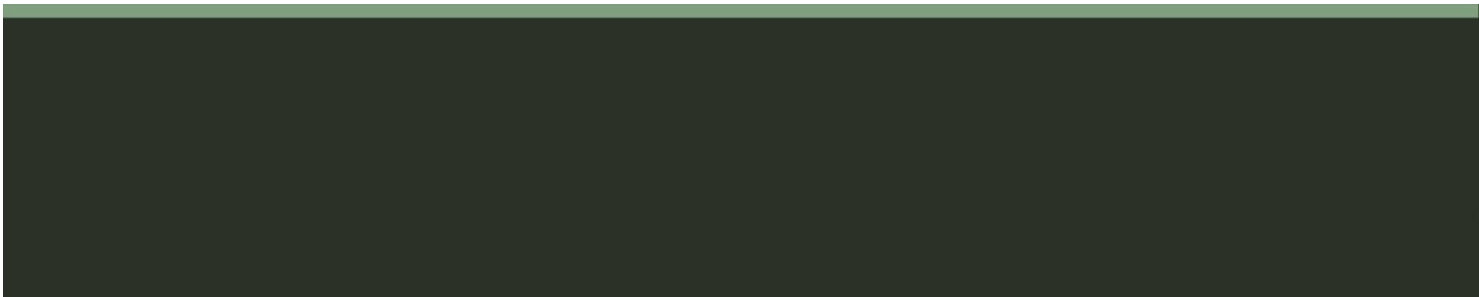


EQUALITY INFORMATION AND OBJECTIVES

GB Committee Responsible:	Curriculum and Achievement
Reviewed by:	Francis O'Sullivan
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1. Introduction

Bentley Wood High School is a non-selective, multi-race, multi-faith, multi-cultural girls' school. All members of the school community have an equal opportunity to fulfill their potential and play a positive and active role both in school and the wider community. Students and staff should feel secure and valued within the school community. Bentley Wood High School High School seeks to value all members of its community equally and to create a co-operative and harmonious environment based on mutual respect in which everyone can thrive. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of all backgrounds, cultures and faiths within the school and we do not value any one more than another. All members of the school community should be valued and respected irrespective of their race, sex, class, disability, sexuality, religion, lifestyle, or age. We are a secular and inclusive school. However, we respect the religious beliefs, and non-religious beliefs, and practice of all staff, students, and parents, and comply with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice. The school does not accept any of form of discrimination, including those forms that are directed towards different races, religious groups, or sexualities. (Ref: BW Anti-bullying Policy)

We believe that:

- Every student should have opportunities to achieve the highest possible standards, and the best possible qualifications for the next stages of their life and education;
- Every student should be helped to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident and open to change, and that is receptive and respectful towards other identities;
- Every student should develop the knowledge, understandings and skills that they need in order to participate in our multi-ethnic society, and in the wider context of an interdependent world.

To achieve these aims, equal opportunities considerations underpin all aspects of the school's work and development.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the public sector equality duty and protects people from discrimination.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools 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 Department for Education (DfE) guidance: The Equality Act 2010 and schools.
- This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It requires public bodies to promote equality. The duty applies to all maintained and independent schools, including academies, and maintained and non-maintained special schools.

The PSED requires schools to:

- Publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the PSED – this information must include, in particular, information relating to people who share a protected characteristic*;
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

**These protected characteristics are sex, age, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, and pregnancy or maternity.*

We will update the published information annually and publish objectives at least once every four years. The information will be available on the school website to those in the school community and public who wish to see it.

3. Equality Objectives and Aims

Our Equality objectives are:

Students

- Maintain excellent academic and personal achievement of all groups of students through high expectations and appropriate interventions where necessary, including a special focus on SEND and vulnerable high-attaining students.
- Maintain high standards and expectations of student behaviour, including ensuring that incidences of discriminatory behaviour and bullying are reported, investigated, logged, and acted upon in a systematic manner, including discrimination based on race and sexuality.
- Educate students about equality issues and the importance of tolerance and understanding, in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010, with a particular emphasis on sexism, racism and homophobia. We will educate students about the nine 'protected characteristics'. We will do this through our curriculum across all subjects, our weekly Wise Thoughts curriculum, Assemblies, displays, PSHE curriculum, and other avenues.

Staff

- Maintain high standards and expectations of language and inclusive behaviour of all adults in the school, including visitors, in line with our promotion of 'British Values' and our Bentley Wood 'CARE' values.
- Continue to ensure all members of staff are familiar with the key implications of the 2010 Equality Act for the school context, such as familiarity with the 'protected characteristics' and how to respond confidently to reports of any discriminatory behaviour or bullying using the school reporting systems. We will do this through staff CPD, Teach Talks, Wise Thoughts, Assemblies, and Bulletins.
- Provide support and training so that all staff feel comfortable in teaching about, and tackling all forms of discrimination, including those to do with race, religion and sexuality, both in the reformed PSHE and RSE curricula, as well as in their subject areas.

(Please see the current Equality Report published on the school website annually.)

To fulfil our legal duties duty Bentley Wood High School aims to:

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

4. How We Fulfil These Aims

i) Eliminate Discrimination / Harassment / Victimization By:

- Monitoring incidents of harassment or bullying of students with protected characteristics and providing perpetrators with sanctions/re-education and support where appropriate;
- Dealing with complaints of discrimination and harassment speedily and notify complainants of the outcomes and action taken;
- Following the discrimination reporting system (Appendix A). Those involved will meet with the AHT responsible for equality. All outcomes will be recorded by AHT following consultation with the head teacher where appropriate;
- Encouraging students to challenge and report discrimination and harassment through assemblies raising the profile of different protected characteristics. There has been Assemblies on how we define 'bullying' and how to report any incidents of alleged bullying; and Assemblies on how we define 'bullying' and how to report any incidents of alleged bullying;
- Educating students and staff through regular Assemblies, Wise Thoughts, and CPD on equality and the Equality Act, on bullying, feminism, and so on. We further celebrate events like Black History Month, LGBT History Month, International Women's day.
- If a member of staff is the victim of a discriminatory incident, the parties involved meet with the head teacher directly;
- Student ~~Anti-Bullying~~ Human Rights Ambassadors and Wellbeing Ambassadors make themselves known to students through Assemblies as another port of call if students are more comfortable speaking with a student first.
- The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with 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 – for example, during meetings.
- New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training each year. For example, most recently in January 2024.
- The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders aware of these as appropriate.

ii) **Advance Equality Of Opportunity By:**

- Keeping records of the destinations of all students and scrutinising to address any patterns or trends;
- Monitoring the achievement of different ethnic group and of SEND students and taking positive steps to intervene with underachieving groups; for example, when Heads of Department do analyses of exam outcomes;
- Ensuring enrichment activities and school trips are run at times when all students are able to participate, and that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students to be able to participate;
- Using language that is accessible to everyone regardless of their first language, this includes jargon free English, where possible, and the provision of translation facilities upon request;
- Ensuring that SEND students are represented and encouraged to participate in class assemblies, plays, events and on the School Council;
- Ensuring that the school environment is welcoming to both mothers and fathers and they are equally participating in school events such as; parents evenings, assessment days, school productions;
- Consulting with stakeholders in reviewing equality measures;
- Conducting annual accessibility audits of the school and keeping a plan of activities to improve provision;
- Providing parents of temporarily disabled students with passes to allow them to drop off their daughters at the main entrance;
- Ensuring the curriculum promotes careers which may in the past have been gender stereotyped. For example: Business Studies, Economics, Physics;
- Promoting STEM (and STEAM) careers to the girls through lessons, displays (e.g. in science classrooms), and dedicated Wise Thought weeks such as 'Women in Science'
- Providing extra curricular opportunities to promote alternative career paths and occupations. For example, Career Days and 'market-place' events where different professionals are invited to explain their career paths to students;
- Delivering Physical Education choices that include gender stereotyped sports (Football / Cricket);
- Endeavouring to ensure the governing body is representative of the local and school community;
- Ensuring that both mothers and fathers are encouraged to participate in Parent Voice activities;
- Where necessary, and where possible, translation services are provided for meetings with parents who do not speak English;
- Parent Ambassadors encourage all parents to attend any relevant workshops or information evenings (such as Safer Internet presentations) school and provide services such as translation;
- School Council has members from all year groups, from diverse backgrounds, and is used to inform decisions about certain school policies, and the topics covered in the Wise Thoughts and PSHE curricula. This promotes their sense of equality, their appreciation of 'British' values like democracy and the rule of law, and their autonomy as part of a participatory decision-making process;
- We take into account the background of more able students when considering specialist programmes for high-achievers like St John's Inspire programme, and the Brilliant Club's 'Scholar's Programme', in order to promote equality of opportunity.

- The school encourages acceptance of bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender members of our community, whether staff or students, and implements strategies to prevent homophobic abuse, bullying and harassment.

iii) **Foster Good Relations By:**

- Encouraging dialogue between different racial groups in school and in the local community. For example: Tutor groups discuss their different backgrounds and present to each other in PSHE lessons.
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. providing a prayer room for religious members of our school community who wish to use it)
- Promoting activities that celebrate our common experience as well as those that recognise diversity generally and foster understanding and respect for the culture and beliefs of all our students. For example, we run Black History Month, Culture Day, Holocaust Memorial Assemblies, International Women's Day, LGBT History Month and more.
- Through our whole-school Wise Thoughts curriculum we regularly have presentations on equality, bullying, discrimination, mental health and wellbeing (promoting understanding of those with poor mental health), sexuality, and more.
- Having an engaging, comprehensive, and 'best-practice' informed PSHE curriculum which covers many issues concerning equality, such as discrimination, bullying (including cyber-bullying), challenging stereotypes, and more.
- Encouraging all students to exercise their rights as citizens and participate in the democratic process such as School Council, and voting when we run school elections.
- Encouraging all students to work together and engage in school leadership activities together through open application membership of student groups such as Human Rights Ambassadors, and Wellbeing & Mental Health Ambassadors.
- Countering myths and misinformation that may undermine good community relations through our PSHE program, our Wise Thoughts curriculum, and in the wider academic curriculum, such as in English Literature, Philosophy & R.S., and History. For example, as part of their English curriculum, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures, not just England, such as Scotland, Ireland, the United States, and more.
- Welcoming visitors of all backgrounds and ensuring displays raise awareness of cultural diversity to encourage visitors from all backgrounds to feel at ease.
- Holding Senior Leadership Group and Head of Year assemblies dealing with relevant issues such as bullying, discrimination, kindness and our CARE values. Students are encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we often invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local community. This includes students helping out in local business and community groups, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community, such as visits to Bentley Priory Nature Reserve and to the local care homes for the elderly.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with tensions between different groups of students within the school. For example, this year we have started to roll out the 'Girls Aboard' approach to managing relationships between the girls, which treats them with respect and autonomy and encourages them to be more empathetic and better able to navigate their own sometimes turbulent relationships.
- Encouraging respectful dialogue between different school groups. For example, our School Council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of students from a range of backgrounds. Similarly, all students are encouraged to participate in the school's activities,

such as sports clubs. We also work with parents to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

- We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, such as Stonewall, which helps inform and develop our approach.
- Each year, Year 9 students take part in the 'First Give' program which aims to support to local charitable causes.

5. School Policies and Practice

As well as the specific actions above we ensure that equal opportunities permeate the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

i) PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

Within school, oral, written and visual communication takes place between staff, parents, students, Governors, the community and other outside groups and organisations. Oral, written and visual communications should aim to:

- Use appropriate vocabulary and terminology that will not exclude, offend or marginalise any groups in the school community;
- Present information in a positive and non-stereotypical way to reflect a multiethnic and multicultural society regardless of race, sex, class, disability, religion, sexuality, lifestyle or age;
- Reflect in all publicity materials the values and ethos embodied in the Equality Act and materials are carefully monitored to facilitate this;
- Encourage active participation in aspects of school life by parents and members of the local community through consultation, presentations and publicity material;
- Promote awareness of Equal Opportunities issues among staff, students, Governors, parents and other groups involved in the school community.

ii) STAFF RECRUITMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All teaching and non-teaching staff are included in meetings, staff development, curriculum development (teaching-staff), policy-making, and social functions when relevant or appropriate including experienced colleagues, ECTs and long-term supply teachers. All new staff and supply teachers are informed of and familiarised with school policies, procedures and the rationale behind them. All staff have access to appropriate professional development. In staff recruitment the following procedures are followed:

- The job description, person specification, shortlisting and interviewing will involve known and designated persons including Governors and staff as appropriate;
- The person designated to write the advertisement should share the school ethos and be familiar with equal opportunities practice and the job being advertised;
- Details must clearly state the criteria applicants are expected to meet;
- The criteria used for shortlisting and the questions asked at interview should match the agreed person specification and should be common to all candidates;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for candidates with a disability to alleviate disadvantage and provide any auxiliary aids and services;
- Candidates are not required to complete a health questionnaire and will not be asked any questions regarding their health unless specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work and in that case. Questions must be targeted, necessary and relevant.

All members of the senior leadership group have training on safer recruitment in order to ensure the recruitment process is always conducted to a high standard. All SLG members are trained in a cyclical manner, overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

iii) STUDENT ADMISSIONS

In student recruitment the following procedures take place:

- A senior member of staff familiar with the school's Equality policy and ethos of the school will be involved in the liaison process with staff and students at feeder schools at the earliest possible stage;
- All new students participate in an induction programme which informs them of the school ethos, expectations and procedures including our equality practice and values;
- The advantages of a girls' only education are emphasised;
- All decisions regarding school procedures should be clearly stated and communicated to all parties concerned;
- Any incident giving cause for serious concern should be dealt with promptly and effectively, following the agreed procedure, which should include a written log of the incident and action taken.

Please also refer to the Bentley Wood High School Admissions Policy.

iv) CURRICULUM PLANNING, ENTITLEMENT, COURSE CONTENT

The school Equal Opportunities policy informs the planning and teaching of the entire curriculum. The curriculum must be broad and balanced and all students should have the same curriculum entitlement, irrespective of race, sex, class, ability, sexuality, religion, beliefs, or age. The curriculum should be relevant to the present and future needs of our students and regularly reviewed and monitored through lesson observations/visits and work scrutinies. In planning course content in each subject, consideration should be given to the wide range of ethnic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds of our students.

v) TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The methods which Departments choose for the teaching of their subjects should, where possible, maximize equality of opportunity;
- Tasks set for students and the materials to support them should aim to motivate them and empower them to progress;
- In order to maximize learning opportunities for all students, classrooms should be organized and managed so that all students can benefit from the teaching;
- Teachers will expect all students to show tolerance and respect for the contributions of others, and model this respect for equality themselves;
- Tasks should avoid unconscious social, cultural or religious bias which might assume experiences which are not common to all students;
- We teach about issues such as racism, homophobia, and sexism and deal with these issues openly and sensitively when they do arise. Staff are supported by Heads of Year and Senior Leaders in dealing with any concerns which may develop. Training and support is offered to staff who may feel uncomfortable or 'out of their depth' on certain topics.

vi) STUDENT PROGRESS, ATTAINMENT AND ASSESSMENT

The school's and departmental assessment policies reflect the school's Equality Information Policy. Assessment policies and practices have clear links to tracking student attainment by ethnicity, religion, looked after status, free school meals/pupil premium status and Special Educational Need/Disability (SEND). Subject areas analyse data formally to ensure all groups of students are making expected progress and to identify any trends of underperformance. Underperforming groups are targeted with intervention strategies and the impact of these strategies is monitored by Heads of Department and SLG.

vii) BEHAVIOUR, REWARDS AND EXCLUSIONS (INCL BULLYING)

Teachers receive training and reminders on how to identify discriminatory incidents that involve harassment or bullying of students (See Appendix A). Staff are expected to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Incidents of discrimination, harassment and victimisation between students with or without the protected characteristics are recorded by teachers or other members of staff on Arbor. They are dealt with by the member of staff present and then escalated to the head of year who will provide perpetrators with sanctions/re-education as appropriate. In more serious incidents, where actual bullying is suspected, rather than simple unfriendliness, coldness, falling outs, or once-off disputes, the HoY will liaise with the Assistant Headteacher responsible (see flow chart below). Pending investigation by the Assistant Headteacher, victims are informed of the outcomes and parents and carers are involved where appropriate. Incidents involving members of staff are referred directly to the Headteacher.

Exclusion data is monitored and analysed by ethnicity, FSM/PP and SEND and reported to the governing body.

Rewards given to students are monitored, and the total number of points awarded is analysed to identify any groups of students ~~with protected characteristics~~ who may not be engaging with the system or being rewarded consistently and in line with their peers.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will:

- Ensure that the school complies with legislation and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher.
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years

The headteacher will:

- Be responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support.
- Promote knowledge and understanding of equality and the equality objectives among staff and pupils
- Take appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination.

The Assistant Headteacher responsible for equality will:

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and students.
- Support the headteacher in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary.
- Investigate and record cases of alleged discrimination, working with Heads of Year as required.

All Staff will:

- Have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in section 3 above.
- Deal with incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation that may occur.
- Know how to challenge stereotyping.
- Support students in their class for whom English is an additional language.
- Incorporate principles of equality and diversity into all aspects of their work.
- Record any breaches or incidents on Arbor and report to their line-manager and the HOY of the student(s) involved.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- The Assistant Headteacher will update the equality information we publish every year.
- This document will be reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher responsible at least every 4 years.
- This document will be approved by the Curriculum and Achievement Committee of the Governing board and the Headteacher.

8. Breaches of the Policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and governing body.

9. Consultation and Evaluation

This policy has been developed with the input of staff, parents and students. This is achieved through feedback from parents at parents' evenings, parent voice meetings, School Council consultation, student Ambassador feedback, staff questionnaires and feedback from training, student focus groups, and feedback through Heads of Year.

We collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and use this to inform strategies and raise achievement. This policy and the Equality Report are available from the school office and published on our website.

Appendix A

Reporting process for incidents of alleged bullying or discrimination (new process since 2023)

