



THE MULBERRY HOUSE SCHOOL

All The Mulberry House School Policies are always to be read and considered in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities, Race Equality and Inclusion Policies

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

This Policy of The Mulberry House School applies to all employees (including those employed in the Early Years Foundation Stage), prospective employees and pupils of the School.

Introduction

The Mulberry House School ("the School") is committed to the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in education in order to foster development and progress in an open and non-threatening environment.

This policy operates alongside the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and supports the School's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Equality, dignity and inclusion are recognised as essential components of effective safeguarding.

The School adheres to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- ◆ The Equality Act 2010
- ◆ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- ◆ Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- ◆ The Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- ◆ The Children and Families Act 2014 (SEND)
- ◆ The EYFS Statutory Framework (where applicable)
- ◆ Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- ◆ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Mulberry House School is Rights Respecting School and as Duty Bearers, we take our responsibility seriously and respect the following rights in regards to this policy. As a Rights Respecting School, the School seeks to realise children's rights through policy, practice and culture. This includes promoting pupil voice, ensuring fair access to education, protecting children from discrimination and harm, and maintaining systems that allow children to raise concerns safely and be listened to.



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- ◆ **Article 2:** All rights apply to every child without exception, regardless of race, sex, religion, language, abilities or family status.
- ◆ **Article 3:** The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
- ◆ **Article 6:** Every child has the right to life and to develop to their full potential.
- ◆ **Article 7:** Every child has the right to have a name and nationality, and to know and be cared for.
- ◆ **Article 8:** Every child has the right to an identity.
- ◆ **Article 12:** Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.
- ◆ **Article 23:** A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community.
- ◆ **Article 28:** Every child has the right to an education.
- ◆ **Article 30:** Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs, and religion of their family.
- ◆ **Article 42:** Governments and institutions must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the convention.

Principles

The School has due regard to the need to:

- ◆ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ◆ Advance equality of opportunity
- ◆ Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity are fundamental and apply to the ways in which staff and pupils treat other staff and pupils, visitors, suppliers and former members of staff. The implementation of these principles is overseen by the Headteacher and Directors with the support of the members of the School's Pastoral Team, as part of their responsibility for effective leadership and management.

The School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, nationality or national ethnic origins, marital status, pregnancy or maternity and (in relation to staff) age (together, these are "Protected Characteristics").

We believe that the educational experience can only be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.

To ensure that these principles are upheld on a day-to-day basis we have considered and will monitor the following areas, always looking to develop and advance in this respect:



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Pupils

The School is committed to full educational inclusion and we welcome applications from pupils with a diverse range of backgrounds. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world.

We also welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND).

The School recognises that pupils with additional needs may be more vulnerable to discrimination or bullying and takes a proactive approach to monitoring and safeguarding their wellbeing.

Code of Conduct

Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable; [our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies contain further detail of the school's expectations and procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination.]

The Curriculum

The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by encouraging respect, tolerance and understanding of diversity within modern British society.

Teaching on sensitive or controversial issues is age-appropriate, balanced and delivered in a way that does not promote partisan political views, ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Culture is central to a child's identity and the learning environment must reflect the cultures of those learning within it and within society at large. All children are provided with the same opportunity to participate in activities throughout the curriculum.

Assemblies, PSHE, RE, Drama, English, Rights Respective, Music and other lessons are used as opportunities to:

- ◆ Promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the school community.
- ◆ Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
- ◆ Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be recognised.
- ◆ Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.



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- ◆ Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.
- ◆ Understand children's rights and ways to promote this.

We regularly organise events such as Cultural Diversity Week, and other events where external visitors and workshop practitioners come to show cultural dances, puppet shows and play music from other parts of the world. All children are actively encouraged to join in these activities.

Resources

We strive to avoid stereotypes in our teaching and to give all pupils the widest possible range of learning experiences.

Books, materials, equipment and learning resources are selected to encourage a positive view of different roles and cultures.

- ◆ We will provide a choice of activities and resources with regard to the diversity of the children. We will endeavour to promote positive and effective use of these resources.
- ◆ We will continually review books and learning materials for bias and a commitment to providing positive materials.
- ◆ We will continue to buy and collect resources and learning materials that promote a positive image of both sexes and all ethnic groups and represent the range of ethnic groups in society.
- ◆ All staff will endeavour to collect and use songs and games from other countries.
- ◆ Where appropriate, we will invest in specialist skills to understand the needs of pupils including those with special educational needs or disabilities and LGBTQ+ pupils.
- ◆ Provide explanation and activities using the Rights Respecting school's website.

Staff remain alert to the safeguarding implications of materials, including online content, and ensure that resources do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or discriminatory language.

Language

We encourage all pupils to use and develop the English language and we provide support to those for whom English is not their first language. We value the richness that languages bring and multilingualism is viewed as an asset. The children have the opportunity to learn about a language through 'language of the day/week'.



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Reasonable adjustments and targeted support are provided to pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), without limiting access to the full curriculum.

Ethnic Monitoring

We monitor this policy and its implementation regularly. As part of that process, we ask parents to complete an ethnicity form as part of their child's new starter pack. The form uses the same ethnic categories as the Government uses in the national census. When the completed forms arrive at the school, they are stored in the children's confidential files and the information is uploaded to the schools confidential database.

Ethnic monitoring data is processed in accordance with data protection legislation and is used solely to support equality, inclusion and monitoring outcomes. Parents may decline to provide this information without disadvantage. We hope that all parents will feel able to participate in the ethnic monitoring scheme.

Staff

The School is an equal opportunities employer.

We regularly review the operation of our recruitment, promotion, training and development policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, in particular but not only, in relation to:

- ◆ Recruitment and selection
- ◆ Promotion, transfer & training opportunities
- ◆ Benefits, terms and conditions of employment
- ◆ Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- ◆ Termination of employment including redundancies
- ◆ Conduct at work
- ◆ Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to admission and assessment of students.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

Recruitment and Selection

This section of the policy should be read alongside our Recruitment Policy and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. Recruitment procedures follow Part 3 of Keeping



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Children Safe in Education (2025), including enhanced DBS checks, barred list checks where applicable, prohibition checks, and maintenance of an accurate Single Central Record.

We will endeavour to achieve and maintain a workforce which reflects the population within our recruitment area.

The staffing process is governed by the School's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between, on the one hand, the individual's knowledge and skills, experience and character and, on the other hand, the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

- ◆ The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the major selection criterion but the ability both to work with others and to be trained, coupled with individual potential will be taken into account.
- ◆ All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.
- ◆ Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of satisfactory references and DBS checks (and in the absence of prohibition orders) and/or medical report and/or satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, and protection applies to applicants at any stage of this process.



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Disability

If a member of staff is or becomes disabled, that member of staff should tell us about his/her condition so that we can support that member of staff.

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If a member of staff experiences difficulties at work because of a disability, s/he may wish to contact the Head of Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Head of Department may wish to consult the member of staff and his/her medical adviser about possible adjustments and s/he may be required to give his/her consent to a report being produced about his/her state of health and ability to perform his/her duties. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate the member of staff's needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

The School will make such adjustments to work arrangements or School premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign, flexible hours.

Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, he or she should discuss this requirement with the Headteacher and Bursar.

The School applies the same principles of reasonable adjustment for pupils (working in consultation with parents and any relevant external bodies and agencies), recognising its duties to remove barriers to participation wherever reasonably practicable.

Staff Development

We will seek to ensure that all employees receive equal access to training and career development opportunities. This section of the policy should be read alongside the School's Training and Development Policy.

Equal Opportunities training

All new members of staff will be given a copy of this policy and asked to read and familiarise themselves with it as part of their induction training.



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All our staff receive anti-discrimination and inclusivity training. Staff are encouraged to complete courses on the subjects via platforms such as National College, and it is woven into in-service courses across a range of different topics.

An equal opportunities twilight session is held every two years for all adults in school and will underpin all training and support sessions.

All Line Managers are trained in performance-related review procedures to minimise bias.

All employees will be informed of relevant promotion opportunities regardless of whether or not they are absent from work (for example, due to sickness or parental leave) at the time.

Dignity at Work

Discrimination (direct or indirect) on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal and will not be tolerated at our school.

Staff will where possible seek to learn about the cultures, customs and practices of their colleagues and pupils they will treat each other and all pupils with respect.

Staff should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant dismissal.

Harassment may take the form of unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which is perceived as affecting an employee's dignity at work. It may also take the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on their appearance or other personal characteristics which is perceived as affecting their dignity at work. It is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter. Harassment may include bullying, intimidating behaviour, persistent teasing or constant unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks, unfair allocation of work and responsibilities, or exclusion from normal work place conversation. It may be directed towards one individual or a group. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

The School encourages the reporting of any low-level concerns, in line with safeguarding guidance, to ensure early identification of issues that may impact professional conduct or wellbeing.

Procedure for staff members who have concerns

- ◆ If a member of staff considers that he or she has been the recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment, it is open to that member of staff to try to resolve the problem informally with the other person. If this is not appropriate or has not been successful, the member of staff may raise a grievance in accordance with the procedure in the Staff Handbook. All such grievances will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence as far as reasonably practicable to progress the complaint. Both



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during the investigation of the complaint and afterwards (whatever the outcome), consideration will be given to ensuring that you and the alleged harasser are not required to work together against your wishes.

- ◆ If a member of staff considers that he or she has been subject to discrimination of any form, he or she should inform the Headteacher or the Bursar.
- ◆ The School will seek to ensure that a member of staff is not in any way penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has stopped.
- ◆ False or malicious allegations may be treated as a disciplinary offence. Retaliation against a member of staff who complains of harassment can be expected to lead to disciplinary action.

Responsibilities and Implementation

All staff and pupils have a role to play in ensuring that this policy is implemented throughout the School.

The Headteacher with the assistance of the staff will:

- ◆ Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary; and
- ◆ Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed and trained on this policy.

Parental Complaints

If a parent of a pupil would like to make a complaint about the operation of this policy, they should follow the procedure set out in the School's Complaints Policy, a copy of which can be found on the School's website or upon request to the School's Office Team.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are very important to our school and have a lot to contribute.

Their views are welcomed and valued at all times. We ask that all parents and carers fully support the school's equal opportunities policy and its ethos of tolerance and respect.

We will discuss any incident of abuse involving their children with parents and carers.

We welcome the involvement of parents in school life and we encourage them to come into School to talk to the children about their experiences, cultures, skills and talents, as part of day to day project work.

Parents were consulted on the writing of this document and a copy of this policy is available on the School's website and the parents' noticeboard. It is also available to parents on request.



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Policy Review

The implementation of this policy is monitored regularly by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, and the policy itself is now reviewed annually. The Headteacher reports on this policy to the Directors of the School who review and monitor its implementation.