



## Equal Access Policy

This policy applies to all pupils and staff of Abbot's Hill, including EYFS.

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- **SEND Policy**
- **SEND Information Report**
- **English as an Additional Language Policy**
- **Gifted and Talented Policy**
- **Pupil Attendance Policy**
- **Supporting Pupils in school with Medical Conditions Policy**
- **Admissions Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**

### 2. The school community

2.1 Abbot's Hill School is an independent day school for girls aged 4-16 years and a day nursery and pre-school for girls and boys from 6 months. We are a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Abbot's Hill has a Christian ethos and tradition. The school community is made up of children, parents, legal guardians, teachers and other employees and governors from many different races, creeds and backgrounds.

### 3. Admissions

3.1 The school welcomes applicants from all backgrounds for both the Senior School and the Prep School (including EYFS). All candidates for admission will be treated equally, irrespective of their, or their parents' race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, orientation, property, birth or other status. The school will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. For further details please see the **Admissions Policy**.

### 4. Education

4.1 The school is mainstream and English-speaking. The school will provide appropriate support for children with special educational needs or for whom English is not their first language. The school's **SEND Policy** and **SEN Information Report** includes details about the welfare and educational provision for pupils with special educational needs.

### 5. Related Policies

5.1 This **Equal Access Policy** is in accordance with and must be read and applied in conjunction with all of the school's policies, including those listed above. Policies are available on the school website and can be made available in accessible formats if required. The school also has an Accessibility Plan which can be accessed in the staff school policies folder.

## 6. Policy Statement

6.1 **Equal Treatment:** The school recognises the benefits of having a diverse school Community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. The school is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and will promote equal treatment for all members of the school community. In the provision of equal opportunities, the school recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of:

- gender;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- gender reassignment;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief);
- sex or sexual orientation;
- (in the case of adult members of the School Community) marital or civil partnership status; and
- age.

6.2 These are called the Protected Characteristics. The school also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need (SEN) or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

6.3 The school aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform to the principle of equal opportunities. The school will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the personal, social, health, careers and economic education (PSHCEE) programme, through assemblies, through the supportive school culture and through the school's policies.

6.4 Inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged. Children will be encouraged to value and respect all those they encounter at or through the school.

## 7. Approach

7.1 The principles of equal treatment guide the school's approach both to the admission of pupils and to the establishment of its expectations of pupils during their time at the school. The principles are also employed to guide the school's approach to the provision of access to facilities, services, opportunities and responsibilities.

## 8. Forms of discrimination

8.1 **Types: Discrimination** may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

8.2 **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out above. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their

association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity).

- 8.3 **Indirect discrimination:** Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race.
- 8.4 **Discrimination arising from disability:** Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 8.5 **Disability and Special Needs:** The school is inclusive and welcomes pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. The school maintains and promotes a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with special educational needs in all its activities and will not treat pupils and their parents or legal guardians less favourably on these grounds without proper justification. However, at present, the school's facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited but all that is reasonable will be done to ensure that the school's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone.
- 8.6 **Disability:** Subject to the above constraints, the school welcomes applications for school places from people who have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Every application will be processed and considered fairly. The school will make reasonable adjustments to its systems and procedures in order to accommodate disabilities of which it has been made aware as set out in the **SEND Policy**.
- 8.7 **SEN:** The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years is adhered to in the school. The Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and the Learning Support Co-ordinators are available for consultation. Children with special needs may have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Pupil Passport which will be reviewed and monitored carefully. Please see the **SEND Policy** for further details of the procedures offered by the school to assist these children.
- 8.8 **Reasonable Adjustments:** The school has an on-going duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils in respect of the education and associated services provided to ensure that such pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils. In making "reasonable adjustments", the school is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils. The school will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids or services.
- 8.9 **Confidentiality:** The school will have due regard to any request by a parent or pupil (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.
- 8.10 **Access:** The school will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the school will take steps to improve access for

disabled users of the premises. The school has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised as necessary.

## 9. Education and associated services

- 9.1 **Equal access:** The school will provide all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, mental health, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.
- 9.2 **Positive action:** The school may provide pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.
- 9.3 **Exclusions:** The school will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding him or her from the school, or by subjecting him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, mental health, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs, subject to section 12 of this policy.
- 9.4 **Teaching and school materials:** Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the school's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.
- 9.5 **Pupil interaction:** All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their age, gender, gender reassignment, race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the school, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.
- 9.6 **Bullying:** The school will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying include:
- bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture
  - bullying related to SEN, learning difficulties or disabilities
  - bullying related to appearance or health (including mental health) conditions
  - bullying relating to sexual orientation
  - bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
  - sexist or sexual bullying.

The school's **Anti-bullying Policy** contains more details about the school's anti-bullying practices.

## 10. School uniform

- 10.1 The school **Uniform Policy** is consistent with this policy. The same policy applies equally to all pupils. However, the school will consider reasonable requests to alter the school uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements and reasonable adjustments for disabled children.
- 10.2 **Symbols of faith:** Small objects of religious significance, such as a crucifix on a chain, may be worn by pupils from Year 1 when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the school's existing school **Uniform Policy**.
- 10.3 **Disabled pupils:** Reasonable adjustments may be required to the school uniform for disabled pupils who require them. The pupil or his or her parents should refer the matter to the SENCo to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the pupil.

## 11. Religious belief

- 11.1 **Religion:** The school's religious ethos, is in accordance with the Christian tradition, but the school respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths, or no faith, subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the school community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

## 12. Provision for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs

- 12.1 The school is keen to respect individual needs and the school will actively:
- promote racial equality and good race relations
  - promote equality of opportunity and access
  - oppose all forms of prejudice and negative discrimination
- 12.2 **Catering:** We can provide for most special dietary requirements whether allergen, intolerance or for religious or cultural reasons. We also comply with the EU law which came into effect in December 2014 which lists 14 allergens that need to be identified if they are used as ingredients in a dish. Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies and the weekly menu is emailed to families on request, where their child has food allergies. The catering team know what ingredients are used in all dishes on offer and pupils are encouraged to seek advice from them if unsure.
- 12.3 **Religious and cultural needs:** The school, through the pastoral structure, will make every effort to support individual pupils with particular cultural needs (religious, ethnic, creative, etc.). We will grant requests of absence wherever possible on grounds of belief in accordance with the **Pupil Attendance Policy**.
- 12.4 **Language:** The school attempts to use succinct and straightforward language whenever possible. The school will also make reasonable adjustments to ensure that parents and pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) will be able to access school material. Pupils for whom English is not a first language receive support, as appropriate, from the Learning Support Department.

### 13. Complaints

- 13.1 A pupil, parent, or guardian who believes that they (or the pupil) have received less favourable treatment on any of the grounds referred to in this policy may make a formal complaint in writing. The complaint should be made to a member of staff (usually the class teacher). The complaint will be handled in accordance with the school's **Complaints Policy**.

### 14. Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 **Responsibilities:** the Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the school's **Equal Access Policy** and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Head day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.
- 14.2 **Monitoring:** To ensure that this policy is operating effectively and encourages diversity in the school, the school seeks to monitor applicants' gender, race, disability and religion or belief as part of the Admissions procedure. The school also maintains records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy.
- 14.3 **Enforcement:** All complaints will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the school community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.

#### Signed

Issue Date: November 2020

Review Date: November 2021 or earlier if major change requires



Mrs Kathryn Gorman  
**Head**