



# MOUNT

ST MARY'S | BARLBOROUGH HALL

## Equal Opportunities and Accessibility Policy

### ISI Regulatory Code – 17a

Policy Written by:	SLT
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This Policy is for:	Barlborough Hall School and Mount St Mary's College
Linked Policies:	Accessibility Plan, Behaviour, Anti Bullying SEND, British Values, RE, Safeguarding, Curriculum Admissions and Recruitment Policy
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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 Our school's aims statement values the individuality of all of our children. We are committed to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum, and have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter.

This Equal Opportunities Policy extends to adults: staff, parents and carers.

1.2 This policy is in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, which replaced all previous legislation in relation to equal opportunities. In line with that legislation, it seeks to ensure that this school provides equal opportunity for all children and adults, giving due regard to groups with 'protected characteristics', in terms of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity and marriage/civil partnership, in accordance with the Act.

## **2 Aims and objectives**

2.1 We aim to act positively and have due regard to the need to challenge and eliminate unlawful discrimination – within both our school and our community.

2.2 We aim not to discriminate against anyone, be they staff, pupil or parent, on the grounds of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief, age, level of educational need or background.

2.3 We aim to promote the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school. We recognise that doing this may entail treating some pupils differently.

2.4 We seek to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school.

2.5 We constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups of pupils.

2.6 We aim to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training processes are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone.

2.7 We aim to challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur.

2.8 We value each pupil's worth, celebrating the individuality and cultural diversity of our school community, and showing respect for all minority groups.

2.9 We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are often caused by poor self-image and also aware of the relationship between that and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

### **3 Racial equality**

3.1 In our school we will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
- seek to educate pupils in a manner which promotes community cohesion in a multi-cultural society.

3.2 We do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will deal with it in accordance with school procedures

3.3 We endeavour to make our school and its environment welcoming to all minority groups. We promote an understanding of diverse cultures through the topics studied by the children, and we reflect this in the displays of work shown around the school.

3.4 Our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for minority ethnic groups. So, for example, in the curriculum topic on religious festivals, the children learn the importance of Diwali to Hindus and Sikhs.

### **4 Disability non-discrimination**

4.1 Some children in our school may have disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all within the school. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not disadvantaged compared with non-disabled children

4.2 The legal definition of 'disability' expressively excludes certain conditions: a tendency to set fire, steal, physical or sexual abuse of other persons, exhibitionism and voyeurism. A pupil with a disability is not protected by the Equality Act in relation to these specific behaviours. With one exception:

4.3 Where a child has a tendency to physically abuse others due to their disability (eg an autistic child who lashes out at staff), such child has the usual degree of protection under the Equality Act. The school must make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting them at a substantial disadvantage. Indirect discrimination can be justified where it is a proportionate means to achieving a legitimate aim.

4.4 The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children and adults full access to the school premises and to all areas of learning.

4.5 Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, ensure access, modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities if children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

- 4.6 Barlborough Hall School has an ongoing action plan which is reviewed regularly and this accessibility policy which states:
- We are committed to providing an accessible environment which values and includes all pupils, staff, parents and visitors regardless of their educational, physical, sensory, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural needs. We are committed to challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion.
  - An Accessibility Plan will be drawn up to cover a three year period. The plan will be updated regularly

## **5. Gender equality**

- 5.1 We realise that although gender is one of the key factors affecting educational performance, it affects different sub-groups of boys and girls in different ways. Social class, ethnic origin and local context are all strongly linked to the relative achievement of boys and girls. We also seek to ensure that policies designed to improve the attainment of one gender group does not do so at the expense of the other.

## **6 The role of the class teacher**

- 6.1 Class teachers recognise the possibility of their own prejudices, but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. We do not knowingly discriminate against any child
- 6.2 When selecting classroom material, teachers strive to provide resources which give positive images, and which challenge stereotypical images of minority groups, or of boys and girls. All staff ensure that the language they use does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudice.
- 6.3 We seek to implement this policy when designing schemes of work, both in our choice of topics to study, and in how we approach sensitive issues. So, for example, history topics include examples of the significant contributions women have made in this country's history. In geography, the teacher attempts to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia, and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world.
- 6.4 All our teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. We record any incidents in the school behaviour file and draw them to the immediate attention of the headteacher.

## **7 The role of the Headteacher**

- 7.1 It is the headteacher's role to:
- ensure that the school's policy on Equal Opportunities is implemented effectively;
  - ensure that all staff are aware of the school policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
  - ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy, so that no one is discriminated against;

- promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum for pupils, and in providing opportunities for professional development for staff;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the school. Respect is of the key Christian values adopted by the school.
- manage all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due seriousness, and in line with this policy.

## **8 The role of governors**

8.1 In this policy statement, the governing body has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and accessibility, and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

8.2 The governing body collects, analyses and evaluates a range of school data. We check that all pupils are making the best possible progress and that no group of pupils is underachieving. To do this we monitor:

- admissions;
- attainment;
- exclusions;
- rewards and sanctions;
- parents' and pupils' questionnaires.

8.3 The governing body seeks to ensure that people from the 'protected groups' as defined by The Equality Act 2010 (see section 1.2 above) are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school. The governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever background or minority group a child may come from.

8.4 The governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

8.5 The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their gender, religion or race. So, for example, all children have access to the full range of the curriculum, and regulations regarding school uniform will be applied equally to boys and girls. If a child's religion has a bearing on school uniform, then the school will deal with each case sensitively, and with respect for the child's cultural traditions.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

9.1 It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The governors will therefore:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process, so that no one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against;

- require the headteacher to report to governors annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take into serious consideration any complaints from parents/carers, staff or pupils regarding equal opportunity;
- monitor the school's Behaviour Policy, and the numbers of exclusions, to make sure that pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years or sooner if it is considered necessary.

This Accessibility part of this policy and the accessibility plan are drawn up in compliance with current legislation and requirements as specified in Schedule 10, relating to Disability, of the Equality Act 2010. School Governors are accountable for ensuring the implementation, review and reporting on progress of the Accessibility Plan over a prescribed period. This policy should be read along with our School Improvement Plan and SEND policy.

- The Accessibility plan will contain relevant actions to:
  - ▮ Improve access to the **physical environment** of the school, adding specialist facilities as necessary. This covers reasonable adjustments to the physical environment of the school for pupils, staff, parents and visitors, and provision of physical aids to access education.
  - ▮ Increase access to the **curriculum** for pupils with a disability, expanding and making reasonable adjustments to the curriculum as necessary to ensure that pupils with a disability are as equally prepared for life as are able-bodied pupils; (If a school fails to do this they are in breach of the Equalities Act 2010). This covers teaching and learning as well as access to the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after-school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers reasonable adjustments in the provision specialist **aids and equipment**, which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.
  - ▮ Improve and make reasonable adjustments to the delivery of **written information** to pupils, staff, parents and visitors with disabilities. Examples might include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks and information about the school and school events. The information should be made available in various preferred formats within a reasonable time frame.
- The Action plan for accessibility relates to the Access Audit of the School, which is undertaken regularly. It may not be feasible to undertake some of the works during the life of any one Accessibility Plan and therefore some items will roll forward into subsequent plans. A further Audit will be carried out prior to the end of each three-year plan, in order to inform the development of a new Action Plan.

- This Accessibility Policy and its associated plan will be published on the school's website.
- The school's complaints procedure covers the Accessibility plan
- Information about our Accessibility Plan will be published in the Governors Annual Report to parents (statutory)
- The Accessibility policy and associated Accessibility Plan will be approved by full Governing body and monitored by the Finance Committee (if necessary) on an annual basis
- The Plan will be monitored by ISI as part of their inspection cycle
- We acknowledge that there is a need for on-going awareness raising and training for staff and governors in the matter of disability discrimination and the need to inform attitudes on this matter. This will form part of each Accessibility Plan.