



Equal Opportunities Policy

Warwick Senior School

Version	September 2025
Author and Reviewer	Deputy Head (Pastoral)
Approving Body	School Governors Committee
Date Approved	December 2025
Review Cycle	Annual
Previous Review Date	September 2024
Next Review Date	September 2026

Equal Opportunities (Pupils) Policy

The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all members of its community, and values the rich diversity and creative potential that pupils with different backgrounds, skills and abilities bring to the School. The School is opposed to any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying on the grounds of any protected characteristic, and aims to create an environment where all current and prospective pupils are treated with dignity and respect and fairly with regard to their 'protected characteristics'.

This Equal Opportunities (Pupils) Policy sets out how the School intends to meet these aims and comply with its equality duties, and is written under the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) ('the Act')

(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>), and draws upon the DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014)

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf).

This policy applies to all areas of school life, which relate to pupils, including the school's curriculum, teaching, pastoral and co-curricular provision. This policy is also set within the context of the school as a single-sex establishment with strong collaborative links with other schools in the Warwick Independent Schools Foundation, and as a Christian foundation that welcomes pupils and staff of all faiths and none.

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy. The School seeks to encourage greater awareness of its aims, policies and procedures in relation to equal opportunities and will provide information and training as required.

There is a separate Staff Equal Opportunities Policy which is available for members of staff.

Unlawful Discrimination

The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) as defined below:

- **Direct discrimination** - This occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination (e.g. if the School were to refuse to let a pupil become a prefect because he is gay).
- **Indirect discrimination** - This occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting pupils with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to pupils without that characteristic (e.g. if the School were to hold a parents' meeting on a Friday evening, which would make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend).
- **Harassment** - This is defined in the Act as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person". This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable.
- **Victimisation** - This occurs when a pupil is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or

bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. If a pupil has done a protected act themselves (e.g. making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher) then the pupil's own good faith will be relevant (e.g. if the parent's complaint is based on information from their child and the child was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish the pupil in the same way as it might do any other dishonest pupil). A pupil must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act.

Failure to Adhere to this policy

The School will do its utmost to protect pupils from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or groups within the School. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of pupils or staff will be handled under the relevant policy: the pupils' Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions and Appeals Policy or the Staff Code of Conduct.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the:

- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Disability Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- PSHEE Policy
- RSE Policy
- SMSC policy
- Trips and Educational Visits Policy

This policy has regard to Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) as outlined in the Independent School Standards Regulations.

Protected Characteristics

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of their:

- Sex (but please note the admissions criteria above)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins) • Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

The School aims to foster a sense of community in which all pupils are valued and can thrive regardless of any of these characteristics, and will seek to counter and discriminatory practices.

In teaching about sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education. For further information, please see the School's PSHEE Policy and RSE Policy.

Admissions

The School welcomes applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. Pupils are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential to take advantage of the particular educational provision of the School, which is suited to highly able and committed boys. The School restricts admission to boys only, and educational opportunities for girls are provided through our sister school (Kings High School). In any review of selection criteria and procedures, the School will ensure that consideration is given to equal opportunities issues.

The School will not discriminate in relation to the protected characteristics listed above in its admissions processes.

There will be no discrimination against pupils with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND), in so far as they have the academic ability to attend the School (which is selective). All pupils will have equal opportunity to access the curriculum. However, the School is not a specialist provider for SEND.

For further information, please see the School's Admissions Policy.

Disability

Definition of 'disability'

The Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'. This has some overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>), but not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and vice versa. 'Disabled pupils', for the purpose of this policy, refers not only to those pupils with physical disabilities but could include, for example, those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.

Disability and discrimination

- **Direct discrimination:** the School will not treat a disabled pupil less favourably simply because that pupil is disabled.
- **Indirect discrimination:** the School will not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only unless the School can show that it is done for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** the School will not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability (e.g. by not allowing a disabled pupil on crutches outside at break because it would take them too long to get out and back).
- **Harassment:** the School will not harass a pupil because of their disability (e.g. a teacher shouting at the pupil because their disability means that they are constantly struggling with classwork or unable to concentrate).

Reasonable Adjustments

The School will take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty).

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School.

Reasonable adjustments and pupils' behaviour

Independent schools must comply with the Act in relation to pupil exclusions. The Act does not prohibit schools from excluding pupils with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding pupils because of their protected characteristic or from discriminating unlawfully during the exclusion process. Schools also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusions process for disabled pupils.

For further information, please see the School's Learning Support and Disability Policy.

The School's Accessibility Policy sets out the School's arrangements for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum.
- improving the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of the education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School.
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Curriculum and Teaching

The Act explicitly states that the content of the School's curriculum is excluded from discrimination law.

However, the delivery of the curriculum is explicitly included. As such, the School will endeavour to deliver the curriculum such that teaching covers issues, thoughts and ideas of all kinds and does not subject individual pupils to discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics listed above. Staff are expected to be sensitive about equal opportunities in their teaching and guard against the transmission, through the content and delivery of the curriculum, of attitudes which stereotype people or label individual pupils as inferior or limited. This includes through the planning of lessons, teaching methods, classroom resources, behaviour management, etc., and through the 'hidden lessons' implicit in other activities about their value as a person, their human rights, the options available to them and their expectations for adult life.

For further information about the content and delivery of the curriculum, please see the School's Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Policy.

Raising Awareness

All school staff are expected to implement this policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHE, the curriculum and the co-curricular programme to:

- Help pupils to develop self-esteem and recognise that they are valued as individuals
- Promote respect for each other within the school community
- Promote positive images and role models to challenge prejudice and raise awareness of related issues
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures, and so enable pupils to contribute actively to the process of education by bringing to it their cultural experiences, values and perspectives
- Understand why and how we deal with offensive language and behaviour
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents in a sensitive manner and as promptly as possible

1. Pupils with Particular Religious, Dietary, Language or Cultural Needs

Considered provision is made for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs. Information shared with the school can be updated at any time when a need changes.

1.1 Religious Needs: See Section 11.

1.2 Dietary needs: the individual dietary needs of pupils are met by the catering team. Individual diets are catered for after consultation with parents, the Medical Centre (if necessary) and the pupil. There are options for those whose religious beliefs preclude a certain ingredient or require a specific need such as a Halal or Kosher diet. Pupils observing religious events or festivals, such as Ramadan are supported in their fasting regime and boarders are able to arrange their eating requirements for the duration of the festival. Those with allergies, intolerances, diabetes etc. may have specially prepared meals or may select certain items from the dining room. Gluten-free and all other allergy/intolerance symbols are placed on the menus. Pupils exercise choice in their diets and options are available at in school events as well as in the School dining room. Pupils who are Vegans, for example, will always be provided with alternatives. There is a Catering Warwick Voice Committee meeting fortnightly with pupils and catering staff. There is also a separate boarders food committee to discuss food provision and requirements.

1.3 Language Needs: Many students come from homes where other languages are widely spoken , with Tamil, Punjabi, Cantonese and Mandarin being commonly represented. The EAL Policy states that the School aims:

- To celebrate and value the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences that students with EAL bring to the School, fostering their feeling of inclusion and ensuring they are not discriminated against.
- To implement school-wide strategies to ensure that all EAL students are supported in accessing the curriculum.
- To assist EAL pupils in becoming sufficiently proficient in English that their linguistic ability does not inhibit their academic potential.

1.4 Cultural Needs: We aim to provide opportunities for cultural development by:

- Raising awareness and teaching student through specific topics in curriculum lessons how to appreciate other people's traditions, values and beliefs
- Encouraging students to explore, share and celebrate their own culture
- Tackling any forms of discrimination or prejudice directly and so in doing so ensure that students learn from this
- Providing opportunities to participate in cultural events at local and national level
- Participating in visits and trips in Britain and abroad to extend the cultural experience
- Developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend students' cultural awareness

The SMSC Policy gives more detail.

2. Protected Characteristics

Everyone has some protected characteristics. It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a student or prospective student by treating them less favourably because of a protected characteristic. The School aims to foster a sense of community in which all students are valued and can thrive regardless of any of these characteristics and will seek to counter any discriminatory practices. The Warwick Schools Foundation Admissions Policy gives further details in respect to equality and King's High admissions criteria.

3. Sex and Gender

- 3.1 The School is dedicated to promoting gender equality and ensuring that no one is discriminated against based on their sex. The School's policies support equal opportunities for all genders and work to eliminate any form of gender-based discrimination or bias.
- 3.2 The School examines its curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias, inequality or stereotyping. There is also a Warwick Voice committee on this issue which meets regularly and presents its findings to the school SLT and in assemblies, as appropriate.
- 3.3 The School will try to ensure that resources include books and other learning materials which value the achievements of people of different genders. The School is committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions.

4. Disability

- 4.1 The School is dedicated to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities. This includes making reasonable adjustments to ensure that students and staff with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of school life. The School actively works to remove barriers and promote understanding and awareness of disabilities.
- 4.2 The Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'. This has some overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>), but not all students are disabled by their SEN and vice versa. 'Disabled students', for the purpose of this policy, refers not only to those students with physical disabilities but could include, for example, those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.
- 4.3 Direct discrimination: the School will not treat a disabled student less favourably simply because that student is disabled.
- 4.4 Indirect discrimination: the School will not do something which applies to all students but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled students only unless the School can show that it is done for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- 4.5 Discrimination arising from disability: the School will not discriminate against a disabled student because of something that is a consequence of their disability (e.g. by not allowing a disabled student on crutches outside at break because it would take them too long to get out and back).
- 4.6 Harassment: the School will not harass a student because of their disability (e.g. a teacher shouting at the student because their disability means that they are constantly struggling with classwork or unable to concentrate).
- 4.7 Reasonable Adjustments: the School will take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty). Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a student's disability and the resources available to the School.

- 4.8 All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that students with disabilities are not placed at any disadvantage compared to students without disabilities in terms of access to student information and the school curriculum. Teachers will modify teaching and learning as appropriate for students with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities or modify teaching materials or offer alternative activities where students are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.
- 4.9 The school will seek to provide an environment that allows students with disabilities full access (where reasonably practicable) to all areas of learning and opportunities afforded to all other students at the school, including educational visits.

The School's Accessibility Policy sets out the School's arrangements for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the School's curriculum.
- improving the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of the education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School.
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information which is readily accessible to students who are not disabled

5. Sexual orientation

- 5.1 The School is committed to creating an inclusive environment of all sexual orientations. The School's policies ensure that everyone is treated with respect and that discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation is not tolerated.
- 5.2 The school will make no assumption about the sexual orientation of any of the members of its community.
- 5.3 In the curriculum, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. Students' questions will be answered as they arise, honestly, factually and non-judgementally. Teachers have regard to statutory guidance on Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)
- 5.4 The school will not tolerate any form of homophobia or homophobic behaviour.

6. Gender reassignment

- 6.1 The School supports individuals undergoing gender reassignment and is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for them. The School's policies ensure that students who are transitioning are respected and that any form of discrimination or harassment is promptly addressed.

7. Religion and meeting religious need

- 7.1 The School respects and values the diverse religious beliefs and practices of our school community. The School's policies ensure that everyone can express their religion or belief freely, and the school accommodates religious practices wherever possible, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding.
- 7.2 The School will comply with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. This includes respect for lack of religion or belief, as in atheism. The School will listen to the religious needs of individuals and responding to requests for specific provision e.g. Ramadan guidance to support pupils who are fasting.

- 7.3 Boards of all faiths will be supported in their chosen religious observance and practice including arrangements for prayer in the Boarding House. As a Christian Foundation, there is the option for any boarder to attend on-site chapel services which take place throughout the year. The Foundation Chaplain is available to discuss the meaning of chapel services to those who may be unfamiliar with Christian faith and practices. There is also a prayer room in the Wellbeing Hub which is regularly used and well-stocked.
- 7.4 The Foundation Chaplain leads Christian worship within the School with occasional services at St Mary's Collegiate Church. There are opportunities for pupils to join discussion groups with the Chaplain to explore Christian beliefs.
- 7.5 The Warwick Voice committee works proactively to support and foster respect for pupils of all faiths and to broaden understanding within the School community. Pupils are given opportunities to explore and develop their faith in a supportive environment.

8. Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)

- 8.1 The School celebrates the rich cultural diversity within our school community and is committed to promoting racial equality.
- 8.2 The School's policies and practices aim to eliminate racial discrimination and promote understanding and respect for all racial and ethnic groups.
- 8.3 The School promotes good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups
- 8.4 The School will not tolerate any form of racism or racist behaviour.
- 8.5 The School endeavours to be welcoming to all minority groups. The celebration and understanding of cultural diversity are promoted through the topics studied by the students and is reflected in displays, resources and events.
- 8.6 The School will give students the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and reject racial discrimination.

9. Pregnancy and maternity

The School is committed to supporting staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave. Students are encouraged to understand the importance of this protected characteristic through their PSHEE education.

10. Age

The School is committed to ensuring that no student is discriminated against based on their age. The School's policies (but please note: age limitations are contained in within the Admissions Policy) and practices promote respect and value for individuals of all ages, ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources.

11. Marriage and civil partnership

The School promotes an inclusive culture that recognises diverse family structures. Teachers teach about marriage and civil partnerships with due regard to statutory guidance on Relationship and Sex Education (RSE).

12. Admissions

- 12.1 All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their, or their parents', race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or any disability. Candidates will also be treated equally in respect of their parents' age, gender or marital or civil partnership status.

12.2 The School is inclusive and welcomes applicants with disabilities, special educational needs and neurodiversity. It promotes a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people, those with special educational needs and those who are neurodiverse. The School's facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited, but it will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under Equality Legislation in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can cater adequately.

12.3 The School needs to be aware of any particular requirements which may affect a child's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the School. The School shall determine the reasonable adjustments that are required for the applicant based on the information provided, in accordance with the School's obligations under equality legislation as explained above. The School staff will assess the child's needs and consult with parents about the adjustments which can reasonably be made to ensure that the application procedure is accessible for the child and that the School can provide adequately for them should an offer of a place be made.

For further information, please see the Warwick Schools Foundation Admissions Policy.

17 Reasonable adjustments and students' behaviour

Independent schools must comply with the Act in relation to student exclusions. The Act does not prohibit schools from excluding students with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding students because of their protected characteristic or from discriminating unlawfully during the exclusion process. Schools also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusions process for disabled students.

18 Raising Awareness

All school staff are expected to implement this policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHEE, the curriculum, displays around school, the co-curricular programme and off-timetable events to:

- Help students to develop self-esteem and recognise that they are valued as individuals
- Promote respect for each other within the school community
- Promote positive images and role models to challenge prejudice and raise awareness of related issues
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage students to recognise the contributions made by different cultures, and so enable students to contribute actively to the process of education by bringing to it their cultural experiences, values and perspectives
- Understand why and how we deal with offensive language and behaviour
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents in a sensitive manner and as promptly as possible

19 Due Regard

'Due regard' will be given to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are being made or policies developed.

20 Training and Development

The School seeks to provide training to staff on equal opportunities to promote understanding of equalities legislation and the school's and their responsibilities.

21 Responsibilities

21.4 Governors

- 21.4.1 Governors will ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.
- 21.4.2 Governors will ensure that no-one is unlawfully discriminated against whilst in the school on account of their race, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- 21.4.3 Governors monitor the implementation of this policy on a regular basis through information provided by the Head.

21.5 Head

- 21.5.1 The Head will ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on EDI and that these guidelines are applied fairly in all situations.
- 21.5.2 The Head will promote the principles of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and in providing opportunities for training.
- 21.5.3 The Head will promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in assemblies, for example, respect for other people will be a regular theme
- 21.5.4 The Head will view all incidents of potentially discriminatory treatment with due concern

21.6 EDI Lead

- 21.6.1 Works with the Head on the School Development Plan to ensure that EDI considerations are brought to bear on all strategic and operational decisions made by the school
- 21.6.2 Works with the Senior Deputy Head to devise a programme promoting, marking and celebrating a wide range of EDI events and activities
- 21.6.3 Works with the Deputy Head Academic on curriculum content
- 21.6.4 Establishes links with external networks and organisations to support EDI initiatives
- 21.6.5 Offers guidance to the pastoral team to enable EDI issues are addressed sensitively and robustly and assists with the provision of relevant restorative work for students involved in EDI issues such as racism

21.7 Teachers and Support Staff

- 21.7.1 Staff will aim to ensure that all students, parents and their colleagues are treated fairly and with respect.
- 21.7.2 When selecting classroom materials, teachers will strive to provide resources which promote positive images and which challenge stereotypes of minority groups.
- 21.7.3 When designing schemes of work, teachers will consider the choice of topics to study and how to approach sensitive issues to promote EDI.
- 21.7.4 All teachers and support staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination, and draw them to the attention of a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

21.8 Students

- 21.8.1 Students will be made aware of the policy and draw any incidents of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a member of staff.
- 21.8.2 Students will be encouraged to show respect, tolerance and understanding towards others and expected to demonstrate these important values in their interactions with others

21.9 Parents

21.9.1 Parents will be made aware of the policy through the school website

21.9.2 Parents are encouraged to draw any incidents of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a member of staff.

22 Complaints

If a parent is not satisfied that an issue has been addressed appropriately, they should speak with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the first instance and then, if still unhappy, refer to the School's Complaints Procedure available on the website.