

# **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES and INCLUSIVE PRACTICE POLICY**

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE POLICY

Abbot's Hill School includes Abbot's Hill Nursery, Abbot's Hill Prep School, a day school for pupils aged 4 - 11 and Abbot's Hill Senior School, a day school for pupils aged 11 - 16. This policy applies equally to all parts of the school and any reference to the 'school' relates to the Nursery, Prep and Senior Schools.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Person Responsible	Deputy Head (Snr)
Reviewed by	Education Committee
Approved by	Head
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	June 2023
Date of Next Review	March 2025

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# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE POLICY

## 1. Introduction

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Abbot's Hill School. The school is committed to being an equal opportunities school and a community in which every person feels valued and able to be their authentic self. In order that everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, it is essential that inclusion is at the heart of all the school's activities.

The ethos of the school and nursery is set out in our Mission and Vision statements which can be found in Appendix A of this policy. Our ethos is underpinned by an agreed set of values which can be found in Appendix B of this policy.

The school recognises the benefits of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils will be taught to value and respect others.

This policy is made available on the school website and can be made available on request in large font format.

## 2. Regulatory Framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the school's obligations under the:

- Protected Characteristics Equality Act 2010 (For reference [here](#))
- Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2014
- Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2014)
- Working Together with Safeguarding Children (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Safe Working Practice Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- RSE and PDE Policies
- Admissions Policy

- Complaints Policy for Pupils
- Complaints Policy and Procedure for Parents
- Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

### 3. Responsibility

The Whole School Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for ensuring that the school operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout the school.

3.1 Each member of the school community is responsible for:

- Being alert to and challenging discrimination
- Embracing diversity
- Respecting different faiths and beliefs
- Upholding equality of opportunity for all

3.2 Abbot's Hill operates a zero-tolerance policy in relation to bullying (including online-bullying) or less favourable treatment or any form of discrimination of any protected characteristics under the Protected Characteristics Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation.

3.3 Abbot's Hill School is committed to promoting and developing inclusive practices in all its functions and will do this by:

- a) Ensuring a member of the Senior Leadership Team is Inclusion Lead, to have oversight of all matters pertaining to Inclusion within the school
- b) Ensuring a member of the Governing Body is responsible for Inclusion who will monitor and review all elements of Abbot's Hill's Inclusive practices and ensure Governor training is up to date and that the Board is aware of its duties in this area
- c) Communicating its commitment to equality and diversity to all members of its community
- d) Ensuring all staff and pupils are aware of and act accordingly with the aims of this policy
- e) Paying heed to this policy when developing and reviewing mechanisms of school procedure
- f) Demonstrating our zero-tolerance attitude towards discrimination by taking all allegations seriously and investigating them appropriately

### 4. Aims and objectives

All members of the school community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.

All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Staff at the school, particularly those working at a management level, have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the school with regard to equal opportunities. The school expects all members of our community, which includes but is not limited to, staff, pupils, parents and volunteers to support the aims of this policy as set out below:

### **Aims**

- To communicate the school's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for all members of the school community.
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- To enforce that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- To promote equal treatment, mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that all individuals feel valued, have a sense of belonging and can thrive.
- To create and maintain an open, safe and supportive environment, free from discrimination.
- To comply with the school's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.
- To remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist.

## **5. Discrimination and the Legal Framework**

5.1 Discrimination can take many forms, including:

- a) Direct discrimination – This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because of their actual or perceived protected characteristic.
- b) Indirect discrimination – This occurs by applying a provision or practice which disadvantages people on the grounds of a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- c) Victimisation – This occurs when an individual has exercised their rights under equality legislation (or has indicated that they intend to do so) and is treated less favourably as a direct result. It applies to a person who is supporting (or indicates that they intend to support) another person who is exercising their rights under the legislation.
- d) Harassment – This is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating a hostile, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- e) Disability Discrimination – This includes direct and indirect discrimination or any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

The school recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

## Pupils and educational provision

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### 6. Admissions

- 6.1 The school treats application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this and the school's Admissions Policy.
- 6.2 As a single-sex school, Abbot's Hill operates a single-sex admissions policy, without breaching the 2010 Equality Act on the basis of exemption relating to biological sex: the legal sex recorded at a pupil's birth. Abbot's Hill does not accept applications from pupils who are legally male for the Prep (Reception – Year 6) or Senior (Years 7-11) School. This does not mean that Abbot's Hill is not able to provide support to children within its care who have gender identity concerns: pupils on-roll at any time, or moving from the Prep to the Senior School will be supported in terms of their physical and psychological wellbeing at all times.
- 6.3 Abbot's Hill's Nursery is co-educational and parents of children who are registered as either biologically male or female may apply for a place.
- 6.4 The school welcomes applicants from all backgrounds for both the Senior School and the Prep School (including EYFS). Although we operate a broadly comprehensive intake, all candidates for admission will be considered on their merits in accordance with the school's selection criteria based on an applicant's ability and aptitude equally, irrespective of their or their parent's 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 does not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. Further information can be sought in the Admissions Policy.
- 6.5 Parents or Legal Guardians must inform the school when submitting the registration form of any special circumstances relating to their child (such as learning support needs) which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children. The school will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

### 7. Educational Provision

- 7.1 Abbot's Hill educates pupils in a multicultural, anti-racist environment using the curriculum, assemblies, PDE programme, enrichment activities, visits and external speakers to promote understanding and appreciation of other faiths, races and cultures.
- 7.2 The school affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services, and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The school does not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

- 7.3 The school monitors the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds.
- 7.4 The school makes reasonable adjustments so that all pupils can access the full co-curricular programme. Some activities may be modified according to particular needs.
- 7.5 Teachers who teach topics and texts which contain offensive material relating to any of the protected characteristics, for example race, are to take stringent steps to provide accurate historical context, provide a warning that the topic contains sensitive issues, not read aloud or ask any pupil to read aloud any offensive material, and evaluate carefully whether the resource is intrinsic to the teaching of the topic. If in doubt, the teacher must seek guidance from a member of the Prep or Senior School Senior Leadership Team.
- 7.6 Specifically, through its curriculum, the school will:
- Encourage children to work and play freely and have respect for all other pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.
  - Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities.
  - Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in school.
  - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

Support children and adults to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes in order to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias and training and education to understand what is offensive and what is not offensive.

## **8. Reasonable Adjustments**

- 8.1 The school makes reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to make sure they do not suffer substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled pupils. Where the school is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it consults with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the school is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other pupils. The school carefully considers any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the school. Further information on the school's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the school's SEND Policy.
- 8.2 The school has an Accessibility Plan in place. This sets out the school's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school; and improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.
- 8.3 The school makes reasonable adjustments (on a case-by-case basis) for staff or pupils who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid or are undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.



## 9. Bias and Impartiality

- 9.1 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 methods. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.
- 9.2 All Abbot's Hill, staff teach politically sensitive topics in an unbiased manner and with political impartiality, so as not to offer personal opinion or to influence pupils' thinking. The school prohibits the promotion of partisan political views.
- 9.3 All of Abbot's Hill's teaching staff are expected to teach all elements of the curriculum. However, on the grounds of personal, political or religious views, reasonable adjustments will be made if considered necessary by the Head.

## Staff and Pupils

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### 10. Religious Belief

- 10.1 The school's religious ethos is in accordance with the Christian tradition, but the school respects the right and freedom of pupils and staff 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.
- 10.2 The Board of Governors, through the Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 10.3 Items of jewellery and headwear, such as a headscarf, may be worn by pupils where doing so is based on a genuine religious or cultural belief. This is subject to the relevant items being consistent with our policy on Health and Safety and subject to safety and welfare. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or their parents to the Head in advance, whose decision will be final.

### 11. Gender Identity<sup>1</sup>

- 11.1 Everyone is assigned a legal sex at birth and it is based on a person's primary sexual characteristics. Our gender identity can be more nuanced and complex, and may be entirely separate to our assigned sex. The school has a regulatory duty to protect the health, welfare and safety of its pupils. The school recognises and respects the sexual orientation and gender identity of each pupil and staff member.
- 11.2 Every attempt should be made which does not reinforce a binary approach to gender. For example, avoiding the use of gender specific language when referring to groups of

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix A for a glossary of terms which are useful in relation to gender identity  
Equal Opportunities & Inclusive Practice Policy v1230818

pupils. Staff should avoid making assumptions about the gender of a pupil or other member of staff because of the way they look.

- 11.3 Respecting a young person's request to change name and pronoun is a crucial part of supporting and validating a young person's identity. The school will consider any requests from pupils in relation to name and/or pronoun change on a case by case basis. Should a name and/or pronoun change be deemed appropriate, every effort will be made to ensure (though it is not yet a compulsory requirement) that this is with the support of the pupil's parent or carer. Similarly, the school will support any member of staff's request to change name and pronoun.
- 11.4 A pupil's birth name and gender will be recorded for exam entries and legal documentation, unless the pupil has changed their name legally by deed poll, as the Joint Centre for Qualifications requires information which can be verified by suitable identification such as a birth certificate or passport. This may cause distress for that pupil and care should be taken to support the pupil in seeing that this is a necessary measure, but that it does not invalidate their chosen identity.
- 11.5 The school will consider requests that the school's MIS (Schoolbase) be updated with a pupil's preferred name, gender marker and title. When reporting home, staff are to use the 'known as' name and pronoun of the pupil, unless advised otherwise.
- 11.6 There is no affirmative duty for the school to notify a pupil's parent or guardian of the pupil's gender identity or expression. However, where a parent is not aware, we will ask the pupil to talk through their thoughts about their gender identity with a trusted adult, usually the school counsellor, before name and pronoun changes are made. However, if the school has concerns about a pupil's welfare or considers they may be at risk of harm, our safeguarding duties and reporting obligations under KCSIE 2022 will prevail over the pupil's request for confidentiality.
- 11.7 Confidential information must not be shared with the parents and carers unless there are safeguarding or legal reasons for doing so. If needed, the school will also seek advice from the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES). The school will develop a support plan to implement in the event that a pupil expresses their wish to change their gender identity. This will enable the pupil to feel psychologically safe and will consider on a case-by-case basis any alternative arrangements that are needed for changing spaces (for example before and after PE). The school will ensure that its policies and procedures are robust enough to safeguard pupils from discrimination.
- 11.8 The school will develop a support plan to implement in the event that a member of staff wishes to change their gender identity. Adjustments which may be required for toilets will be planned and agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- 11.9 It is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity. To 'out' someone without that person's permission is a form of harassment and will be treated as such.

## **12. School Uniform and Staff Dress Code**

- 12.1 All pupils in Stepping Up and in Years Reception to 11 are required to wear a uniform.

- 12.2 All staff are required to dress as befits a professional working environment.
- 12.3 The School Uniform Policy and Staff Dress Code are both consistent with this policy. Further information on these matters should be sought from either document.
- 12.4 The school will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations to the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the school's policy on health and safety and that such request/s are reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 12.5 Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn to school, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Head, in advance.

### **13. Breaches of this policy**

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy or Discipline and Exclusions Policy.

The school will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination and/or harassment. Any pupil who believes that they have been discriminated against or may have been subject to discriminatory conduct should talk to the Deputy Head Pastoral.

The parents of any pupil who believes that they have been discriminated against or may have been subject to discriminatory conduct should use the school's complaints procedure to seek remedy over the matter.

A member of staff who believes they have been discriminated against or may have been subject to discriminatory conduct should seek guidance from the HR Manager and may wish to pursue the matter in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

A member of staff who is in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the school's Disciplinary procedures or Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which includes Low Level Concerns.

### **14. Recruitment - Staff**

The school aims to ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment because of any protected characteristics. The school maintains that candidates are selected on the basis of their relevant merits and experience.

The school takes steps to ensure that job advertisements avoid stereotyping or use language which may discourage particular groups of people from applying. The school's Job Pack for each advertised post includes a statement from this policy.

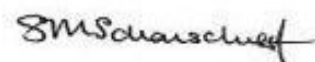
Applicants are not asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment, unless Safer Recruitment or other relevant practices require it.

## 15. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps are being taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination. As part of that process, we invite all parents of prospective pupils who register for a place in the nursery and school, together with all parents who accept places for their child, to complete an ethnic monitoring form. The Information Commissioner recommends that young people aged 11 or older have the opportunity to decide their own ethnic identity. Parents, or those with parental responsibility, are asked to support or advise those children aged 11-15 in making this decision, wherever necessary.

Issue Date: September 2023

Review Date: December 2024 or earlier if major change



**Sharon Schanschieff**  
**Head**

## Appendix A

**CISGENDER OR CIS:** Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people

**GENDER:** Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is socially constructed and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

**GENDER DYSPHORIA:** Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity.

This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**GENDER EXPRESSION:** How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.

**GENDER IDENTITY:** A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

**GENDER REASSIGNMENT:** To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.

Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected by the Equality Act 2010, and it is further interpreted in the Equality Act 2010 approved code of practice.

**GILLICK COMPETENCE:** A term used in medical law to decide whether a child (under 16 years of age) is able to consent to their own medical treatment, without the need for parental permission or knowledge.

**INTERSEX:** A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

**NON-BINARY:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

**OUTED:** When a lesbian, gay, bi or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

**PRONOUN:** Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze / zir.

**QUESTIONING:** The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**SEX:** Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** A person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. Along with romantic orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity.

**TRANS:** An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

**TRANSITIONING:** The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this.

Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

**TRANSPHOBIA:** The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people

who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.

**TRANSSEXUAL:** This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. This term is still used by some, although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.

## Appendix B

### Code of Conduct



There is one rule for all of us at Abbot's Hill: adults and pupils act with courtesy and consideration for others.

We support our school values in the following ways:-

#### Be kind

- We are respectful and inclusive to all and celebrate the diversity of our community
- We show humility at all times
- We empower others: always trying our best to encourage and enable one another to succeed
- We care about each other and are considerate of other people's feelings
- We respect ourselves, others and our environment

#### Be authentic

- We are unique. Proud of ourselves and our individuality.
- We are sincere in the way we interact with others and show integrity in the way we behave in all aspects of life
- We are true to our feelings and beliefs in the way we reflect on our actions and learn from them
- We take pride in our responsibilities

#### Be involved

- We work hard as part of the school and contribute to the community beyond Abbot's Hill
- We are proud of the school, its history and tradition
- We always give our best and embrace opportunities
- We celebrate other people's successes and achievements
- We are positive role models

#### Be curious

- We love to learn, create and use our imagination
- We are inquisitive: we explore new opportunities
- We ask questions about the world around us
- We embrace calculated risk and seek adventure

#### Be challengers

- We persevere in the face of challenge: we are resilient
- We are self-motivated, ambitious and determined to develop and improve through work and play now and into the future
- We prioritise our physical and mental wellbeing
- We have the freedom to speak out and to voice our own ideas
- We have the courage to test our ideas, to fail and to adapt as we prepare for life beyond school
- We have fun