



**Belleville Wix Academy**

# **Equality Policy**

<b>Date of Policy</b>	Summer 2023
<b>Next Review date</b>	Summer 2026

## **Introduction**

At Belleville Wix Academy we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity in respect of our pupils, staff, parents and carers. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

We are also committed to identifying and dealing pro-actively with institutional barriers to equality.

As well as dealing effectively with equality related issues as they arise, we will also work to challenge bullying and stereotyping and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

## **Protected characteristics**

The Equality Act 2010 protects the following characteristics, known as “protected characteristics”:

- Gender, maternity and pregnancy
- Race, ethnicity or nationality
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Religion and belief
- Sexuality
- Age
- Marital status

## **Putting equality into policy and practice**

As well as the specific actions set out beneath, we ensure equality of opportunity in our day to day practice in the following ways.

## **Teaching and Learning**

We aim to provide all our pupils with the opportunity to succeed and to reach their potential for personal achievement. To do this we will:

1. Use contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils
2. Monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and identify, investigate and where appropriate, put resource into remedying gaps
3. Ensure equality of access for all pupils
4. Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
5. Use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability without stereotyping
6. Promote attitudes and values that will challenge discriminatory behaviour, bullying or prejudice

7. Provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures
8. Encourage classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning

### **Admissions and Exclusions**

Our admissions policy is governed by Wandsworth Borough Council's admission arrangements.

Exclusions will always be in line with our behaviour policy. We will annually review whether one or more groups with a particular characteristic is overrepresented and if so, this will be investigated to ensure against conscious or unconscious discrimination.

### **Staff**

We will always comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 when appointing staff.

Recruitment methods will ensure that appointments are based on merit and ability. For instance, we will use a shortlisting procedure which rates candidates against the competencies of the job and those addressed in their applications.

We will annually monitor appointments and promotions to ensure that no groups with a particular protected characteristic appear to be disadvantaged through conscious or unconscious prejudice or discrimination. Where particular groups appear to be underrepresented in comparison with the local community, we will investigate why, and may take steps to attract applicants from particular groups, subject always to the requirements from the Equality Act.

Bullying and harassment of staff on any grounds whatsoever will not be tolerated and the disciplinary procedure will be instigated wherever an initial investigation decides that there is a case to answer.

It is usually unlawful to ask applicants about their health prior to appointment, so health questionnaires will not be issued to applicants and any health related questions will be only those that are targeted, necessary and related to the job.

### **Equality and the Law**

The duties that the school has are as follows:

#### **1. Public Sector Equality Duty**

This requires the school to take positive steps to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between those with protected characteristics and those who do not share it; and to foster good relations.

With the PSED, as with the previous general duties, schools are subject to the need to have due regard to the three elements outlined above. What having "due regard" means in

practice has been defined in case law and means giving relevant and proportionate consideration to the duty. For schools this means:

- Decision makers in schools must be aware of the duty to have “due regard” when making a decision or taking an action and must assess whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- Schools should consider equality implications before and at the time that they develop policy and make decisions, not as an afterthought, and they need to keep them under review on a continuing basis.
- The PSED has to be integrated into the carrying out of the school’s functions, and the analysis necessary to comply with the duty has to be carried out seriously, rigorously and with an open mind – it is not just a question of ticking boxes or following a particular process.
- Schools can’t delegate responsibility for carrying out the duty to anyone else.

The school is required to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED and must also prepare and publish [equality objectives](#).

## **2. Accessibility Plan**

The Equality Act 2010 requires the school to have an [Accessibility Plan](#) which must show how the school is:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.
- improving the physical environment of schools to enable those with disabilities to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided.
- improving the availability of accessible information to those with disabilities.

## **3. Equality Act non-discrimination provisions and duty to provide auxiliary aids**

In respect of pupils and staff, the school may not treat a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or apply a policy or practice which has a discriminatory effect and is not justified. In addition, harassment based on protected characteristics is unlawful, as is victimisation (that is, unfavourable treatment) of those who complain about discrimination or breaches of the Act.

Finally, the school must make reasonable adjustments to policies, criteria and practices for disabled pupils and staff, so that barriers to access to the school (or workplace) are tackled. Auxiliary aids (that is, specialist equipment) must be provided where it is reasonable for the school to do so in light of factors such as cost and practicability.

### **Reporting incidents of discrimination or potential equality issues and how to raise an issue**

Equality related complaints regarding teaching or other staff should be addressed to the Headteacher in writing.

Parents who wish to complain to the school regarding an equality related incident should contact the Headteacher in writing, with details of the complaint.

Equality related incidents between pupils will be dealt with as follows:

1. Incident investigated – Headteacher responsible for delegation of investigation to appropriately senior, or trained, staff member of the trust.
2. Once investigation complete, investigator to consult with Headteacher to agree outcomes.
3. Headteacher to meet with alleged victim and their family and alleged perpetrator and their family to set out findings and proposed action, in relation to individuals.
4. Take into account any further information as a result of the meetings.
5. Incident form to be completed and filed.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years. The equality objectives and accessibility plan will also be every three years or earlier as necessary.

### **Publishing**

We will publish this policy on our school website and a hard copy will be available to parents or staff on request.

## **Appendix One - Definitions**

**Discrimination** is unfair treatment towards another or a group of individuals who share one or some of the protected characteristics.

**Direct Discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic.

**Discrimination by Association** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because someone they are associated with, such as a friend, family member or carer, has a protected characteristic.

**Direct Discrimination by Perception** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because someone believes they have a protected characteristic, regardless of whether their perception is correct or not.

**Indirect discrimination** can be more difficult to identify and sometimes is not intended. It can occur due to a lack of understanding of the law or a genuine error of judgement about an individual. For example, a policy that is applied to all individuals equally may inadvertently disadvantage individuals or groups who have a protected characteristic. It is therefore essential that all aspects of school life and policies are scrutinised carefully to avoid any unlawful provision, criterion, or practice.

**Victimisation** occurs when an individual has either raised a complaint or grievance that they have been discriminated against based on having a protected characteristic; or has supported someone who has raised a complaint or grievance.

**Harassment** is any form of unwanted behaviour intended to violate an individual's dignity or create an environment which may be described as hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive. The victim will be subject to this harassment based on a protected characteristic or the perception that they have a protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

**Prejudice** can be conscious or unconscious and involves stereotypes, prejudgements, and beliefs (which are usually negative) about an individual, or group of people, based on a protected characteristic.