



Merchant Taylors'
School

Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy of Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby [the School].

Merchant Taylors' School is an independent mainstream day school for pupils aged from 4 to 18 years. The School welcomes staff, workers, volunteers, pupils, parents, applicants and Governors from all different ethnic groups, backgrounds and faiths.

The term School community includes staff, Governors, pupils, including those in EYFS, parents, visitors and volunteers.

- 1.2 The School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all members of its community and values the rich diversity and creative potential that individuals with different backgrounds, skills and abilities bring to the School.

Pupils are taught to value and respect others and the Fundamental British Values including mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy outlines how the School intends to achieve these aims and comply with its equality duties, as mandated by the Equality Act (2010) ['the Act'], and draws upon the DfE guidance "The Equality Act 2010 and schools" (2014).

All members of the School community are expected to adhere to this policy. The School seeks to foster greater awareness of its aims, policies, and procedures related to equal opportunities and will provide necessary information and training.

The School opposes any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the grounds of any protected characteristic and aims to create an environment where all current and prospective pupils are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness regarding their protected characteristics. In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of:

- Sex (but please note the admissions criteria)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Marriage and civil partnership

- 1.3 These are called the **Protected Characteristics**.

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of any of their protected characteristics. The School aims to foster a sense of community in which all pupils and members of the school community are valued and

can thrive regardless of any of these characteristics, and will seek to counter any discriminatory practices, details can be found in the school's Anti-Bullying policy.

The School will do its utmost to protect pupils from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or groups within the School. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of pupils or staff will be handled under the relevant policy: the pupils' Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy or the staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

- 1.4 The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special education need or learning difficulty, as detailed in the SEND policy.
- 1.5 The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices, conform with the principles of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through:
 - staff leading by example;
 - through the Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) programme;
 - the delivery of Assemblies by pupils and staff;
 - the cultivation of Merchant's Values: Character, Ambition and Excellence;
 - teaching of the Fundamental British Values;
 - a supportive School culture and through the School's policies.
- 1.6 In teaching about sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education. For further information, please see the School's PSHE Policy. 1.7 Related policies: This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is consistent with all of the School's policies, including the Admissions Policy, Behaviour Policy, Exclusion, Anti-Bullying Policy, Disability Policy, Managing Educational Visits Policy, Accessibility Plan, SEND Policy, and protocols on School Uniform.
- 1.7 All policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format, if required.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 **Scope:** This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective School Community. There is also an Equal Opportunities Policy available to staff
- 2.2 **Policy aims:** Through the operation of this Policy we aim to:
 - communicate the commitment of the School to equal opportunities for all members of the School community ;
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
 - promote equal treatment within the School for all members of the School Community;
 - create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination;
 - 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;
 - remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist;

- ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person on any ground listed at paragraph 1.2;
- make it clear that, and ensure, all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable
- take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled people at a substantial disadvantage (the 'reasonable adjustments' duty).

3. Forms of discrimination

3.1 **Types:** Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability, and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

3.2 **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not 'fit in' on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination. 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). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

3.3 **Indirect discrimination:** 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 gender, sexual orientation or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with gender, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of gender.

3.4 **Discrimination arising from disability:** 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. For example, where a pupil with cerebral palsy who has mobility issues is told they are unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

3.5 **Victimisation and harassment:** Discrimination also includes:

- Victimisation - less favourable treatment because of an action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination) and
- Harassment - unwanted conduct, related to one of the Protected Characteristics other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, regardless of whether this effect was intended

4. Admissions

4.1 The School welcomes applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible.

Pupils are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential to take advantage of the particular educational provision of the School, which is suited to committed pupils. From September 2025, all provision at the School is co-educational.

- 4.2 In any review of selection criteria and procedures, the School will ensure that consideration is given to equal opportunities issues. The School will not discriminate in relation to the protected characteristics listed above in paragraph 1.2 in its admissions processes.
- 4.3 There will be no discrimination against pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), insofar as they have the academic ability to attend the School (which is selective). All pupils will have equal opportunity to access the curriculum. We follow the SEND Code of Practice and the Equity Act in order to ensure pupils who require reasonable adjustments can access and enjoy their school career at Merchant Taylors' Schools. Although the School is not a specialist provider of SEND, we aim to remove barriers to learning and value the benefits of neurodiversity.

For further information, please see the School's Admissions Policy.

5. Education and associated services

- 5.1 **Equal access:** The School will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects, including all sports, irrespective of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.
- 5.2 **Positive action:** The School may afford 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.
- 5.3 **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, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs.
- 5.4 **Teaching and School materials:** Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias [for example, gender or racial], so that this can be eliminated in both the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. The School aims to ensure that materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to prevent discrimination and avoid stereotypes and bias and proactively educates pupils through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and subject curricula about the protected characteristics and Fundamental British Values.
- 5.5 **Pupil interaction:** All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, 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 and stereotypes.

5.6 **Bullying:** The School will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types 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 relating to gender reassignment
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- sexist or sexual bullying.

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy contains more details about the School's strategy in this regard. The School will work with Local Children's Services as necessary when bullying behaviour becomes a potential safeguarding issue

6. School uniform

6.1 The protocol on wearing a School uniform is consistent with this policy. The protocol on wearing a school uniform applies equally to all pupils, irrespective of their race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, the School will consider reasonable requests to alter the School uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements. The School will make reasonable adjustments for disabled children.

6.2 Symbols of faith: Certain items of jewellery, such as Christian Crosses, and certain items of headwear, such as headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or ethnic beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the School's existing guidance on School uniform principles [in regard to, for example, the School colours]. Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or her parents to the Pastoral Leads, Heads of Section and Heads of Houses for consideration. They may consult with the Head before making a final decision subject to the Complaints procedure.

6.3 Disabled pupils: Reasonable adjustments may be required on a case-by-case basis to the School uniform for disabled pupils who require them. The pupil or the pupil's parents should refer the matter to the Head to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the pupil.

7. Religious belief

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

8. Disability and Special Educational Needs

8.1 The Act defines a 'disability' as when a person has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'. This definition has some overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs'

(SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014), but not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and vice versa.

For the purpose of this policy, 'disabled pupils' refers not only to those with physical disabilities but also to those with health issues, including mental health, or learning disabilities, if they meet the legal definition of 'disability'.

8.2 Disability and Discrimination

- **Direct Discrimination:** The School will not treat a disabled pupil less favourably simply because that pupil is disabled.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** The School will not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only, unless the School can show that it is done for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- **Discrimination Arising from Disability:** The School will not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability [e.g., by not allowing a disabled pupil on crutches outside at break because it would take them too long to get out and back].
- **Harassment:** The School will not harass a pupil because of their disability (e.g., a teacher shouting at the pupil because their disability means that they are constantly struggling with classwork or unable to concentrate).

8.3 Reasonable Adjustments

The School is committed to providing full educational inclusion and will take reasonable steps to ensure all pupils have equal access to the School environment and all opportunities available. Reasonable adjustments will be made to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils [the 'reasonable adjustment' duty].

This is a broad expression that covers all aspects of school life, for example:

- the curriculum;
- classroom organisation and timetabling;
- access to School facilities;
- clubs and visits;
- School sports; and,
- School policies.

Reasonable adjustments may typically include:

- making arrangements for a child in a wheelchair to attend an interview in an accessible ground floor room;
- allowing extra time for a dyslexic child to complete an entrance examination;
- providing examination papers in larger print for a child with a visual impairment;
- rearranging the timetable to allow a pupil to attend a class in an accessible part of the building;

- arranging a variety of accessible sports activities.
- 8.4 The School is not legally required to make adjustments which include physical alterations such as the provision of a stair-lift or new ground floor facilities, or a new library.
- 8.5 In making 'reasonable adjustments', the School is required to provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled pupils. The School will consider any proposals made by parents carefully and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids and services.
- 8.6 The School's Accessibility Policy specifically sets out the School's arrangements for:
- Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum.
 - Improving the physical environment of the School to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of the education and benefits, facilities, or services provided or offered by the School.
 - Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

9. Informing the School

In accordance with the School's Terms and Conditions, parents of pupils must notify Heads of Division, Heads of House or Head of Learning Support in writing if at any time they are aware or suspect that the pupil has a learning difficulty. The registration form enables prospective parents to give details of their child's disability when applying for a place at the School.

Parents must provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing the School with such information will enable the School to support the pupil as much as possible.

Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a 'need to know' basis. The School will have due regard to any request made 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.

10. Admission of children with special educational needs and/or a disability

Applications for a place at the School will be considered on the basis that reasonable adjustments (see definition above) have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's special educational needs and / or disability. The School will not offer a place if, after reasonable adjustments have been made, the School will not be able to provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs. The School shall inform the parents of their decision and give details of the reasonable adjustments they are going to make or give reasons why an offer of a place has not been made.

- 10.1 **Existing pupils:** Where the School becomes aware of a disability or special educational need of an existing pupil, the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the pupil whilst at the School, which may include making reasonable adjustments. If in the professional judgement of the Head

of Learning Support, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made, parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.

- 10.2 **Access:** 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. The School has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised as necessary. The Plan is available on the School website

11. **Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs/Education, Health and Care Plans**

The School's SEND Policy includes details about the welfare and educational provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs/ Education, Health and Care Plans.

12. **Pupils with English as an additional language**

Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) receive additional learning support if necessary, overseen by the Head of Learning Support and both the English Department and Modern Languages Department. The School consults with the pupil and the parents as appropriate. The School has appropriate welfare support for all such pupils through the supportive and inclusive pastoral system.

13. **Responsibilities**

All members of the School Community are expected to comply with this policy and, therefore, to treat others with dignity at all times.

- 13.1 **Overall responsibility:** The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Executive Committee day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review

- 13.2 **Management:** Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

14. **Reporting and recording incidents of discrimination**

- 14.1 **Questions about this policy:** If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Head of School.

- 14.2 **Complaints:** If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in paragraph 1.2, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's formal complaints procedure. For a copy of the School's Complaints Policy, please contact the Head of School. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the complaints procedure.

14.3 **Reports:** If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint under paragraph 15.2 above, please contact the Head of School.

14.4 **Enforcement:** We will treat seriously and investigate every complaint and report. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the School Community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.

15. Monitoring and review

15.1 **Monitoring:** To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to admission and selection, and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in the School, the School monitors applicants' gender, race, disability and religion or belief confidentially as part of the Admissions procedure.

15.2 **Review:** The Deputy Head Pastoral is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data monitored under paragraph 15.1 above and under paragraph 15.4 below and will arrange for the taking of appropriate positive steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination where necessary. The Deputy Head Pastoral is also responsible for reviewing whether the aims of this Policy are carried out throughout all areas of the School and taking appropriate action where necessary. From September 2025, This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head Pastoral.

16. Publication

This policy will be available on the School's website and on request from the School