Pupil Equality and Diversity Policy
Prepared by: Cavendish Education
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1. PREAMBLE

Burlington House School Tooting is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular, it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere inBurlington House School Tooting documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

In the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility updated August 2023, considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part-time, and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school contracts the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for:

- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees', the term refers to any individual who is classified as an employee or a worker, working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Burlington House School Tooting.

The policy documents of Burlington House School Tooting are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions, a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the republication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
- Promote mental health and wellbeing.

Our school's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our pupils. We are committed to supporting and celebrating all pupils' individual identities. We have zero tolerance for any type of discrimination. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

The school's equality aims reflect its commitment to an inclusive learning community. Specifically, the school aims to:

- remove barriers to participation and achievement; close unjustified gaps in outcomes; celebrate diversity; and ensure pupils feel safe, respected and able to belong.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school
- Promoting community cohesion
- Promoting parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of pupils with protected characteristics
- Regularly reviewing our policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

This policy has due regard to statutory and good practice guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE 'Gender separation in mixed schools'
- DfE 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE 'School admissions code'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Secondary Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- LGBTQ+ Policy
- Supporting Pregnant Pupils and School-age Parents Policy
- Admissions Policy
- LAC Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body/directors will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Ensure that the equality information and objective as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils and potential pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
- Admissions.
- The way the school provides an education for pupils.
- How pupils are provided with access to benefits, facilities and services.
- The exclusion of a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate equality impact assessments informing future plans in collaboration with the headteacher.

The headteacher will:

- Implement and champion this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines fairly in all situations.

- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities under all relevant legislation, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Review and amend this policy, taking into account new legislation and government guidance, and previously reported incidents, in order to improve procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate counselling is made available for pupils who require immediate interventions, parental assistance and personal counselling.
- Monitor success in achieving equality aims and objectives and report back to governors.

Staff will:

- Be alert to the possible harassment of pupils, both inside and outside of the school, and to deal with incidents of harassment and/or discrimination as the highest priority.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equal opportunities and inclusivity, and pertaining to their specific roles.
- Have due regard to the sensitivities of all pupils, and not provide material that may cause offence.
- Act as a role model for equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole school community.

5. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in Appendix A. For example, refusing to admit a pupil because of their race.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a school has a policy or practice in place that applies to all pupils but puts people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a school rule that bans certain hairstyles, that would disproportionately affect pupils from a particular ethnic origin. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a pupil's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of a pupil who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

6. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Staff will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their:

- Sex.
- Race.

- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy or maternity.

Staff will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated. Staff will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

7. SEX

For the purpose of this policy, sex refers to a pupil's biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. The school understands that some pupils identify as a gender different to the sex they were assigned at birth, and we will support pupils through their transitioning phases.

Staff will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

The school will only separate pupils by sex where there is reasonable justification for doing so, or if one of the following applies:

- Pupils will suffer a disadvantage connected to their sex
- One sex has needs that are different from the needs of the other sex
- Participation in an activity by pupils of one sex is disproportionately low

The school will consider non-statutory exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and regularly review the impact of any separation to ascertain whether it remains lawful.

Pupils will be offered equal opportunities to undertake any activity in the school, e.g. in relation to technology lessons; all pupils will be allowed to choose which skills they learn. There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, but the school will ensure that such classes do not give pupils a disadvantage when compared to pupils of the other sex in other classes. Occasions where pupils are separated to be taught in single-sex classes will be documented and the separation justified to ensure parents, Ofsted and, where necessary, the wider community can understand the reasons behind separation. Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, trans pupils will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender they identify with.

Pupils' age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams. Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities; where separation is deemed necessary, the single-sex sports teams will receive the same quality and amount of resources.

8. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Staff will ensure that pupils of all races and ethnicities are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils and the school will regularly review its practices to ensure that they are fair.

Staff will ensure pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are treated equally and fairly, while ensuring they are supported at all times. The school will not separate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity.

The school may, however, take positive action to alleviate any disadvantage experienced by those with protected characteristics, and to address the particular challenges affecting pupils of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

9. DISABILITY

Staff will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

The school will avoid implementing rules that could have an adverse effect on pupils with disabilities (e.g. by making physical fitness a basis for admission), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

Staff will ensure that they do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something arising in consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for them to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

The school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments for pupils who are disadvantaged due to their disability. The school will provide auxiliary aids where necessary, to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the pupil also has SEND but does not have a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school will meet its duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented – in accordance with the LA accessibility strategy – and reviewed where necessary.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

10. RELIGION AND BELIEF

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their actual or perceived religion or belief, their lack of religion or belief, or their association with someone who holds a particular religion or belief. The school will ensure that pupils are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.

Absences in relation to religious observances will be handled in accordance with the school's Attendance and Absence Policy.

The school will liaise with local religious leaders of all faiths to inform the amount of leave pupils will be granted in relation to religious observance.

11. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Staff will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bi-sexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bi-sexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

The school will ensure that pupils are taught about the nature of marriage, including same-sex marriage, by presenting the facts of the law in an age-appropriate and impartial way.

The school will follow applicable statutory guidance when teaching relationships, sex and health education.

Staff will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to pupils in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.
Staff will support LGBTQ+ pupils to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity.

The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space where pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

12. GENDER REASSIGNMENT

The Equality Act 2010 defines gender reassignment as applying to anyone who is undergoing, has undergone or is proposing to undergo a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes.

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably in relation to gender reassignment, i.e. because they are trans or have trans parents, siblings or other family members. The school recognises that gender reassignment does not necessarily involve physical change, and can be solely social and emotional.

Pupils will be supported to dress in a way that reflects their gender identity, in line with the requirements of the School Uniform Policy and in accordance with current equality legislation.

The school will ensure that there are suitable toilet and changing facilities for pupils to use, including:

- Gender-specific toilets and changing facilities.
- Private changing facilities.

The facilities will be made available to all pupils and pupils can use the facility they feel most comfortable in, e.g. if a trans pupil wished to use a private changing room.
The school will support trans pupils to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity.

The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space within the school where trans pupils can discuss issues of gender without fear of discrimination.

The school will abide by its LGBTQ+ Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for trans pupils.

13. PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

The school will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably in the provision of education, benefits, facilities or services because they become pregnant, have recently given birth, have children or are breastfeeding.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate absence requests for the treatment and support of pupils who are pregnant or have just given birth.

To ensure all school-age parents and pregnant pupils are properly supported and the school can fulfil its duty of care, the school will implement and monitor a Supporting Pregnant Pupils and School Age Parents Policy. Where a pupil is unable to attend school, the LA will retain the duty to provide suitable full-time education that meets their individual needs, in accordance with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.

14. LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN (CHILDREN IN CARE)

Admission of LAC and previously LAC (PLAC) will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of our Admissions Policy.

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created and implemented for all LAC and PLAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

Staff will ensure that any SEND that LAC or PLAC have are duly taken into account and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND statement or EHC plan.

The school will adhere to its LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

15. THE CURRICULUM

Pupils will be exposed to thoughts and ideas of all kinds, and the school will not make any unjustified changes to curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristics that a pupil may have. The school will ensure, however, that the curriculum is as balanced as possible, and delivered in such a way that prevents discrimination and the promotion of prejudicial stereotypes.

To ensure equality, diversity and acceptance are taught and promoted throughout each subject area, the school will:

- use inclusive resources that reflect different cultures, identities and experiences; challenge stereotypes and prejudice; make reasonable adjustments; and enable all pupils to participate fully.

The observation of inclusive teaching strategies will remain a key aspect of the SLT's annual programme of monitoring.

The school will respect the right of parents to withdraw their child from sex education.

16. PROMOTING INCLUSION

The school will promote inclusion and equality at our school through:

- Ensuring that pupils are called by their preferred names, which may be different from their legal names, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that our governing board and staff reflect the full diversity of our local community.
- Providing an environment where prejudiced assumptions, attitudes and behaviours are continually challenged.
- Instilling in pupils an awareness of prejudice, giving them confidence that it can, and must, be eradicated.
- Providing a variety of educational and residential visits that expose pupils to a wide range of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring equal access to opportunities, such as extracurricular activities and the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language and the choice of resources, so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of society.
- Valuing the cultural experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of any protected characteristic that they may have.
- Communicating our policy to parents to gain their understanding, agreement and support for its provisions.
- Discussing equality issues as an agenda item for the school council.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the wider society.
- Ensuring admission arrangements will not unfairly disadvantage a pupil from a particular social or racial group, or with SEND.

17. PUPILS WHO HAVE LEFT THE SCHOOL

The school's responsibility to not discriminate, harass or victimise will not end when a pupil has left school. It will continue to apply with regard to subsequent actions related to our previous relationship with the pupil, such as the provision of references.

18. THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In accordance with the Equality Information and Objectives Policy, the school will meet its duty to publish:

- Annual information to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding pupils who have any of the protected characteristics outlined in the Protected characteristics section of this policy.

- Equality objectives (at least every four years) outlining how the school may further equality.

There are some protected characteristics where statistical data is less likely to be readily available, and pupils will not be pressured into providing information related to any characteristic which they may identify with.

19. BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

Our Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy in order to prevent, and effectively deal with, any discriminatory incidents.

Any bullying incidents of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and dealt with in line with the process in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The headteacher will decide whether it is appropriate to notify social services and/or the police of any incident.

Concerns with regards to the handling of bullying and discrimination incidents will be dealt with via the procedures outlined in the Complaints Procedures Policy.

20. STAFF TRAINING

New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy during their induction.

Whole-school staff training will be delivered in-house on a termly basis.
Staff will receive the appropriate equalities training that will:

- Focus on staff specialisms in relation to equality, for example, a focus on homophobic bullying to address a planned approach towards inclusion.
- Ensure all staff are aware of, and comply with, current equalities legislation and government recommendations.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how they can support pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide support for teachers to effectively manage any discrimination towards pupils with protected characteristics.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terms, concepts and current understandings relating to each of the protected characteristics.
- Develop appropriate strategies for communication between parents, educators and pupils about any issues related to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and participates in, relevant awareness days, such as Black History Month, World Disability Day, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Pride, and International Women's Day.

21. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links to the following policies, procedures and plans:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy

- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- School Uniform Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Looked-after Children Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Accessibility Plan

22. MONITORING, APPROVAL & POLICY REVIEW	
This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and reviewed annually by the school's governing body. Amendments will be communicated to staff and made available to pupils and parents as appropriate.	
Policy Approver(s)	Senior Leadership Team and governing body of the school
Storage Location	School website and internal policy library
Effective Date	12 August 2026
Next Review Date	12 August 2027

23. REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Change	Author	Date of Change
1.0	Initial policy issued	Cavendish Education	12 August 2026