



The Blue Coat School

# **POLICY FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Approved by the Governors' Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(A Poole – Chair of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Committee)

This Policy for Equal Opportunities was devised by the Academic Lead in consultation with the Academic Team.

Date of Next Review: Lent 2026

## **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.

## **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 for group and school-based providers 2024 (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 breadth 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 identity is valued and respected, the cultural diversity of the community reflected in 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, inclusion and diversity are promoted through the education provided in the School. All pupils' learning needs are met, including children who have SEND, are able, gifted and talented or have English as an additional language. Staff recognise that doing this may entail making reasonable adjustments to cater for the needs of individuals. Staff recognise that each child develops at his or her own pace and the curriculum is planned to enable each child to fulfil 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 ensure that all children have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the School including facilities, resources, 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**

Through diverse educational experiences and the use of high quality resources and materials staff aim to promote equality, positive social attitudes and respect for all. These reflect a range of viewpoints and pay particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Awareness about unconscious bias is raised in staff training to ensure equality of opportunity for all those with protected characteristics.

## **2.6**

The adequacy of the arrangements for collecting pupil voice is regularly reviewed. 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.

## **2.7**

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.

## **2.8**

The School's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) group plays a key role in shaping and monitoring the School's Equal Opportunities policy, ensuring it reflects The Blue Coat School's commitment to an inclusive and fair school community. The group actively promotes awareness, advises on best practice, and helps identify and address any barriers to equity. Through collaboration with staff, pupils and parents, the DEI group strives to foster a culture where everyone feels represented, valued and empowered to thrive.

# **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**

Subject to the School Admissions and Attendance Policy and Procedures, The Blue Coat School does not discriminate in any way regarding entry. Staff aim, wherever possible, to ensure that there is a balanced intake of boys and girls in the School. Children with special educational needs are welcomed, provided that the Learning Success 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 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 able-bodied 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 Director of Learning Success is 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, including the provision of temporary ramps to facilitate access and designated parking spaces.

### **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 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 all cultural and religious backgrounds. Resources used in school are carefully selected to ensure diverse representation and inclusion, reflecting a range of heritages and backgrounds so that all pupils feel seen and their experiences valued.

## **4.2 Racial Equity**

### **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 taking reasonable steps for them to use their home language in their play and learning
- Provide a range of meaningful contexts in which the children have opportunities to develop English
- Provide a range of resources to ensure that the children are able to access their learning
- 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 Equity**

#### **4.4.1**

Staff at The Blue Coat School are committed to enabling all individuals and groups of children, regardless of gender, to make the best progress possible in the School. Girls and boys are regarded as equal learners and are treated equally.

#### **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
- Ensuring that resources are free of gender stereotypes
- 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 School is gender inclusive.

#### **4.4.3**

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of children questioning the way they feel about being a boy or a girl, including their physical attributes of sex and the related ways in which they fit into society. The draft DfE non-statutory guidance, Gender Questioning Children (December 2023) would be taken into consideration should such an instance arise.

## **5. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

### **5.1**

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. There is a named governor with oversight and responsibility for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

## **6. THE ROLE OF THE HEADMASTER**

### **6.1**

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

### **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 all 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 STAFF**

#### **7.1**

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. The curriculum in Pre-Prep and Prep is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that it is inclusive.

#### **7.2**

All 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.

#### **7.3**

The Chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) group, in conjunction with other colleagues, is responsible for raising awareness of diversity and inclusion across the school community. This may be achieved through holding meetings, leading assemblies, delivering presentations, creating wall displays, preparing resources, and creating content for social media, as well as other ways deemed appropriate.

### **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 Head of Pre-Prep and Academic Lead.

#### **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), Pupil Voice Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Special Educational Needs Policy and Procedures.

#### **8.3**

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