



**THE
WHITE
HOUSE
SCHOOL**

Equal Opportunities Policy

Author of policy and position of responsibility: Elle Vinall, Headteacher	Date policy finalised: September 2024
Approved by: Dave Farley, COO	Date of approval: September 2024
Due to be reviewed: September 2025	Date of review:

Contents:	Page Number:
1. Context	2
2. Aims	3
3. Our equality objectives	3
4. Legislation and guidance	3
5. Roles and responsibilities	4
6. Discrimination	4
7. Advancing equality of opportunity	5
8. Recruitment and selection	5
9. Fostering good relations	6
10. Equality considerations in decision making	6
11. Disabilities	6
12. Part-time and fixed-term work	7
13. Breaches of this policy	7
14. Training	7
15. Monitoring arrangements	7
16. Links with other policies	7

1. Context

The White House School is an Independent Specialist school. We are part of an ethical and progressive organisation that believes it can achieve real change for pupils and their families.

The White House School is situated within BCP local authority and offers a specialist learning provision which emphasises the development of core academic understanding, encourages creativity, celebrates outdoor learning and promotes the growth of essential life skills. We aim to establish a safe, creative and vibrant environment where children feel challenged and supported in their learning, achieving high levels of wellbeing and academic success. We aim to nurture and develop mutual respect, tolerance, teamwork, perseverance, kindness and good manners.

We adhere to the values of ARC:

- Ambition
- Resilience
- Community

The White House School operates within the SPELL framework. SPELL is The National Autistic Society's framework for understanding and responding to the needs of children and adults on the autism spectrum. It focuses on five principles that have been identified as vital elements of best practice in autism and

emphasises ways to change the environment and our approaches to meet the specific needs of each person.

SPELL stands for Structure, Positive approaches and expectations, Empathy, Low arousal and Links:

Structure	Structure makes the world a more predictable, accessible and safer place. We can support people on the autism spectrum in creating structured environments using visual information.
Positive (approaches and expectations)	We must seek to establish and reinforce self-confidence and self-esteem by building on natural strengths, interest and abilities.
Empathy	We must try to see the world from the standpoint of the autistic child or adult, knowing what it is that motivates or interests them but importantly what may also frighten, preoccupy or otherwise distress them.
Low arousal	Approaches and the environment need to be calm and ordered in such a way so as to reduce anxiety and aid concentration.
Links	Autistic people, their parents or advocates should be seen as partners. Open links and communication will reduce the risk of misunderstanding, confusion or the adoption of fragmented, piecemeal approaches.

2. Aims

The White House School aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty by having due regard to the need to:

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

3. Our Equality objectives

- To promote the awareness between children, staff and parents of the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act - through an engaging PSHE/SMSC programme and throughout all aspects of the curriculum.
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not - all staff promote healthy friendships and record incidents of prejudice-related bullying.
- To robustly challenge inappropriate language and behaviour amongst any group within the school and community, taking any opportunity to educate.
- To build/continue to develop an environment where everybody feels safe and safe to challenge others where their behaviour falls short of what is expected within The White House School and the wider community.

4. 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.**

5. Roles and responsibilities

The School Board will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents, and that they are reviewed and updated at least once every four years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives amongst staff and pupils.
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to the School Board.

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in this policy.

6. Discrimination

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

Direct Discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views.

Indirect Discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Sexual Harassment occurs when a someone is subjected to unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is unlawful and prohibited. The conduct need not be sexually motivated, only sexual in nature.

Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

Disability Discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Eliminating discrimination

We do not discriminate on any of the characteristics in the Equality Act 2010

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Marriage and civil partnerships

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 the School Board are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings. Where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the meeting minutes. New staff receive training on equality as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training.

7. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (e.g. pupils with disabilities).
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim pupils to pray at prescribed times).
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (including provision at extra-curricular clubs).

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Publish attainment data each academic year showing how pupils with different characteristics are performing.
- Analyse the above data to determine strengths and areas for improvement, implement actions in response and publish this information.
- Make evidence available identifying improvements for specific groups.
- Publish further data about any issues associated with particular, protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own pupils.

8. Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

9. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, pupils will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Holding assemblies dealing with relevant issues. Pupils will be encouraged to take a lead in such assemblies and we will also invite external speakers to contribute.
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies and organising school trips and activities based around the local community.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives to deal with any potential tensions between different groups of pupils within the school. For example, our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of pupils from a range of backgrounds. All pupils 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.

10. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made. The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:

- Cuts across any religious holidays
- Is accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

11. Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

12. Part-time and Fixed-term Work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

13. Breaches of this Policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal. If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

14. Training

This policy will be supported by a program of training activities, to make sure that all barriers, procedures, attitudes and behaviours that prevent equal opportunity are removed. Any member of staff who has any questions about the applicability of this policy should consult the Headteacher.

15. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every two years and sent to the School Board for approval.

16. Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Curriculum Policy
- Promoting the Fundamental British Values Policy
- PSHE Policy