



Birchwood High School Equality Policy

Purpose

This policy is required to ensure that the school complies with current equality legislation. The school recognises that it has to make special efforts to ensure that all groups prosper within our thriving school community. This over-arching policy adopts a single approach to cover practice across the eight strands cited below.

- 1 Community cohesion
- 2 Gender-related
- 3 Age
- 4 Race
- 5 Disability
- 6 Religious beliefs
- 7 Sexual orientation
- 8 Discrimination by Association or by Perception

1 Community Cohesion

Our school policy on community cohesion, through both curricular and extra-curricular provisions embraces four dimensions:

- (a) **The school community** – the children and young people it serves, their parents, carers and families, the school's staff and governing body, and community users of the school's facilities and services.
- (b) **The community within which the school is located** – the school in its geographical community of Bishop's Stortford and surrounding villages.
- (c) **The UK community** – all schools are by definition part of this community. Included in this dimension, is the teaching and celebration of British Culture and British heritage.
- (d) **The global community** – supported through our extensive international links programme of visits to the EU, North America, Africa and Asia.

2 Gender-related

We will ensure that neither males nor females are treated less favourably in any procedures, practices or aspects of service delivery. Birchwood will not tolerate harassment of people based on their gender or transgender status.

As a mixed school our admission arrangements for students ensure that both boys and girls are given equal weighting. In dealing with male or female supervision or welfare issues, we ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that, for example, female students are able to see female staff if required.

We strive to develop positive attitudes in young people by challenging stereotypes and promoting positive role models. We encourage cross gender participation in sporting activities and provide information for girls and boys on positive career role models to ensure they make their choice from a wide range of career options. There are gender specific programmes in place to deliver sexual health education to young men and women.

We continue to monitor the performance of boys and girls and take appropriate action to address imbalances where necessary.

As an employer, we recruit solely upon qualifications, experience and personality – not upon gender. There are exceptions to this rule when there is a specific need for either gender, eg PE teachers and specialist Teaching Assistants.

In supporting staff at Birchwood High School, we ensure that appropriate measures are taken regardless of gender and that career development focuses on the person not their gender.

3 Age

As an 11-19 school, we aim to provide an excellent all-round education for our students providing academic and personal development appropriate to the age group concerned.

As an employer, we do not recruit or retain staff on the basis of age. The demographic profile of staff is monitored but this is purely for succession planning purposes.

4 Race

We strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school is such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school community, everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect.

The school actively discourages racial intolerance and formally deals with any issue of racial abuse or stereotyping. With students, a racist incident log is maintained with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) monitoring the data and taking appropriate action where necessary. For further information, see the school's [Race Equality Policy](#) and the roles and responsibilities section below.

5 Disability

Our school welcomes all without prejudice and as such caters for a wide range of student and staff disability. With regards to student provision, please refer to the school's [Special Educational Needs Policy \(SEN\)](#) and [Examinations Disability Policy](#).

All incidences of disability discrimination will be recorded through a central log monitored by a member of SLT and appropriate action taken where necessary.

Regarding staff, recruitment measures ensure that we do not discriminate against disabled applicants and the school recognises it has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to prevent a disabled person from being placed at a substantial disadvantage by any physical feature of the premises, or by any provision, criterion or practice of the school. Provision is made through occupational health referral for staff who need additional support.

The school is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2003 and monitors provision through its [Accessibility Policy](#), [Health and Safety Policy](#) and the H&S Committee.

6 Religious Beliefs

The religious beliefs of both students and staff are upheld and a tolerance of different views and religious requirements are accommodated by the school. Whilst school policy is covered in our [Statement of Collective Act of Worship](#), students are apprised of world religions as part of their curriculum provision.

7 Sexual Orientation

Whilst the majority of students and staff live within heterosexual family units, the school promotes a tolerance and understanding of same-sex relationships. Student-related homophobic incidents are recorded through a central log monitored by a member of Senior Leadership Team.

8 Discrimination by Association or Perception

The school will not tolerate any form of discrimination whether it be direct, indirect, by association or by perception. Any member of staff found to be discriminating on any of the eight strands may be subject to an investigation and potential disciplinary action in accordance with the school's Disciplinary procedures.

Promotion of British Values

At Birchwood High School we actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is done through a carefully coordinated programme of Personal Development along with assemblies, guest speakers and trips to the Houses of Parliament, local Churches and other religious centres.

We monitor the provision within the curriculum both inside and outside lessons to ensure that all students receive a broad and balanced experience that reflects today's modern British Culture. Student leaders, democratically elected by their peers, have a significant voice in terms of future planning and feedback.

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Furthermore, our safeguarding procedures ensure that our young people only come into contact with adults who have passed full and comprehensive background checks.

Roles and Responsibilities of Principal, other Staff and Governors

The **Principal** will ensure that a school culture and ethos is established, maintained and developed which:

1. Celebrates diversity/equality and achievement within the context of promoting modern British Values
2. Promotes high expectations and positive attitudes towards all the seven strands mentioned previously.
3. Listens to, and involves pupils, parents, carers and staff.
4. Communicates behaviour expectations.
5. Ensures that it welcomes applications for school places and jobs from all sections of the community.
6. Ensures that incidents are reported, analysed, addressed swiftly and effectively, and reported on as required. All termly returns to the Local Authority on racial and homophobic incidents and anti-bullying will be submitted accurately and on time.

Governors and the SLT will actively monitor equality to ensure that school policies and practice do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any adult or student in the school; that the school is accessible to all; and that positive role models and a wider perspective will strengthen the school. Governors and SLT will ensure that equality objectives are reviewed every four years.

The staff will actively implement this policy and the equalities plan, and support the monitoring of impact.

Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body will monitor the pattern and frequency of equality related incidents. It will receive reports from the Principal and staff that enable evaluation of the relevance of provision for dealing with equality related incidents – defined as any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to contravene this policy. Serious breaches constitute criminal offences.