



## Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging Policy (Trust including EYFS)

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Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Check for new/updated Policy completed by (committee/date): SMT February 2026

### Documentation Distribution

*Please delete as applicable*

All staff / volunteers	Y
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ISI requirement to be on School website	N
Parent Portal	Y
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***This policy is considered a 'live' document and will be updated as statutory guidance is released***

**In policies St Bede's School Trust Sussex may be referred to as Bede's/the School/the Trust.**

**Bede's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.**

## Vision, Mission and Values

### Our Vision

Where every child finds joy in their pursuit of brilliance

### Our Mission

We continue to craft a more joyful education.

- Cultivating a vibrant learning experience, motivating us to pursue our individual best.
- Providing a festival of opportunity, enabling us to discover new passions and develop new talents.
- Building a kind-hearted community, inspiring us to enhance the lives of others.

### Our Values

#### Be Compassionate

Because a caring community fosters belonging.

We expect our community to show kindness to people of all ages, genders and ethnicities, maintaining campuses where every person feels joyful and energised.

#### Be Courageous

Because fortune favours the brave.

We challenge our community to stand up for what is right, providing them with a safe environment where they can take bold action in pursuit of brilliance.

#### Be Curious

Because wisdom can be found off the beaten track.

We encourage our community to discover unlikely passions and hidden niches, releasing them into a wealth of opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

#### Be Conscientious

Because dedication is a spearhead of success.

We ask our community to throw themselves wholeheartedly into every endeavour, taking responsibility for their journey and inspiring others to do the same.

## Policy Principles/Aims:

The Trust is proud of its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion among all its members. We ensure that our Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging practice across the trust is outstanding and the values of kindness, respect and understanding are embedded within our practice across the Trust.

Inclusion, understanding, support and respect for all members of our community is central to building a community where everyone feels that they belong, regardless of their individual characteristics, whether this be age disability, gender reassignment (and gender identity), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

**Statutory Guidance:**

- The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools.

**Associated Trust Policies:**

All Policies across the trust will consider this Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging Policy.

**Purpose**

The Trust endeavours to provide an environment which respects and values the positive contributions of each of its members, enabling every child to find joy in their pursuit of brilliance. It strives to develop each person's skills to the highest possible order, enabling differences to become positive and enriching attributes. The purpose of this policy is to act as a practical tool which will support Bede's pupils, prospective pupils, staff, parents, carers, guardians and other stakeholders in identifying and showing how the Trust achieves these goals and its legal duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

**Framework**

**The Equality Act 2010:** refers to the following protected characteristics:

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

- Under the Act people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics. There is also protection against discrimination where someone is perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or where they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.
- Discrimination means treating one person worse than another because of a protected characteristic (known as direct discrimination) or putting in place a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified (known as indirect discrimination).
- Harassment includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone with a protected characteristic.
- Victimisation is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so.
- In addition, the Trust is committed to ensuring its pupils do not experience any inappropriate discrimination because of differences arising out of cultural background; linguistic background; special education needs; academic or sporting ability (Department for Education National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, Standard 16 – Equal Opportunities).

**Aims:**

- I. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; to foster good relations between all members of the Trust.
- II. In order to achieve these aims, the Trust Acknowledges the following basic rights for all its members:
  - a) To be treated with dignity and respect.
  - b) To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices.
  - c) To receive encouragement.
  - d) To create a positive atmosphere where there is shared commitment to respect diversity and difference.
  - e) To regard all pupils as having equal rights
  - f) To ensure appropriate adjustments are made to accommodate the needs of all pupils so each pupil has equality of opportunity.
  - g) To prepare pupils to be good citizens and take the responsibility of participation and to treat others as they wish to be treated.
  - h) To raise awareness of the needs of others.

**Actions:**

- I. Decision makers are required to have due regard to these aims and objectives when formulating policy and making decisions which may have implications for people with protected characteristics. Equality duty must be integrated into the carrying out of the Trust's functions in a serious, rigorous and open-minded manner. Opportunities should be sought to create a shared positive culture; to challenge prejudice; to promote acceptance; to ensure the needs of all pupils are identified and met through equality of opportunity and access; and to raise awareness of mutual responsibility for compliance with the law and provision of basic human rights.
- II. At the Prep and Senior Schools these opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following:
  - a) preparation for entry to the School (see Admissions Policy)
  - b) School policies (including access to and content of the curriculum)
  - c) leisure time
  - d) the provision of school meals
  - e) interaction with peers
  - f) opportunities for assessment and accreditation, including exam arrangements
  - g) behaviour management, rewards and sanctions
  - h) School clubs, activities, School trips and transport
  - i) the School's arrangements for working with other agencies
  - j) preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
  - k) teaching and learning (the planned curriculum and timetabling)
  - l) classroom organisation
  - m) grouping of pupils
  - n) prep
  - o) dress codes
  - p) provision of facilities and access to facilities
  - q) activities to enrich the curriculum
  - r) School sports
  - s) pupil voice
  - t) staff training
  - u) PHSE and RSE programme
  - v) religious observance and promotion
  - w) celebration of national days, feast days, holidays
- III. All staff will receive ongoing training in line with the Professional Development Policy.

- IV. A staff Inclusion Hub (across the Trust), Senior School pupil Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Excellence (INDEX) committee and Prep School pupil Community Hub, meet regularly and work together to ensure that the practices and cultures within the trust are inclusive and strive to ensure that every member of our community feels that they belong.

### **Compliance with the Policy**

- I. In the workings of everyday School life, the Trust, its staff and pupils are charged with identifying specific opportunities to promote equity and celebrate diversity with open-mindedness, understanding and respect.
- II. Each member of the community is obliged to contribute to making it a happy and caring environment by showing respect for and appreciation of others as individuals.
- III. All pupils will be included in and invited to contribute to the spiritual life of the Trust through their own faith.
- IV. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to their education and that of others by sharing their cultural experiences, values and perceptions.
- V. All pupils are encouraged to aim high and utilise all the opportunities available to them regardless of their individual characteristics.
- VI. Policies and practices will all reflect the pupil population in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation and disability.
- VII. Positive images of pupils will be used to illustrate the commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities.
- VIII. All members of the community are expected to comply with this policy. Any reports to the contrary will be investigated and dealt with swiftly in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary procedures.
- IX. Dealing with unfair discriminatory behaviour of any kind, abuse and intimidation is the responsibility of everyone. All staff and many pupils (such as School and House Prefects) have a particular obligation to tackle prejudice and report bullying and harassment, as outlined in their role descriptions.
- X. Teaching staff have the responsibility to identify and challenge racial or cultural bias and stereotyping through their choice of resources and teaching materials.
- XI. We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same.
- XII. As an employer we need to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

### **In addition, the Trust will:**

- XIII. Ensure that all families are treated with equity regardless of family circumstances or social or economic class, nor allow anyone to be disadvantaged by any other condition or requirement which is not relevant to good practice and cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- XIV. Implement established systems for those who feel themselves subjected to discrimination and work to ensure that all members of the community feel comfortable and confident to raise any issues of difficulties.

- XV. Provide training to ensure all are informed of equal opportunity and principles of diversity and are given the opportunity to discuss and understand racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, unconscious bias and other forms of prejudice. It is important that everyone understands the hurt and harm caused by discrimination and prejudice.
- XVI. Maintain and monitor records of admissions, attendance, progress, achievement, behaviour, discipline, involvement, health and welfare to assess the effectiveness of its commitment to equality and diversity.

### **Breaches of the Policy**

- I. All forms of discrimination by any person within the Trust will be treated seriously. A careful note of such breaches will be kept by whoever deals with the incident. It will be made clear to offending individuals that such behaviour is unacceptable and a warning will be issued that future breaches may be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy (in the case of pupils) and Disciplinary Procedure (in the case of staff and contractors).

## The Halo code

The Trust has adopted *The Halo Code*, the UK's first Black hair code. No Black staff or pupils should have to change their natural or protective hairstyle to thrive at our School. We hope the Halo Code will move us one step closer to a world free from discrimination, where all Black community members have their identities fully recognised and celebrated.

### *The Code:*

"Our school champions the right of staff and pupils to embrace all Afro-hairstyles. We acknowledge that Afro-textured hair is an important part of our Black staff and pupils' racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, and requires specific styling for hair health and maintenance. We welcome Afro-textured hair worn in all styles including, but not limited to, afros, locs, twists, braids, cornrows, fades, hair straightened through the application of heat or chemicals, weaves, wigs, headscarves, and wraps. This school recognises and celebrates our staff and pupils' identities. We are a community built on an ethos of equality and respect where hair texture and style have no bearing on anyone's ability to succeed."