

The Webber Independent School

Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy applies all pupils in the School, including those in the EYFS



Reviewed July 2023

Checked by
Headmistress
Date: August 2023

Next Review July 2024

Introduction

The ethos and aims of our school are to provide a first-class individualised learning experience supported by outstanding teaching and pastoral care to help our children achieve their personal and academic potential. Within this ensuring equality of opportunity to all individuals is integral to the culture of our school.

This policy applies to all members of our school community and visitors involved in any school-related activities, both on and off school premises. It covers how the School will deliver on its duties under the 2010 Equality Act and actively address discrimination in all forms.

The Webber Independent School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students, staff members, and visitors. Discrimination, in any form, is strictly prohibited within our school community. This policy aims to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion and to ensure that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. The Policy and practice through which it is delivered will be integral to the delivery of the School's commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as outlined in the Bellevue Group group statement on EDI. The policy also outlines how the School will be proactive in preventing discrimination, as well as defining its response to incidences of discriminatory behaviour.

Responsibilities within the Scope of this Policy

Governance; As part of the School Governance processes the outcomes and responses of pupils, staff and parents will be analysed, with appropriate actions identified and taken. In addition Governance will be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations. Take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils and potential pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:

- Admissions,
- The way the school provides an education for pupils
- How pupils are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans in collaboration with the Headteacher.

School Leadership: The school management is responsible for ensuring the review and effective implementation of this policy, ensuring that its guidelines are applied fairly. They must foster an inclusive culture, address any complaints promptly and appropriately; including taking action in relation to incidents of discrimination in line with policies, and providing appropriate support. The school will monitor and record incidents of discrimination, analyse trends, and take proactive measures to address any emerging issues. Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.

Staff Members: All staff members, including teachers, support staff, and administrators, have a responsibility to promote equality and prevent discrimination. Be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment/discrimination as the highest priority. They should challenge discriminatory behaviour, report incidents, and participate in training programmes. Have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.

Students: Students are expected to treat each other with respect. They should report any instances of discrimination to a trusted staff member and actively contribute to creating a school environment that is welcoming.

Parents and Carers; are expected to treat all members of the community with respect. In the event they have concerns about any instances of discrimination these must be reported to the school leadership. They will be supportive of this and related policies.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following; The Equality Act 2010, KCSIE 2023, Children and Families Act 2014

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following: DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools' DfE (2014) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools' DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy is related to the following other school policies: SEND Policy Curriculum Policy Anti-bullying; Safeguarding and Child Protection; Curriculum; Behaviour; Exclusions; Admissions; Staff Appraisal; Recruitment; Complaints Procedure

Protected characteristics

We will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, member of staff or parent/carer because of their:

- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity or Pregnancy

We will not discriminate against an individual, because of a characteristic related to a person with whom the individual is associated. We will regularly review our school practices to ensure that they are fair with regard to all the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Preventing discrimination, promoting respect

Within our school, we celebrate diversity and show respect for those with protected characteristics. Bullying and harassment on account of sex, race, gender reassignment, religion, or belief, disability or sexual orientation are unacceptable and are not tolerated within the school environment. It is essential that the school is proactive, as well as reactive, in its approach to tackling discrimination. We ensure that we challenge stereotyping and prejudice and that any incidences of discrimination are dealt with effectively; this includes recognising and addressing different manifestations of discrimination including

- Direct Discrimination: Treating someone less favourably based on a protected characteristic, such as denying admission, benefits, or opportunities.
- Indirect Discrimination: Imposing policies, practices, or criteria that disproportionately disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics unless there is a justifiable reason.

- Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.
- Victimisation: Treating someone unfavourably because they have made a complaint, assisted with an investigation, or participated in anti-discrimination measures.
- Bullying: including bullying policy definition

Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally and possibly causing psychological damage. It is usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide. (Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various different forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion.
- Sexual/sexist - behaviour, physical or non-physical, where sexuality or gender is used as a weapon against another. It is any behaviour which degrades someone, singles someone out using sexual language, gestures or violence, and victimising someone for their appearance. Sexual bullying is also pressured to act promiscuously and to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable.
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation
- Special Needs or Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- Because a child is adopted or a carer
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, online sexual harassment, sending of unwanted photographs or asking for/pressurising others to do so . (Please refer to separate section, below.)

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying

when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

Curriculum

We embed equality and diversity in our curriculum provision and implementation by ensuring our climate for learning, curriculum planning and delivery, learning experiences and assessment practices proactively eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in a manner that values, preserves and responds to diversity and supports the feeling of belonging.

This includes the use of inclusive teaching methods and assessments, and the reduction of barriers to learning. It also includes reviewing and developing curriculum content so subject matter representing the knowledge and understanding of multiple identities. It includes covering multiple perspectives, and encouraging pupils to think about and reflect upon their own identities, biases and backgrounds.

Further detail on this is included in the Curriculum Policy.

Behaviour

In the Behaviour Policy / Anti-bullying Policy we include issues relating to discriminatory behaviour in the School's Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies and reference to our principle of promoting anti-discriminatory practices and behaviour. Behaviour cannot be detrimental to other pupils' learning and all members of the school community must always feel respected at all times. Please refer to the Behaviour Policy for additional information.

The School acknowledges the importance of good behaviour and its impact on a good education; the school will continuously improve and maintain high standards of behaviour throughout the school community. Creating a culture with high expectations of behaviour will benefit both staff and pupils, establishing calm, safe and supportive environments conducive to learning.

Creating an environment which pupils want to attend and to learn, will allow pupils to thrive and to flourish in safety and dignity. The reinforcement of this culture, ensuring it permeates through every aspect of school life is the school community's (pupils, staff and parents) collective responsibility. The school community should embody this within its school culture we uphold the schools' behaviour policy at all times and respond to misbehaviour consistently and fairly. Whilst the behaviour policy will ensure that behaviour expectations are high, the process of addressing misbehaviour will not be discriminatory in any manner (respecting protected characteristics).

Staff

The School has in place a number of personnel policies and procedures which meet our legal responsibilities and promote good practice in the area of equal opportunities, including:

- Recruitment and selection procedures;
- A Code of Conduct for School-based staff;
- Induction arrangements for staff newly appointed to the school, including The Staff Handbook.

Our staff management, appraisal and in-service arrangements take into account the need to identify and meet staff training needs through access to good quality training and opportunities to exchange good practice. This includes how to address instances of discrimination and how to deliver the curriculum.

Working with Parents and Carers

Our world is increasingly diverse and different types of families are more and more widespread. Families with single parents, same sex parents, recomposed, adoptive, foster, extended, elective families are all equally valid, deserving equal rights and respect; we recognise, honour, welcome and value such diversity. We do not discriminate against families on the grounds of their gender, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity or any other Protected Characteristics.

Parents/carers and schools play a key role in the education of children and, therefore, parents/carers should be encouraged to be involved in their child's education in schools. Constructive dialogue between schools and parents/carers about their children's progress, development and support facilitates a mutual understanding of the child and, ultimately, benefits the progress of pupils. Parental/guardian engagement should involve the school providing clear information to all parents or carers, in an accessible way and parents/carers should be given reasonable time to consider any information; the school must provide reasonable opportunities for parents to share their thoughts and views and the school must give consideration to those views from parents or carers and balance them with their views on the needs of the pupils and school. Schools ultimately make the final decisions.



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