



# CHURCHER'S COLLEGE

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

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SENIOR SCHOOL, JUNIOR SCHOOL AND NURSERY (INCLUDING EYFS)

May 2025

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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**Authorised by**

Deputy Head (Pastoral)

**Delegated to:** Senior Teacher (Wellbeing)

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 This policy is a whole school policy and it applies to Churcher's College, which comprises the Churcher's College Nursery, Churcher's College Junior School and Churcher's College Senior School.

1.2 This policy applies to all pupils within the school and their parents or legal guardians.

### **1.3 The School Community**

Churcher's College is an independent day school for children aged 3-18 years and is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It has a Christian, non-denominational ethos and tradition. Churcher's College defines the school community as comprising of the pupils, parents, legal guardians, teachers and other employees and governors as well as the network of past pupils and their families.

### **1.4 Aims**

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Churcher's College and the school is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity, in the belief that all pupils and staff are of equal value and are entitled to receive equal provision, access and treatment.

The aims of this policy and the school community as a whole is to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics;
- promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community; and
- comply with the school's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.

### **1.5 Related Policies**

This Equal Opportunities Policy is in accordance with and must be read and applied in conjunction with all the School's policies, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Accessibility plan
- Behaviour, rewards and sanctions policy / Culture and Ethos policy
- Anti-bullying policies
- Parental complaints policy
- Exclusion policy
- Uniform Policy

## **2 Our approach to equal treatment**

### **2.1 Equal Treatment**

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 and other cultures. The School is committed to promoting inclusion in order that every individual feels a sense of belonging at the School. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and will promote equal

treatment for all members of the school community. It is committed to fostering mutual tolerance and positive behaviours, practices and attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School.

In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics which are:

- Sex;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Gender reassignment;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief);
- Sexual orientation;
- Marital or civil partnership status; and
- Age.

The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need (SEN) or learning difficulty, or because English is an additional language.

The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities and the School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff training, PSHE lessons, the RSE curriculum, assemblies (house, sectional and whole school) and a programme of talks, workshops and lectures which the school provides in liaison with external agencies and providers.

### **3 Our commitment to each other**

All members of the Churcher's College community have an essential role to play in promoting the school's policy of equal opportunities and in countering any prejudice including those based on the protected characteristics. All members of the school community are therefore expected to comply with this policy.

The school and staff will actively seek 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 to raise awareness of related issues;
- foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures and to learn to identify any forms of bias;
- understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour; and
- understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

All members of the school community have a duty to:

- recognise, appreciate and acknowledge the contributions made by each sex and by different ethnic and religious groups to the richness of the school's academic, social, spiritual, cultural and sporting life;
- treat each other fairly and with sensitivity, recognising that a person's sex, race, religion, abilities or social circumstances are not subjects for negative comment or behaviour of any kind; and
- all staff, pupils and parents are expected to support the ethos of the school actively and to promote a civilised, friendly, compassionate and secure environment for everyone to value and enjoy.

#### 4 **Discrimination**

- 4.1 Discrimination leads to the unfavourable treatment of a person and it may be direct or indirect, arise from disability and occur intentionally or unintentionally.

##### Forms of Discrimination

**Direct discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity).

**Indirect discrimination** occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race.

**Discrimination arising from disability** occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Victimisation and harassment** occur when an individual experiences a detriment because of action that person has taken or may take to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist another person to do so (called a Protected Act) and harassment.

#### 4.2 **Admissions**

The School welcomes applications for school places from people who have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and will process and consider each application fairly. The School will make reasonable adjustments to its systems and procedures in order to accommodate disabilities of which it has been made aware and promotes a positive culture towards inclusion of people with disabilities and special educational needs in all its activities. At present, the School's facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with special educational needs are limited but all that is reasonable will be done to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures and premises are made accessible to everyone (see also the School's [Form of Undertaking](#)).

#### **4.3 Reasonable Adjustments**

The School has an on-going duty to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the accessibility needs of all pupils in respect of the education and associated services provided to ensure that no pupils are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils. In making "reasonable adjustments", the School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for pupils as required. The School will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids or services.

#### **4.4 Confidentiality**

The School will have due regard to any request by a parent or pupil (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential, where safeguarding allows.

#### **4.5 Physical Access**

As described within the school's Accessibility Plan, the School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises.

### **5 Incidents of discrimination or harassment**

No member of the school community should engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to discrimination towards or the harassment of another person. Discrimination and harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence. If a pupil considers that they have been subject to discrimination or harassment of any form, they should inform a trusted member of school staff. In all cases, complaints must be treated in a serious and sympathetic manner. The School will seek to ensure that the victim is not in any way penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint. The situation will be monitored to ensure that it has been resolved. False or malicious allegations will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

### **6 Education and associated services**

#### **6.1 Equal access**

The School will provide all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects, irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

In PSHE and sport, the School applies paragraphs 9 and 10 of non-statutory guidance *Gender Separation in Mixed Schools* (DfE, June 2018).

There is equal opportunity for boys and girls to participate in comparable sporting activities while recognising that single sex teams are formed for competitive sports where physical strength, stamina or physique may put the average boy or girl at an unfair advantage or disadvantage.

## **6.2 Positive action**

The School may provide pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

## **6.3 Exclusions**

The School will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding them from the School, or by subjecting them to any other detriment, on the grounds of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs.

## **6.4 Teaching and School materials**

Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, sexual or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum to avoid stereotypes and bias.

## **6.5 Pupil interaction**

All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions, stereotypes and negative behaviours and practices. The School's PSHE and RSE curriculum encourage respect for other people, regarding the protected characteristics.

## **6.6 Bullying**

The School will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying and prejudice-based bullying) for any reason.

Examples of bullying include:

- bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture;
- bullying related to SEN, learning difficulties or disabilities;
- bullying related to appearance or health conditions;
- bullying relating to sexual orientation;
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances; and
- sexist or sexual bullying or bullying related to gender reassignment.

## **7 School Uniform**

### **7.1 The School Uniform Policy**

All pupils are required to wear a uniform up to and including Year 11 at the Senior School. A 'business dress' code operates for the Sixth Form.

### **7.2 Symbols of faith**

Subject to considerations of safety and welfare items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle worn by Sikhs, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity.

### **7.3 Pupils with disabilities**

Reasonable adjustments may be required to the School Uniform for pupils with disabilities who require them.

### **7.4 Requests for variations to the School Uniform**

Any requests for variations to the School Uniform should be made by parents in writing to the Senior Teacher (Wellbeing) (Senior School) or the Head or Deputy Head of the Junior School (Junior School & Nursery) in the first instance.

## **8 Provision for pupils with particular religious, dietary, language or cultural needs**

### **8.1 Catering**

Churcher's College provides a wide range of food options. The catering team can provide for most special dietary requirements whether related to allergen, intolerance or for religious or cultural reasons. Ongoing communication between the school and the parents of pupils with allergies is expected. Individual meals accommodating allergies are provided as required.

### **8.2 Religious observance**

The School's religious ethos, services and school timetable are set in accordance with the Christian tradition, but the School respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths, or no faith, subject always to them respecting the rights and freedoms of the school community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

### **8.3 Religious and cultural needs**

The School will grant requests of absence wherever possible on grounds of belief. Most school assemblies are non-denominational and cater for pupils of any or no religion. The School, through the pastoral structure, will make every effort to support individual pupils with cultural needs (religious, ethnic etc.) provided that this is consistent with the law and the inclusive ethos and tradition of the School.

### **8.4 Language**

The School attempts to use succinct and straightforward language whenever possible. The School will also make reasonable adjustments to ensure that parents and pupils for whom

English is an Additional Language (EAL) will be able to access school material. Pupils for whom English is not a first language receive support, as appropriate, from the Learning Enrichment Department (Junior School & Nursery) / Curriculum Support Department (Senior School).

**9 Awareness**

Awareness of this policy among employees will be raised and maintained by means of discussion at staff meetings and will form part of the School's education programme for pupils (in PHSE lessons and assemblies). Children will be valued for their diversity and differences and, in turn, encouraged to value and respect others.

**10 Risk assessment**

Where a concern about a pupil's welfare is identified, the risks to that pupil's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified. The School's approach to promoting pupil welfare will be systematic and pupil focussed.

**11 Working together**

The School is committed to working with parents and other agencies for the good of each pupil.

**12 Complaints**

A parent or guardian who believes that they (or the pupil) have received less favourable treatment on any of the grounds referred to in this policy may make a formal complaint in writing. The complaint should be made to a member of staff (usually the class teacher or form tutor, Head of House or to any other adult who is able to report the complaint). The complaint will be handled in accordance with the School's Complaints Procedure, the latest version of which is always available on the School's website.

**13 Monitoring and review**

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Deputy Head (Pastoral), in conjunction with the Senior Teacher (Wellbeing) and the Head of the Junior School, is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.