



The Blue Coat School

POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Date of Next Review: Lent 2024

This Policy for Equal Opportunities was devised by the Head of Prep and Head of Pre-Prep in conjunction with members of the Academic Team and other colleagues in the School.

The Blue Coat School Birmingham Limited

POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1

The School's Mission and Aims are to: nurture a spirit of fun, adventure and curiosity in a supportive and caring Christian community; provide exceptional learning opportunities for every child through innovative and dynamic teaching; and champion versatile, creative risk-takers prepared for a changing world. Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of the School.

1.2

The Blue Coat School is committed to giving all the children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. Staff seek to do this by taking account of children's varied experiences and needs. A broad and balanced curriculum is offered, and staff have high expectations of all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all the children matter.

1.3

Staff at The Blue Coat School are committed to actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

1.4

The Blue Coat School is committed to equal treatment for all pupils, employees and members of the school community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. These are the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

1.5

The Blue Coat School Policy for Equal Opportunities applies to all children in the School including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception).

1.6

The Blue Coat School Policy for Equal Opportunities is available for parents in Main Reception and the Pre-Prep Office.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1

This Policy has regard to the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 (and any subsequent revisions), the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) (and any subsequent revisions), the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years (DfE 2015), the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 (and any subsequent revisions) and any other relevant legislation or Guidance.

2.2

This Policy is intended to help ensure that the School actively identifies, prevents and redresses unfair discrimination against disadvantaged groups and promotes equality of opportunity for all children. It is the responsibility of all staff to actively promote anti-discriminatory practice, mutual tolerance, harmony and respect for people of all faiths, races and cultures both within the school community and in the wider community. All staff seek to develop the individuality of all children, irrespective of age, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, culture, home language, ability, or family background. Each child's worth is valued and respected, the cultural diversity of the community centred on the School and that of the wider community is appreciated, and respect is shown for all minority groups.

2.3

The principles of fairness and justice for all are promoted through the education provided in the School. Staff recognise that doing this may entail treating some children differently. Staff recognise that each child develops at his or her own pace and the curriculum is planned to enable each child to develop to his or her potential. Staff constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups.

2.4

Staff seek to ensure that all children have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the School including visits and trips outside the School. Full Risk Assessments are carried out before such visits and trips to ensure that the needs of all children are accounted for and managed appropriately.

2.5

Staff challenge personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur. Staff are aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through the promotion of positive images and role models and through positive educational experiences, and support for each individual's legitimate point of view, staff aim to promote equality, positive social attitudes and respect for all. Awareness about unconscious bias is raised in staff training to ensure equality of opportunity for all those with protected characteristics. Through various Pupil Voice forums all children are given the opportunity to express their opinions, all of which are valued equally and which inform decision making processes where relevant.

2.6

Staff aim to work in partnership with parents by providing information on a regular basis and presenting opportunities for discussions about each child's progress and needs. All the School policies are available for parents to see on request and many are available on the School website. Partnership with parents is also encouraged in cultural events and activities organised by the Friends of The Blue Coat School and supported by the School.

3. ADMISSIONS

3.1

Applications are encouraged from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches the community and is vital in preparing pupils for their life ahead. The Bursary Programme is designed to enable a number of pupils of merit but of limited means to take up a place at The Blue Coat School if they have met the entry criteria. Further details of the Bursary Programme can be obtained from the Finance Office.

3.2

The Blue Coat School is an academically selective co-educational school, and staff 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. The Blue Coat School is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of the race, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, disability or social background of prospective pupils. Staff aim, wherever possible, to ensure that there is a balanced intake of boys and girls in the School.

3.3

Subject to the School Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures, The Blue Coat School does not discriminate in any way regarding entry. Children with special educational needs are welcomed, provided that the Learning Support Department can offer them the support that they require. Children with physical disabilities are welcomed, provided that the site can accommodate them. Parents of a child who has any disability or special educational needs must therefore provide the School with full written details when applying for a place, or subsequently before accepting the offer of a place. The School needs this information so that, in the case of a child with particular needs, those needs can be assessed and parents can be consulted about the adjustments that can reasonably be made to cater adequately for the child's needs both during the admissions process and if an offer of a place is made. The Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures gives further details about the admissions procedures.

4. SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

4.1

To enable the School to make appropriate provision for each individual child the following information is ascertained from each child's parents prior to entry into the School:

- Specific dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies;
- Specific health requirements;
- Cultural and religious background
- Linguistic background and languages spoken at home.

Parents are also asked to update the School with any changes to this information as their child progresses through the School.

4.1.1 Dietary Provisions

4.1.1.1

The catering staff are informed about specific dietary requirements which are then catered for appropriately. Vegetarian, vegan and halal options are available every day and provision is made for children with food allergies or intolerances. Staff receive regular training on the management of allergies.

4.1.1.2

The First Aid and Health Policy gives further details about the management of allergies and links to external support agencies.

4.1.2 Specific Health Provisions

4.1.2.1

Provision is made for children with specific health needs such as allergies, asthma and diabetes. Staff receive appropriate training regularly.

4.1.2.2

The First Aid and Health Policy gives further details about the management of these specific health needs.

4.1.2.3

Some children at The Blue Coat School have disabilities. The Blue Coat School is as committed to meeting the needs of these children, as it is to meeting the needs of all children within the School. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a disadvantage compared with non-disabled children.

4.1.2.4

The School is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children full access to all areas of learning by making all reasonable adjustments where possible. The School has an Accessibility Plan which sets out how the School will continue to make provisions to meet the needs of people with disabilities. This is reviewed annually by the Governors.

4.1.2.5

Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give children additional time to complete certain activities, or modify teaching materials, or offer alternative activities where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment.

4.1.2.6

The Assistant Head Academic Development and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators for The Blue Coat School are responsible for overseeing the provision for children with special educational needs within the school as set out in the Policy for Special Educational Needs and Disability. This Policy together with the Disability Discrimination Policy set out details about the School's provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their integration into the School.

4.1.2.7

Where possible, provision is made for parents with disabilities to attend school events such as Chapel Services, Parents' Evenings and school functions. This provision includes the provision of temporary ramps to facilitate access, designated parking spaces and allocating Prep children to downstairs Houses to enable parents with disabilities to collect their children more easily.

4.1.3 Cultural and religious background

4.1.3.1

Staff endeavour to make the School welcoming to all children irrespective of their cultural or religious background. An understanding of diverse cultures is promoted through the topics studied by the children, particularly in PSHE, RE, humanities and modern languages and this is reflected in the displays of work shown around the School. The curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that staff have for minority ethnic groups.

4.2 Racial Equality

4.2.1

At The Blue Coat School, staff will:

- Strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups.

4.2.2

It is the right of all children to receive the best education the School can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the School. Racism or racist behaviour is not tolerated in any form. Should a racist incident occur, staff would deal with it firmly in accordance with School procedures as set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Behaviour Management and Exclusions Policy. The procedures as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will also be followed where there are safeguarding concerns about a child or a group of children.

4.3 English as an Additional Language

4.3.1

At The Blue Coat School staff will:

- Support children with English as an Additional Language by providing opportunities for them to use their home language in their play and learning and by providing a range of meaningful contexts in which the children have opportunities to develop English.
- Strive to maintain effective channels of communication with parents/carers for whom English is not their first language.
- Seek the assistance of outside agencies when necessary.

4.3.2

Support is also provided for some children with English as an Additional Language through one-to-one sessions or small group sessions led by an EAL specialist.

4.3.3

The Policy for English as an Additional Language gives further details about the support that is offered to children who speak English as an Additional Language.

4.4 Gender Equality

4.4.1

The Blue Coat School recognises that, nationally, the achievement of boys is falling behind that of girls – though this does not appear to be the pattern at The Blue Coat School. Staff are committed, however, to enabling all individuals and groups of children make the best progress possible in the School.

4.4.2

A number of measures have been put in place to ensure equal learning opportunities for boys and girls. These include:

- Dealing with negative aspects of children's behaviour, including bullying and name-calling.
- Removing gender bias from resources.
- Making sure that displays encourage all children to be effective learners and achievers.
- Making sure that the language used by teachers and other adults in the school is gender inclusive.
- Encouraging both boys and girls to read fiction and non-fiction.

4.4.3

To make their teaching more accessible to all children, staff often:

- Begin a lesson by stating the learning outcomes and giving the 'big picture'.
- Employ a variety of activities and include a kinaesthetic element.
- Deliver work in bite-sized chunks, with 'brain breaks' and new starts.
- Provide challenge, competition and short-term goals.
- Give regular positive feedback and rewards.

4.4.4

In structuring their teaching to maximise its effectiveness for both genders, staff seek to ensure that strategies designed to improve the boys' attainment do not do so at the expense of achievement by the girls.

5. THE ROLE OF STAFF

5.1

All staff ensure that all children are treated fairly and with respect. Staff do not knowingly discriminate against any child.

5.2

When selecting classroom materials, staff strive to provide resources challenging stereotypical images of minority groups.

5.3

Staff seek to implement this Policy when designing activities and schemes of work, both in the choice of topics to study, and in the manner in which staff approach sensitive issues. So, for example, humanities topics include examples of the significant contributions made to this country's history by people irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability or any of the protected characteristics. Teachers attempt to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world. Issues might also be addressed through drama, assemblies, PSHE and in English lessons. The curriculum in Pre-Prep and Prep is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it is inclusive.

5.4

All teachers and support staff challenge any incidents of prejudice or racism. Any such incidents are recorded, and these are drawn to the attention of the Headmaster. The Behaviour Management and Exclusions Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy contain clear procedures for dealing with instances of discrimination.

6. THE ROLE OF THE HEADMASTER

6.1

It is the Headmaster's role to implement the School's Policy on Equal Opportunities, and he is supported by the Governing Body in so doing.

6.2

It is the Headmaster's role to make sure that all staff are aware of the School Policy on Equal Opportunities, and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.

6.3

The Headmaster promotes respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in school assemblies, for example, respect for other people is a regular theme, as it is also in displays around the School.

6.4

The Headmaster views all incidents of unfair treatment, and any racist incidents, with due concern in accordance with the Behaviour Management and Exclusions Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

7. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

7.1

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that all members of the School community are treated fairly and equally and that there is equality of opportunity. The Governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the School environment properly accommodates people with disabilities.

8. RELATED POLICIES, MONITORING AND REVIEW

8.1

As part of the monitoring process, all parents who accept places at the School for their child are invited to complete an ethnic monitoring form. The teaching staff are responsible for monitoring the progress of all the children they teach and for ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for them all. The progress of children at the School is overseen by the Deputy Head Academic.

8.2

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related whole school documents including: Accessibility Plan, Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Management and Exclusions Policy, Disability Discrimination Policy, English as an Additional Language, Early Years Foundation Stage Policy, First Aid and Health Policy, Policy for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Special Educational Needs Policy and Procedures.

8.3

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or before if necessary. It will be presented to the Governors' Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee for approval. The minutes of this meeting will be presented to the Governors.