EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in their next stage of life.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION - POLICY STATEMENT

Approval Committee:	**Finance and General Purposes**
Author:	**Headteacher**
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Sensitive information on some students with protected characteristics

Some information in relation to protected characteristics we regard as sensitive. It is not appropriate for us to collect information from students or their families in relation to some protected characteristics such as gender identity and sexual orientation. However, we are aware that there may be a number of equality issues for these students and we are committed to understanding these.

School Contextual Data

UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) governs how we use, process, and store sensitive information. Compliance in schools requires careful management of personal data, including obtaining consent, ensuring data security, and providing transparency.

Where GDPR allows, we obtain and frequently track School Contextual Data to hold ourselves accountable. For example, this includes data taken on the gender divide and a breakdown of ethnicity and religion across both students and staff.

1. Aims

At The Courtyard Islington we work hard to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between all those within our school community. We do this with regard to the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 as they apply in a schools context.

We also work hard to eliminate discrimination arising from disability.

2. Legislation, protected characteristics and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010 (the Act), which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects everyone in Great Britain from discrimination.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools (inter alia) to publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives.

- This document is also based on guidance contained on the Key website (https://thekeysupport.com/) and on Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools and on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance for Schools in England.

Protected characteristics

The Act covers the following protected characteristics:

- Sex
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Disability
- Marriage and civil partnership

Paragraph 1.15 of the DfE guidance linked above notes that age is only a protected characteristic in schools in relation to employment and the provision of goods and services. It doesn't apply to students, even if they're over 18. This is also true for protection based on marriage and civil partnership, which applies to employment but not to students - see section 85 of the Equality Act 2010.

Paragraph 2.8 of the DfE guidance linked above explains section 89(2) of The Equality Act noting that the content of the school curriculum is excluded from the Act. This is different from the delivery of the curriculum, which is covered.

3. Roles and responsibilities - our duties under the Equality Act

The 'responsible body' for the purposes of this Act for our school is the governing body. As the responsible body, we are also liable for any discriminatory actions taken by individuals acting on our behalf as well as those taken by individual employees of the school subject to demonstrating that all reasonable steps have been taken to stop such actions.

See Para 1.6 of the DfE guidance.

To students - We are committed to ensuring the school does not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student:

- In relation to admissions;
- In the way we provide education for students;
- In the way we provide students access to any benefit, facility or service;
- By excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

See Para 1.5 of the DfE guidance.

To staff - We are also responsible for preventing discrimination against school staff, including prospective and former school staff. For more information on that, see these guides published by Acas https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-bullying-and-harassment and those published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

To parents/carers and the public - In some circumstances, if we open any of our facilities to the public, a school is regarded as a 'service provider' under part 3 of the Act. We are responsible for preventing discrimination against any person that uses our facilities (unless we let our premises to another organisation, e.g. a sports club, then the organisation using the premises is responsible) and we have a duty to make accommodations for all parents/carers of students. For example, if a parent/carer is deaf, the school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the parent can communicate with school staff, which might include providing a sign language interpreter so the deaf parent/carer can participate as fully as those parents/carers who aren't deaf. Or, if a parent has mental health difficulties, the school may adapt its practices in relation to, for example, the timing and location of meetings, the amount of information delivered at any one time or any deadlines for the parent to respond.

Responsibilities

The Equality Act introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), made up of general and specific duties. Under the general duty, we are required to 'have due regard to the need to':

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics, between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The specific duty itself requires us to:

1. Publish information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the PSED; and
2. Prepare and publish equality objectives.

The entire staff team, parents/carers, visitors, students and volunteers are all responsible for:

- Challenging bias and stereotypes;
- Refraining from behaviour that constitutes discrimination;
- Harassment, victimisation or bullying; and
- Reporting prejudice-related incidents.

The school's procedure for dealing with prejudice-related incidents can be referred to in our respective Positive Behaviour for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policies.

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, students and parents/ carers.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis and publish them to the headteacher.

The equality link governor is Susan Miller-Jones. She will:

- Monitor plans and policies related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and validate that these are being well implemented.
- Collaborate with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead Teacher to gain insights on how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embedded into The Courtyard School's ethos, vision, mission, teaching and learning. This will support the Full Governing Board to hold staff to account, drive continuous improvement and assure that everyone is represented and celebrated.
- Challenge the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead Teacher to verify the objectives specified in The Courtyard School's Equality Information and Objectives Statement are successfully accomplished.
- Possess a solid understanding of the legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to confirm The Courtyard School and its Full Governing Board are legally compliant and inclusive.
- Undertake appropriate equality and diversity training.
- Report back to the full governing board regarding any issues.

The headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students.
- Monitor success in achieving the equality objectives and report back to governors.

The designated members of staff for equality are Joe Lawn, Bruce Cockburn and Jordan Damiri. They will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students.
- Meet with the equality link governor to raise and discuss any issues, provide updates, share progress, and collaborate on new ideas and initiatives.
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs and deliver training as necessary.
- Organise and oversee a number of events or trips annually to celebrate important awareness days and promote inclusivity within the school community.
- Deliver 1 CPD training sessions per year to build staff capacity and understanding of Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and practices.
- Collect and analyse staff and student surveys annually to gather feedback and insights on the school's progress in promoting Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Fulfilling our public sector equality duty

The school does not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from harassment or victimisation of anyone within our school communities, and we are opposed to all forms of prejudice. All school staff are expected to have due regard to this document and to work to achieve the equality objectives as set out in section 8.

4. Eliminating discrimination and unlawful behaviour under the Act

The school is aware of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with its non-discrimination provisions. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, and are asked to read and sign this policy on an annual basis. New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive short refresher training every September on areas of equality, diversity and inclusion.

The designated members of staff monitor equality issues and report to the equality link governor and all governors in their termly report.

Unlawful behaviour under the Act

Direct discrimination - This is what normally comes to mind when you think about discrimination: intentionally treating someone less favourably due to a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination - This is where a policy or practice, though applied equally to all students, has a disproportionate impact on a group of pupils sharing a protected characteristic. For example, a tribunal finding that a school's uniform policy that banned long hair was discriminatory against Rastafarian boys.

No one should discriminate against someone because of something that arises from their protected characteristic. For example, excluding a student with aggressive behaviour, where that behaviour is the result of the student's SEND.

Reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people where they are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people in relation to policies, provisions and practices, auxiliary aids and services and physical features is a cornerstone of the Act.

We comply with the duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people, be they students, staff, prospective students or staff, volunteers or members of the public. In some cases, treating disabled people more favourably than non-disabled people may be necessary.

Please see - https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/reasonable-adjustments-disabled-pupils and our Accessibility Plan for further information.

Harassment

The legal definition of harassment is: 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 can be as direct as bullying someone for the colour of their skin or as broad as doing or saying something that unintentionally offends someone on the basis of gender.

Under the legal definition, harassment only covers disability, race, sex or pregnancy and maternity, and not religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This doesn't mean schools are free to harass students with these characteristics, only that doing so will be considered direct discrimination.

Victimisation

Much like the rules for whistleblowing, it is unlawful to retaliate against someone who is taking action under the Equality Act or supporting someone who is taking action under the Equality Act. The Equality Act defines protected acts as:

- Claiming or complaining of discrimination under the Act.
- Giving evidence in someone else's claims under the Act.
- Claiming someone has violated the Act.
- Taking any other action under the Act.

The EHRC's Technical Guidance for Schools in England gives the example of a teacher giving a student a detention because he believes the student will support another student's sexual harassment claim. This would amount to victimisation of the student.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people that are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities or gay students who are being subjected to homophobic bullying).
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim students to pray at prescribed times).
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school clubs).

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Analyse student attainment, progress, admissions attendance and exclusions data of the different protected groups to determine strengths and areas for improvement, set objectives and implement actions in response and report this information to the governing body.
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups (e.g. declines in incidents of homophobic or transphobic bullying).
- Report further data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own students, staff, parents/carers and visitors.
- Report data about any issues associated with particular protected characteristics, which could also affect recruitment, promotion, training, disciplinary action and complaints. This will be reported to the governing body.

6. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, Global Citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.

- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Students will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local community. We take positive action to ensure that people with a range of different identities engage with our school communities, for example guest speakers, arts groups, school governors, and volunteers etc. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies and organising school trips and activities based around the local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, the school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds and cultures. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the school's activities, such as extra-curricular trips and enrichment clubs. We also work with parents /carers to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures including regular celebrations of different religious and cultural festivals, opportunities for families to share and experience each other's cultures e.g. sharing food, cooking together and through regular community coffee mornings and breakfasts.
- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach e.g. EqualiTeach and the Islington Local Authority Equalities Advisor for schools.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The schools ensure they give due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The schools always consider the impact of significant decisions on particular groups, often consulting with parents/carers and providing ways to hear both student voice and parent/carer voice (e.g. parent mail, weekly catch up calls). For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, an equality impact assessment is considered as part of the planning process (there is no written record of this to minimis e teacher administration workload), and the schools consider whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays;
- Is accessible to all students;
- Has equivalent facilities for all students;
- Is mindful that parents/carers of children of all genders, races and religions are actively encouraged to allow their children to attend residential trips.

General Exceptions for Schools

The DfE guidance (see chapter 2) explains exceptions which are set out in the Equality Act including:

- As a rule, a school cannot have a rule or policy which applies to all students but which is likely to have an adverse effect on pupils with any protected characteristic – for example, having a rule that all students must demonstrate physical fitness before being admitted to the school – unless the school can show that this is done for a legitimate interest and it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Positive action means a school can take targeted action to address the disadvantages experienced by a specific group. For example, we could have a special catch-up tuition for children of migrant workers without having to provide the same service to students who don't fall into that group. We would have to show that this is a proportionate way to achieve a specific goal.

8. Equality objectives

In order to fulfil its Public Sector Equality Duty, the school collects equality information on students and staff.

Using this information, each school analyses information including student progress and attainment data, student attendance data, student exclusions data, student access to extra-curricular activities and staff recruitment data in terms of protected characteristics. The schools also conduct surveys with staff, students and parents/carers to identify areas that they feel the school is doing well in and areas for improvement.

This information is used to identify any discrepancies between people from different groups and to identify equality objectives. The school publishes this information annually in the school newsletter (parents and students survey) and in an email to staff and governors (staff survey).

Equality objective 1: Ensure students of all gender are able to access learning over the course of this academic year (2025-2026):

- We will continue to identify additional SEMH barriers in our female students.
- We will implement interventions of CAMHS, Art Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and pastoral support in particular for female students struggling with SEMH who may be experiencing this as a barrier to learning.
- We will develop teaching and support staff skills to support those who present with EBSA, which is particularly prominent in our female students.
- We will design our teaching and learning practices so that all students feel comfortable in their learning environments.
- We will evaluate our high-quality teaching practices, focusing on inclusivity and removing all barriers to learning.

Equality objective 2: Disability –Our students primarily hold a formal diagnosis or display traits of Autism Spectrum Condition. However, we have identified students who exhibit additional SEND. Over the course of this academic year (2025-2026):

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- We will continue to assess our students using the Graduated Approach for early support and intervention.
- We will develop teaching and support staff skills to support those who present with additional SEND.
- We will design our teaching and learning practices so that all students achieve their educational outcomes regardless of their SEND.
- We will evaluate our high-quality teaching practices, focusing on inclusivity and removing all barriers to learning.

9. Monitoring arrangements

- The headteacher will update the equality information we publish, described in sections 4 to 7 above, at least every year.
- This document will be reviewed by the governing body at least every year .

- This document will be approved by the governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This document links to the following policies/documents:

- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Disability and Accessibility
- Risk Register
- Curriculum
- Positive Behaviour for Learning
- Anti-Bullying
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Staff Handbook
- Application Forms for prospective employees
- Information pack for prospective employees