



WESTHOLME

# Equal Opportunities Policy

<b>Reviewed:</b>	October 2024
<b>Date of next review:</b>	October 2025
<b>Produced by:</b>	Principal
<b>Cross Referencing:</b>	To be read in conjunction with the below policies:  SEND Policy Accessibility Plan Safer Recruitment Policy PHSE Policy RSE Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Staff Code of Conduct Behaviour Management Policy Discipline, Exclusions and Required Removal Staff Handbook

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The School will review this procedure annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school

## Policy Statement

At Westholme School we recognise our responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity and difference. Every child will be included and not disadvantaged and learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. We understand the importance of providing a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development and we undertake to make reasonable adjustments to enable all to participate in our programme of learning, where all are valued and supported.

Westholme School is totally committed to promoting equal opportunities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This applies to all pupils, parents, staff members, and prospective pupils and staff members.

Westholme School will strive to treat all members of the school community equally and will not treat anyone less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**).

We seek to ensure that the individual needs of all our pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEND) are met and pupils are included, valued and supported, and that reasonable adjustments are made for them (see separate policy). We undertake to work with the school community, with parents and with other relevant agencies to ensure that any form of discriminatory behaviour is treated seriously, and action is taken to prevent any repetition. This policy statement and the effectiveness of our inclusive practices at Westholme School are reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

## Procedure for Pupils

Westholme School seeks to implement this policy statement effectively through the following actions:

- Provision of our policy statement for equal opportunities to all pupils, staff and parents, including those of prospective pupils.
- Working with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists, family/pupil medical practitioners, and mental health agencies (e.g. CAMHS) to support the endeavour of the school in serving the needs of all pupils, parents and staff.
- Discussing, where appropriate, equal opportunities and the special needs of individuals at staff meetings.
- Delivering a message of equal opportunities within PSHE, the wider curriculum and through the extra-curricular programme.
- Dedicating whole school and class assemblies, and form time and 'circle time' to the importance of kindness, care and unconditional respect for members of the school and the wider community, and on promoting and valuing diversity and differences.
- Meeting the individual needs of pupils, as detailed by parents and by the pupil's previous setting, through teacher, assistant and outside agencies working together with the pupil and the pupil's parents.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against a pupil or staff member who deliberately discriminates against another pupil/staff member. This is detailed further in the Rewards, Sanctions and Behaviour Management Policy.
- Including the special needs coordinator and other relevant staff, in discussing pupil needs and progress in staff meetings and leadership meetings. On such occasions the strategy for each individual child is focused around respect for the child's needs, the need for the pupil to have access to all opportunities within the school and the child's right to feel confident, happy and valued.

- Monitoring the needs of all pupils as they progress through the school, through discussion at meetings, and written information circulated confidentially, relating to specific support for learning or emotional, social, mental, physical or other difficulties.
- Discussing, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating at staff meetings and leadership meetings, the effectiveness of inclusive practices which enable all pupils, parents and staff to access and enjoy school life.
- Ensuring that the Personal, Social, Health and Educational Programme includes discussion of Equal Opportunities.
- Ensuring school documents demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities and avoid inappropriate discrimination of all forms.
- Making appropriate provision or exemption, where feasible and desirable, for pupils with special dietary or religious observance requirements or needs because of religious or cultural backgrounds.

## Procedure for Members of Staff

To ensure the elimination and prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.

## Discrimination

You will not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former staff members, pupils, parents, prospective pupils and staff members or visitors on grounds of any **protected characteristic**.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because of their sexuality.
- Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Our recruitment procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of the Principal. For example:

- a) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- b) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- c) Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- d) Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation (see Recruitment and Selection Policy and Safeguarding Policies for details).

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we often monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity (please refer to the Schools Privacy Notice on the website for detailed information on how we handle sensitive data).

## **Training and Promotion**

Training needs will be identified through appraisal. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

## **Termination of Employment**

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **Disabilities**

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. If preferable you may choose to contact a member of the Leadership Team to discuss your concerns.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **Part-Time and Fixed-Term Work**

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **Breaches of this Policy**

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.