisions will be based on objective criteria.
- Job advertisements will avoid discriminatory language and encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

- Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate candidates with disabilities.
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### **Training and Development**

- We are committed to providing training opportunities that promote professional growth for all staff.
- Training on equality, diversity, and inclusion will be provided to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

- Any form of harassment, bullying, or victimisation will not be tolerated.
- Staff are encouraged to report concerns, and complaints will be handled promptly and confidentially.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against those found to have breached this policy.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- The implementation of this policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure effectiveness.
- The SLT and Governing Body will oversee compliance and make improvements where necessary.
- Feedback from staff will be encouraged to enhance our commitment to equal opportunities.

### **Complaints Procedure**

- Any employee who believes they have been unfairly treated under this policy should report their concerns through the school's grievance procedure.
- Complaints will be taken seriously and investigated in line with our procedures.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation. Any updates will be communicated to staff accordingly.

## Appendix 1 Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

**Direct discrimination** occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in Appendix A. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

**Harassment** related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

**Victimisation** is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

## Appendix 2 Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics

The definitions used in this appendix are based on the Equality Act 2010, the full text of which is available [here](#).

**Age:** The Act protects people of all ages; however, differential treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

**Disability:** The Act protects people who are disabled; the Act defines this as someone who has 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.

**Gender identity:** The Act protects transgender people. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected, so a person who does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered by these protections.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

**Pregnancy and maternity:** The Act protects people against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which they are entitled. The school upholds the **extended redundancy protections** for pregnant staff and those returning from family leave, ensuring they are not disadvantaged during restructuring.

**Race:** The Act protects people of all races; the Act's definition of race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

**Religion or belief:** The Act protects people of any religion, including specific denominations or sects, as well as a lack of religion, i.e. employees or jobseekers who do not follow a certain religion or do not follow any religion are protected. The Act protects people of any belief; this is defined as any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of such belief, that is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

**Sex:** The Act protects men and women. For the Equality Act purposes, "sex" is increasingly interpreted as biological sex.

**Sexual orientation:** The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual staff.