

Widford Lodge

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



17a

Equal Opportunities Policy for Staff and Pupils

This policy applies to all pupils at Widford Lodge School including those in the EYFS

Reviewed and Approved by the Proprietor - April 2024
Next Review - April 2025

Introduction

At Widford Lodge we aim to ensure that every pupil and member of staff is given an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, and to take full advantage of the school's facilities and activities. We also believe that each individual is entitled to learn, teach or work in a supportive environment, free from prejudice or discrimination of any form. We aim to provide a positive and caring learning environment free from prejudice, discrimination and fear, in which all children and their families feel accepted, respected and valued. We recognise the importance of the role we play in educating young people about diversity and equality.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on Safeguarding, SEND, Anti-bullying, Admissions and our accessibility plan, as well as our PSHEE curriculum including Relationships, Sex and Health Education. The policy covers members of staff, pupils, parents and other contractors and visitors to Widford Lodge.

Widford Lodge is committed to equal opportunity for all, regardless of an individual's gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'protected characteristics'. We recognise that the Equality Act's definition of disability includes mental and physical health issues and that there may be, but not always, some overlap with SEND.

Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of this Policy are for Widford Lodge Preparatory School:

- To be free from discrimination, stereotyping and unconscious bias
- To promote the self-esteem, and to develop the social and emotional growth of each child throughout the school and, in particular, through the school's pastoral system and PSHEE curriculum
- To provide both boys and girls with full access to a broad and balanced curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, according to their individual needs and requirements
- To recognise and celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of children, parents, staff and visitors, welcoming the enrichment of the environment which this brings, and to foster positive attitudes towards our multi-cultural society
- To promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues, e.g. through the provision of resources, posters, books, materials and equipment that are multicultural and non-sexist
- To provide opportunities within the life of the school to increase religious awareness and understanding, and to forge links with the wider community

- To ensure that the physical environment of the school is as sympathetic as possible to the needs of children, staff, parents and visitors and to raise awareness of all members of the school community to the needs of those with disabilities
- To reflect on our practice and increase/improve our understanding of issues and concerns surrounding equality and diversity
- To create, through example and education, an environment of mutual respect and tolerance, and help children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable
- To promote an environment of acceptance and understanding where racism and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and where pupils and staff feel able to raise concerns, know they will be listened to and be confident that appropriate action will be taken.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher has responsibility for this policy and ensuring that it is known and understood by staff members, pupils and parents. The Headteacher will report to the Proprietor on any matters regarding discrimination.

The Headteacher, Deputy Head Academic, Leaders of Prep, Pre-Prep, EYFS and subjects are responsible for ensuring equal opportunities are provided for in the curriculum.

All staff members are responsible for following the policy and reporting incidents of unequal treatment or discrimination to an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team. Staff members are also encouraged to challenge any cultural bias or stereotyping which may arise during the course of their work.

Parents and carers are asked to keep the school fully informed about any relevant issues, so that measures can be taken to resolve them.

We will not discriminate against a child (current or prospective) when:

- Admitting children
- Providing teaching or allocating pupils to teaching groups
- Applying standards of behaviour, dress or appearance
- Excluding pupils
- Allocating resources
- Providing other benefits, facilities or services in the School.

Admissions

We welcome applications from potential pupils with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Please see our Admissions Policy for further details.

Access to Educational Opportunities

We understand the importance of providing a challenging and enjoyable curriculum that leads to learning and development. We undertake to make reasonable adjustments to enable all children to participate in the programme of learning, including children with special educational needs or learning difficulties or disabilities. We understand that this includes the provision of auxiliary aids and services as required, although this may involve an additional cost to be discussed with parents.

Girls and boys are given equal access to sports opportunities. In Years 3 to 6, children may select rugby/hockey, football/netball or a combination of these.

Physical Environment

The school will make every effort to ensure that no child, parent or staff member is disadvantaged by the school environment due to a disability, although it needs to be recognised that the physical layout of some of the buildings may restrict the movement of individuals with particular mobility difficulties.

Pupils' displays around the school will reflect diversity across all aspects of equality of opportunity.

The school's Accessibility Plan provides further information – this is available from the school office.

Promoting and Valuing Diversity and Differences

We endeavour to make Widford Lodge School a welcoming place for all, and appropriate opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Resources are chosen to give the children a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of the diversity of our multi-cultural society. Subject leaders review their topics in conjunction with the Deputy Head Academic to ensure that a wide range of role models are included, for example via the authors, scientists, musicians and artists studied as well as through current events. Gender, sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity, amongst other protected characteristics, are given due consideration for inclusion in our curriculum so that resources and themes are representative of society and raise issues of discrimination, stereotyping and unconscious bias for discussion. We try to celebrate a range of festivals and positively reflect on a range of communities through our choice of activities. We also invite volunteers, local speakers or personalities, who reflect the diversity of the local community, to visit the school.

We recognise the different learning styles of children and make appropriate provision within the curriculum to ensure each child receives the best opportunity to develop their skills and abilities.

Discriminatory Behaviour

Discriminatory remarks made by children, parents or staff members are unacceptable and action will always be taken. It is, however, recognised that in our youngest children, the comments can be made without intent to harm and due to a lack of understanding. We help children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are hurtful and unacceptable through PSHEE work, assemblies or pastoral work.

Requests for Variation in the School Uniform

Parents should be aware that all pupils at Widford Lodge School are required to wear a uniform. The Headteacher will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the school's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Headteacher may take expert advice and arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the request.

Information

Information normally provided in writing (lesson content, texts, library resources and information about school events) can be made available in alternative formats that are clear, and user friendly, as appropriate, such as Braille, audio tape and large print or may be transmitted orally or through lip-speaking or sign language, or through a recognised symbol, or through electronic media.

Equal Opportunity Principles for Current or Prospective Employees

Widford Lodge School is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against for having any protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010).

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

The school recognises that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work at Widford Lodge develop to their full potential, and the talents and resources of the school's employees will be utilised fully to maximise the educational opportunities offered to the children.

Widford Lodge School, as an employer, is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all its members of staff
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which everyone is treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- Fulfilling all its legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action where appropriate and necessary
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy by employees as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary action being taken.

Training

Widford Lodge School employees will receive training on the learning needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, where appropriate. Equality training and guidance may also be provided for staff as appropriate, including training and awareness of this Policy within the School's induction programme. In April 2022 all school staff received training from an external provider, Equaliteach, on gender bias, stereotyping and protected characteristics.