

TALBOT HEATH SCHOOL TRUST LTD

SINGLE EQUALITY POLICY

Date last adopted: 21st March 2023

Date for next adoption: Spring Term 2026

Purpose:

This policy reflects the Equality Act 2010 which harmonises and replaces previous legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The policy therefore supersedes all previous school policies on Accessibility and Equal Opportunities. Through this policy Talbot Heath School will fulfil its public duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in connection with disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual identity, and where appropriate, age (applicable to employees only) and all Protected Characteristics. The guiding principles in this policy refer to all individuals and therefore are equally applicable to students, staff, governors and visitors to Talbot Heath. As a boarding school, with boarders of many nationalities, Talbot Heath is particularly aware of the importance of our equalities policy.

Talbot Heath is mindful that we are a selective all-girls school offering education that is based on sound Christian and moral principles, founded on the teaching of the Church of England. The Governing Board has a duty to secure, reserve and develop the character of the school as an independent Church of England School. In line with this duty and the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003, which state that schools designated as having a “religious character” may choose to appoint those staff whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the school, or who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets, or who give, or are willing to give, RE/PR at the school in accordance with those tenets*, applicants for all posts (teaching or non-teaching) may be asked about their willingness and ability to support the religious ethos of the school.

Legal framework

Duties as identified in the Equality Act 2010 and its Schedules. There are nine equality strands (known as Protected Characteristics):

- disability (*from 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply*)
- ethnicity (including Gypsy and Traveller groups)
- gender
- gender identity and transgender (transphobia)
- faith, religion and belief
- marriage and civil partnership
- sexual orientation (biphobia and homophobia)
- pregnancy and maternity
- age

Each relates to direct discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination; harassment and victimization. Talbot Heath School will seek to achieve positive action in respect of the Act.

It should be noted that all schools have a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and failure to do so could result in legal action against the school's Governing Body. Employees of the school acting on behalf of the Governing Body are also liable for their own discriminatory actions.

Good Practice

1. We strive to achieve a cohesive community and expect that students respect one another and behave with respect to one another, and that their parents feel fully engaged in the school.
2. We aim to enhance a wider sense of community locally, as well as in the context of the UK and the World communities.
3. We support the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998. Through our policies and actions, we undertake to ensure that every child and young person is healthy, safe, is able to enjoy and achieve in their learning experience, and is able to contribute to the wider community.
4. We monitor and log incidents that discriminate against students and young people or adults in our school with protected characteristics, e.g. racist, homophobic or transphobic bullying.

Guiding principles

In fulfilling the legal obligations and establishing our school ethos, we are guided by 9 principles:

Principle 1: All learners are of equal value

We see all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation *, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender or gender identity
- whatever their sexual identity

Principle 2: We recognise and respect difference

As a school we actively celebrate diversity through our ethos, our curriculum, extra-curricular activities and our contact with the wider community at home and abroad. Treating people equally (Principle 1 above) does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. Policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must nevertheless take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people may face, in relation to:

- disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made
- ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised
- gender, so that all gender identities are recognised and reasonable adjustments are made to support trans and gender questioning pupils.
- sexual identity, so that children's experiences are recognised

Principle 3: We foster positive attitudes and relationships and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

Policies, procedure and activities promote:

- positive attitudes and actions towards disabled people, good relations between disabled and non-disabled people, and an absence of harassment of disabled people
- positive interaction, good relations and dialogue between groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin or national status, and an absence of prejudice related bullying and incidents
- mutual respect and good relations between all pupils and staff, whatever their gender identity and expression

Principle 4: We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development

Policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion and in continuing professional development

- whether or not they are disabled
- whatever their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation*, national origin or national status
- whatever their gender and sexual identity and with full respect for legal rights relating to pregnancy and maternity

Principle 5: We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between those with Protected Characteristics and all other members of the school community.

Principle 6: We consult and involve widely

People affected by a policy or activity should be consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones. Consultation involves all those with Protected Characteristics and all other members of the school community.

Principle 7: We address prejudice and prejudice related bullying

We oppose all forms of prejudice which stand in the way of fulfilling the legal duties listed above

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed against religious groups and communities, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and those that are directed against Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum
- prejudice reflecting sexism or homophobia

Principle 8: Society as a whole should benefit

Policies and activities should benefit society as a whole, both locally and nationally, by fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life of all those with Protected Characteristics.

Principle 9: Support for gender questioning or trans pupils at Talbot Heath School

At Talbot Heath School gender questioning or trans pupils gender identities are respected and reasonable measures accommodated to ensure we meet Duty of Care issues. We acknowledge and will act to safeguard all gender questioning or trans pupils including non-binary or genderless individuals.

As part of our support for trans and gender questioning pupils we strive to:

- take our lead from pupils and involve them in making decisions that affect them
- involve family members, with the agreement of the trans pupil or student, in making decisions about their child
- respect and use the pupil's / student's new name, pronouns and title (and apologise for any mistakes made)
- take confidentiality seriously and not 'out' a trans child or young person without their permission including to parents and carers
- enable full access to enrichment activities for trans pupils and students

- use the curriculum and other opportunities to challenge gender stereotyping, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia
- identify, record and challenge all prejudiced incidents and bullying including that which is sexist, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic
- support pupils who identify as trans and refer them and their families, when needed, to national or local services

Relationship to other policies

- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying
- Assessment (Junior and Senior)
- Attendance
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Careers
- Curriculum
- Educational Visits
- First Aid
- Health and Safety
- ICT, Mobile equipment and eSafety
- More Able
- Recruitment and Selection
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Scholarships and Awards
- Special Educational Needs

Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

All equality information for pupils and staff (excluding attainment and data) will be monitored by the Head's PA and reported to the Governing Body on an annual basis.

Curriculum

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum effectively. When it is reviewed, each curriculum subject or area will ensure that teaching and learning will reflect our Guiding Principles as set out above.

Talbot Heath aims to provide a curriculum that:

- provides opportunities to explore, understand and prevent stereotypes and all forms of prejudice
- Discusses and challenges sexism, gender stereotyping and transphobia when it arises and as part of planned opportunities in PSHE education
- Participates in events such as LGBT History Month and ensures the visibility of trans people and their achievements. Mark LGBT History Month, Transgender Day of Visibility and/or International Day against Homophobia and Biphobia and ensure that trans people, including trans people of colour are represented in this.
- PE and Physical Activity - allows trans pupils and students to participate in PE and physical activity (including swimming) and enables access to changing facilities where they feel safe and in line with their gender identity if this is their wish.

Attainment and progress data will be analysed to ensure that all pupils are supported effectively.

Staff and Governors

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

The Head is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy, for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

All staff are expected to:

- adhere to this policy;
- promote equality and inclusion in their classrooms, amongst colleagues and with visitors to the school;
- deal with and report any prejudice related incidents that may occur;
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect our Guiding Principles;
- attend appropriate training that enables Talbot Heath School to keep up-to-date with equality issues.

All staff and Governors will exercise their Safeguarding responsibilities in relation to equality matters and ensure that any bullying or challenging of Human Rights is addressed immediately.

Related papers:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
- Parliamentary Briefing Paper 06972 – Faith Schools: FAQs, 14 October 2015
- Managing Staff Employment in Schools (statutory guidance), 22 April 2013