Equality and Diversity Policy

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1 Principles

The Chantry School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and aspirational community in which every pupil and member of staff is valued, has a strong sense of belonging and is supported to achieve and thrive.

- promote equality of opportunity and challenge unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- maintain high expectations for all pupils and remove barriers to learning, participation, attendance and wider school life;
- recognise and respond to individual need through inclusive practice, reasonable adjustments and appropriate support;
- ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are reflected in leadership, curriculum, teaching, employment practice and the wider life of the school;
- foster respectful relationships and good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not;
- recognise that disadvantage can arise from a range of interacting factors and that disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and pupils with other vulnerabilities may require particular attention even where these are not themselves protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

2 Purpose and national context

This policy sets out how The Chantry School will meet its legal duties and embed equality and inclusion in day-to-day practice. It should be read alongside the School Development Plan, Accessibility Plan, SEND policy and information report, Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Relationships and Sex Education Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and relevant Trust employment policies

Statutory and regulatory context

- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017;
- Department for Education advice on the Equality Act 2010 for schools;
- current Department for Education guidance on workforce equalities in schools and colleges;
- statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance in force from 1 September 2026;
- current safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and suspension/permanent exclusion guidance where equality considerations are relevant.

National policy direction

The government's 2026 schools' white paper, Every child achieving and thriving, is not itself a source of statutory equality duties, but it provides important policy direction. It places inclusion at the heart of mainstream education, with high-quality adaptive teaching, early support, strong belonging, improved attendance and a clear ambition to reduce the disadvantage gap. The school will take account of this direction when developing its curriculum, teaching, pastoral systems and inclusion strategy.

3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- all pupils;
- all employees, including teaching and support staff;
- governors and trustees where relevant to school functions;
- trainees, volunteers and contractors;
- parents, carers, visitors, service providers and community partners when engaging with the school.

4 The Equality Act 2010 and Publick Sector Equality Duty

In carrying out its functions, the school must have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard means that equality considerations must be built into decision-making and policy development at the point decisions are made. They should not be treated as an afterthought.

Under the specific duties, the school will publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty annually and will publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Local Governing Body	Provides oversight and challenge, ensures the school gives due regard to equality in its decisions, approves significant policy changes and reviews published equality information and objectives.
Headteacher	Holds overall responsibility for implementation, provides visible leadership and ensures equality and inclusion are embedded within school priorities, culture and decision-making.
Deputy Headteacher / Designated Equality Lead	Provides strategic leadership for equality, diversity and inclusion, oversees implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and equality objectives, and monitors impact through the School Development Plan and wider quality assurance. Works with the E&D PAG Lead, the senior leader responsible for Personal Development and other relevant leaders to ensure agreed priorities are implemented effectively.
E&D PAG Lead	Supports the operational development of equality and diversity across the school, including leading the E&D Pupil Action Group (PAG) and contributing to pupil voice. Works collaboratively with the senior leader responsible for Personal Development to support the development of equality and diversity through Personal Development, including opportunities to strengthen pupils' understanding of equality, diversity, protected characteristics, respectful relationships and different communities and perspectives. Supports relevant E&D events, activities and partnership work and contributes to the evaluation and development of provision.
Senior Leaders and Managers	Apply the policy within their areas of responsibility, consider equality impact in decisions and monitor whether systems, curriculum and practice create or remove barriers.
Heads of Department / Line Managers	Promote inclusive practice within teams, ensure fair access to opportunities and support staff to make appropriate adjustments and respond to barriers.
All Staff	Uphold the policy, model respectful behaviour, challenge discrimination and harassment, apply inclusive practice and raise concerns through the appropriate school procedures.
Pupils	Are expected to treat others with respect, uphold school values and report discriminatory, prejudicial or bullying behaviour.

Parents and Carers	Are encouraged to work in partnership with the school, raise concerns promptly and contribute to consultation where appropriate.

6 Equality in employment

The school and Trust will seek to ensure that recruitment, employment, development, appraisal and access to opportunities are fair and comply with employment and equality law.

- Recruitment and selection processes will use clear, objective criteria and reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled applicants.
- The school will seek to reduce bias through consistent recruitment processes, appropriately trained panels and fair access to development opportunities.
- Where workforce data is collected and analysed, this will be lawful, proportionate, appropriately protected and used to identify patterns or barriers that may require action.
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled employees, workers and applicants, including adjustments to working arrangements, equipment or the physical environment where appropriate.
- Appraisal and professional development will be supportive and developmental, and will take account of equality considerations, including changes in role, disability-related needs and return from maternity or other relevant leave.
- The school will take proactive steps to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, and will maintain clear routes for staff to raise concerns.
- Flexible working, wellbeing and staff support arrangements will be considered fairly and in accordance with current Trust policy and employment law.

From 30 October 2026, strengthened employment protections will require employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees and will introduce further protection in relation to harassment by third parties. Trust and school procedures will be reviewed as required to reflect the legislation and associated guidance.

7 Equality, inclusion and provision for pupils

The school will combine high expectations with appropriate support so that pupils can participate fully in learning and the wider life of the school. Equality does not mean treating every pupil identically; it means ensuring that differences do not create avoidable barriers or unfair disadvantage.

- Curriculum design and teaching will maintain ambition for all pupils and use high-quality adaptive teaching to respond to a range of starting points, strengths and needs.
- Reasonable adjustments and auxiliary aids will be provided for disabled pupils where required by law, and the school will seek to anticipate common and predictable barriers through accessible, inclusive design.
- The school will use early, evidence-informed support where barriers to learning, participation, behaviour or attendance emerge, while maintaining high expectations for outcomes.

- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable groups will be considered explicitly in school improvement and quality assurance, while recognising that these categories are not all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- Attendance, behaviour and safeguarding systems will be applied fairly, with appropriate consideration of disability, special educational needs and other relevant circumstances. Adjustments do not remove high expectations; they support equitable access to them.
- The school will work with pupils, families and wider services to understand and remove barriers to participation and attendance.
- Enrichment, trips, clubs, leadership opportunities and wider school experiences will be planned so that pupils can participate as fully as possible, with reasonable adjustments and additional support where appropriate.
- The curriculum will remain ambitious, inclusive and accessible to all pupils and will promote respect for others. For 2026–27, the school's specific EDI development and monitoring priority will be led primarily through Personal Development rather than requiring each subject department to evidence a separate EDI curriculum initiative.
- Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education will be delivered in line with the statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026, including the requirement to promote respect and teach relevant content appropriately and impartially.

Belonging and respectful culture

The school recognises the relationship between belonging, engagement, attendance and achievement. We will seek to ensure that every pupil feels safe, seen, respected and able to participate. Discriminatory language, prejudice-related incidents, bullying and harassment will be challenged and addressed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

8 Equality objectives 2025–2029

The school's equality objectives are reviewed annually. Progress will be evaluated using a combination of quantitative information and the lived experience of pupils, staff and families. Measures will be interpreted carefully, particularly where cohort sizes are small.

Objective	What we aim to achieve	How progress will be reviewed
1. Outcomes and participation	Identify and reduce significant inequalities in attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour and participation where these affect pupils with protected characteristics or other groups experiencing disadvantage.	Annual analysis of relevant school data; identified gaps and actions recorded in school improvement planning; evidence of narrowing gaps or reduced barriers over time.
2. Inclusion and belonging	Strengthen a safe, respectful and inclusive culture in which pupils and staff feel valued, are able to participate and know how to report discrimination, harassment or prejudice-related behaviour.	Pupil and staff voice; behaviour and bullying information; attendance and participation patterns; actions arising from feedback and quality assurance.

3. Accessibility and inclusive practice	Improve access to curriculum, teaching, communication, the physical environment and wider school opportunities through reasonable adjustments, adaptive teaching and removal of common barriers.	Accessibility Plan review; SEND and inclusion quality assurance; participation in enrichment and trips; evidence that agreed adjustments are implemented and reviewed.
4. Workforce equality	Promote fair recruitment, development and progression and a working environment free from discrimination and harassment.	Review of recruitment and professional development processes; workforce information where appropriate and lawful; staff feedback; action taken in response to any identified barriers.

9 Equality information, impact and monitoring

- The school will publish information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty every year.
- Equality objectives will be published at least every four years and progress will be reviewed annually.
- Equality considerations will be integrated into the school's self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning.
- Leaders will consider the equality impact of significant policies, decisions and changes where these may affect people with protected characteristics. A proportionate equality impact assessment may be used where this supports effective decision-making.
- Monitoring may include attainment and progress, attendance, suspensions and exclusions, behaviour incidents, bullying and prejudice-related incidents, access to enrichment, recruitment, staff development and stakeholder feedback, where this is lawful and meaningful.
- Data relating to protected characteristics will be handled in accordance with data protection requirements. Small cohorts will be treated carefully to avoid identification or unreliable conclusions.
- The school will also monitor disadvantage, special educational needs and disabilities, English as an additional language and other relevant vulnerability indicators separately where these are important to understanding barriers and outcomes.

The school will align this work with its wider inclusion strategy and the government's inclusive mainstream expectations, including the use of whole-school approaches to remove common barriers to learning and participation.

10 Complaints, concerns and breaches

- Pupils and parents or carers may raise concerns through the appropriate school pastoral, safeguarding or complaints route.

- Staff should raise concerns through their Line Manager, the Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher, Trust Human Resources procedures or Whistleblowing Policy, as appropriate.
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation will be taken seriously and addressed under the relevant school or Trust procedure.
- Safeguarding concerns must always be reported through the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Retaliation or victimisation against a person who raises a concern, supports a complaint or provides evidence will not be tolerated.

11 Protected characteristics and prohibited conduct

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. Their application differs between education, employment and the provision of services; for example, age and marriage/civil partnership do not apply to pupils in the same way as they apply in employment.

Protected characteristic	Summary
Age	A person belonging to a particular age or age group. In schools, age is principally relevant to employment and some service functions rather than pupils.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	Protection applies to a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process, or part of a process, for the purpose of reassigning sex.
Marriage and civil partnership	Protection applies in employment. It does not operate as a protected characteristic for pupils in school education.
Pregnancy and maternity	Protection applies to pregnancy and maternity, with the detail of protection varying according to context, including employment and education.
Race	Includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or belief	Includes religious belief, philosophical belief and lack of religion or belief, where the legal tests are met.
Sex	For the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, the legal meaning of sex must be applied in accordance with current law and authoritative guidance, including the April 2025 Supreme Court judgment.
Sexual orientation	A person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, the opposite sex, or either sex.

Prohibited conduct

Direct discrimination: Treating a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination: Applying a provision, criterion or practice that places people sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage and which cannot be objectively justified.

Discrimination arising from disability: Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of disability, unless the treatment can be objectively justified.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment: Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect described in the Equality Act 2010.

Victimisation: Subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done, or are believed to have done, a protected act under the Equality Act 2010.

Discrimination by association or perception: In some circumstances, protection applies where treatment is because of association with someone who has a protected characteristic or because a person is perceived to have one.

The legal position in relation to sex and gender reassignment has developed following the Supreme Court judgment of April 2025. The school will follow the Equality Act 2010 as interpreted by the courts and the most current Department for Education and Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance. This will be done alongside the school's duties to safeguard pupils and protect the dignity and rights of all members of the school community.

12 Reasonable adjustments and positive action

Reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments is central to disability equality. For disabled pupils, the duty is anticipatory: the school should consider in advance the barriers disabled pupils may face rather than waiting for an individual difficulty to arise. Reasonable adjustments may include changes to policies or practice, auxiliary aids and services, or arrangements that reduce substantial disadvantage.

For employees and applicants, reasonable adjustments will be considered where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage. Individual circumstances will be considered in consultation with the person concerned and, where appropriate, Human Resources or Occupational Health.

Positive action

The Equality Act permits proportionate positive action in specified circumstances to alleviate disadvantage, meet different needs or increase participation by people who share a protected characteristic. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination. Any proposed positive action will be considered carefully and, where necessary, with appropriate legal or Human Resources advice.

13 Related policies and guidance

- Accessibility Plan
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report

- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Anti-Bullying arrangements
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Trust recruitment, appraisal, grievance, harassment and flexible working policies
- School Inclusion Strategy (to be published/updated in accordance with current Department for Education requirements)

Key national guidance used in this review

- Department for Education: Equality Act 2010: advice for schools.
- Department for Education: Workforce equalities requirements in schools and colleges: an outline (27 February 2026).
- Department for Education: Every child achieving and thriving – schools white paper (23 February 2026, corrected April 2026).
- Department for Education: Inclusive mainstream fund: best practice for schools (updated 7 August 2026).
- Department for Education: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance for introduction 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education: school/academy website requirements for Public Sector Equality Duty information and equality objectives.
- Ofsted: Equality duties on education inspection (from November 2025).
- Equality and Human Rights Commission: Technical guidance for schools in England and current updates to equality law guidance.
- The Key: Equality information and objectives – model policy and guidance; equality and inclusion guidance; schools white paper and inclusion strategy summaries.

14 Equality Impact

The School's responsibilities towards promoting equality, diversity and inclusion have been considered when drafting this policy.

15 Monitoring

This policy will be monitored annually and significant change approved by the Local Governing Body.

Policy review note: This policy should be reviewed earlier than the scheduled date if new statutory guidance or equality law comes into force, including finalised Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance following recent legal developments.