



WELLESLEY PREP SCHOOL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

2026-2027

This policy applies to all parts of Wellesley Prep School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Updated: September 2026

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Policy owner: Bursar

Approved by: Governing Body

Document Control

Document title	Equal Opportunities Policy
Applies to	All parts of Wellesley Prep School, including EYFS
Policy owner	Bursar
Related documents	Admissions Policy; SEND and Learning Difficulties Policy; Accessibility Plan; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Behaviour Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Grievance Procedure; Dignity at Work / Anti-Harassment arrangements; Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy
Updated	September 2026
Review	September 2027, or earlier if required by changes in law, guidance or School practice

1. Purpose and Commitment

Promoting equality of opportunity and treating people with dignity and respect are fundamental to the aims and ethos of Wellesley Prep School ("the School"). We seek to provide a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment in which every member of the School community is valued and able to participate and flourish.

The School is committed to equal treatment and to taking reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We recognise that equality does not always mean treating everyone identically; in some circumstances, different or additional support or reasonable adjustments may be needed to remove or reduce disadvantage.

This policy sets out the School's approach to equality in relation to pupils, applicants, staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, parents and others who engage with the School. Different legal duties may apply depending on the relationship and circumstances.

2. Scope and Legal Framework

The School will act in accordance with applicable equality and employment legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, and with the requirements applicable to independent schools and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals against unlawful discrimination because of protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins;
- religion or belief, including lack of belief;
- sex; and

- sexual orientation.

The protected characteristics and the way in which the Equality Act applies are not identical in every context. For example, age is generally protected in employment but not in the same way in relation to pupils. The School will apply the relevant legal framework to the circumstances in question.

3. What This Policy Seeks to Prevent

The School will not unlawfully discriminate against a pupil, prospective pupil, employee, job applicant or other person to whom the relevant legal duties apply. Unlawful conduct may include:

- direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic;
- indirect discrimination: applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages people sharing a protected characteristic, unless it can be justified where the law permits;
- discrimination arising from disability: treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability, unless the treatment can be justified;
- failure to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person where the duty applies;
- harassment: unwanted conduct of a type prohibited by law which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- victimisation: subjecting someone to a detriment because they have done, or are believed to have done, a protected act, such as making or supporting a complaint of discrimination.

The School will take seriously discriminatory language, conduct, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. Incidents will be considered promptly, fairly and sensitively under the appropriate School policy or procedure.

4. Our Approach to Pupils and Prospective Pupils

The School aims to ensure that pupils and prospective pupils are treated fairly in relation to admissions, education, access to benefits, facilities and services, disciplinary decisions and other aspects of School life.

Admissions decisions will be made in accordance with the School's Admissions Policy and published admissions arrangements. The School will not refuse admission or otherwise treat an applicant less favourably because of a protected characteristic, except where a lawful exception applies.

The School recognises that a pupil's disability, special educational needs, medical needs or other circumstances may require individual consideration. The School will consider reasonable adjustments and other appropriate support in accordance with its legal duties and its SEND and Learning Difficulties Policy and Accessibility Plan.

The School will consider individual circumstances and the reasonable adjustments or support that may be required. Decisions about admission or continued attendance may also involve legitimate considerations of the School's ability to meet a child's needs safely and appropriately, having regard to available resources, specialist provision and the impact on the wider School community.

5. Disability, Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

The School recognises that disability is a protected characteristic and that the duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory in some contexts. The School will seek to identify and reduce barriers to participation for disabled pupils and others where the relevant duty applies.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered on an individual basis. Depending on the circumstances, these may include adjustments to policies, practices, communication, timetabling, access arrangements, support or the provision of auxiliary aids or services.

The School's Accessibility Plan addresses the longer-term improvement of access for disabled pupils, including access to the curriculum, the physical environment and information.

The School will work with parents and, where appropriate, pupils and relevant professionals when considering adjustments or support. Parents are encouraged to share relevant information with the School at an early stage so that appropriate arrangements can be considered.

6. Teaching, Curriculum and School Life

The School will promote mutual respect and understanding through its curriculum, assemblies, PSHE, Relationships and Sex Education where applicable, RE and the wider life of the School.

Teaching and other activities will be delivered in a manner that promotes dignity and respect and does not unlawfully discriminate. The School may expose pupils to a broad range of ideas, issues and perspectives, including matters on which people hold differing views, while ensuring that teaching is age-appropriate and delivered with appropriate sensitivity.

The School will seek, where appropriate, to use positive images and role models, challenge prejudice and stereotypes, and help pupils understand the importance of respectful relationships and the impact of discriminatory or offensive language and behaviour.

The School may take lawful positive action where this is an appropriate and proportionate means of addressing disadvantage, meeting particular needs or encouraging participation.

7. Bullying, Harassment and Discriminatory Behaviour

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discriminatory behaviour are inconsistent with the School's values and will not be tolerated.

All allegations and concerns will be considered seriously and dealt with under the appropriate procedure, which may include the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, disciplinary procedures or grievance arrangements.

Where behaviour between pupils is related to a protected characteristic, the School will take care to respond appropriately and consistently and to consider both the immediate incident and any wider safeguarding, welfare or equality issues.

The School recognises that some forms of peer-on-peer conduct may also raise safeguarding concerns, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, and these will be managed in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

8. Equal Opportunities in Employment and Recruitment

The School is committed to fair and lawful recruitment, employment and professional development practices. Decisions relating to recruitment, appointment, training, promotion, pay, benefits, performance management, discipline and dismissal will be made on the basis of relevant merit, ability, experience, qualifications, conduct and the requirements of the role.

The School will make reasonable adjustments for job applicants and employees with disabilities where required by law.

The School's Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy sets out the safer recruitment and pre-employment processes applicable to appointments. Recruitment decisions will also be made in accordance with the School's equal opportunities commitments.

Staff who believe that they have experienced discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise the matter through the appropriate School procedure. Concerns will be handled as sensitively and confidentially as reasonably possible.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 Governing Body and proprietorial body

The Governing Body and proprietorial body are responsible for ensuring appropriate oversight of equality, inclusion and compliance within the School's governance arrangements.

9.2 Head and Senior Leadership Team

The Head and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for promoting the aims of this policy, ensuring that concerns are addressed appropriately and supporting a School culture in which dignity and respect are expected.

9.3 Bursar and managers

The Bursar and managers are responsible for ensuring that employment, operational and administrative practices within their areas of responsibility are consistent with this policy and for seeking advice where equality issues are complex or uncertain.

9.4 Staff and others working at the School

All members of staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and others working at the School are expected to comply with this policy, treat others with dignity and respect and raise concerns about discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour.

9.5 Pupils and parents

Pupils are expected to treat others with respect. Parents and carers are expected to support the School's aims and to engage constructively with the School where concerns arise.

10. English as an Additional Language

The School recognises that pupils may speak English as an additional language. A child's level of English may be relevant to the School's assessment of whether it can meet that child's educational and pastoral needs and whether the child will be able to access the curriculum and participate appropriately in School life.

The School will consider each applicant individually, taking account of age, educational background, existing English language skills and the support that may reasonably be available. English language ability will not be treated as a blanket requirement within this Equal Opportunities Policy.

Detailed admissions and assessment arrangements are set out in the School's Admissions Policy and related admissions procedures.

11. Financial Assistance and Access

Where the School offers bursaries, scholarships, discounts or other financial assistance, eligibility and award decisions will be made in accordance with the relevant published criteria and procedures. Such arrangements will be administered fairly and consistently, subject to any lawful positive action or other applicable exception.

12. Raising Concerns and Complaints

Pupils, parents, staff and others are encouraged to raise concerns about discrimination, harassment, victimisation or inequality promptly so that they can be considered and addressed.

The appropriate route will depend on the nature of the concern. It may include speaking to a member of staff or manager, using the School's safeguarding procedures, behaviour or anti-bullying procedures, grievance procedure or the School's formal complaints procedure.

No person should be treated adversely because they have raised a genuine concern or supported another person to do so. The School will take appropriate action where concerns are substantiated.

13. Training, Monitoring and Review

The School will provide staff with information, guidance or training on equality, inclusion, respectful conduct and related safeguarding matters as appropriate to their roles.

The School will monitor the operation of this policy through day-to-day management, complaints and concerns, safeguarding and behaviour information, recruitment and employment practices and other relevant information, where appropriate and proportionate.

The Head and Bursar will report significant equality or discrimination issues to the Governing Body where appropriate, while respecting confidentiality and data protection obligations.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if there are material changes in legislation, statutory guidance, regulatory requirements or School practice.

Appendix 1: Practical Guidance for Staff

When dealing with an equality or discrimination issue, staff should:

- listen carefully and respond calmly and respectfully;
- take the concern seriously and avoid making assumptions;
- record and report the matter through the appropriate School process;
- consider whether there are safeguarding implications;
- consider whether a disability, special educational need or other individual circumstance may require reasonable adjustments or further support;
- avoid informal arrangements that may create inconsistent or discriminatory treatment;
- seek advice from the Head, Bursar, DSL, SENCO or another appropriate senior colleague where the issue is complex; and
- maintain appropriate confidentiality and comply with data protection requirements.