

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Approved by Full Governing Body on:	8th October 2025
Next review date:	October 2028
Signed by Chair of Governors:	Nicola Waters

# The Weald School Policy Statement On Equality And Diversity

## 1. Aim Of Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide employees with a clear statement about the school's commitment to promoting equality and diversity within employment.

We seek to ensure that our working environment is one that respects and includes everyone regardless of their gender or gender reassignment; marital status (including civil partnership); sexual orientation; race, language, ethnic or national origins and nationality (including citizenship); religious belief; disability and / or medical conditions; age; whether they have dependants; trade union membership status and activity or political views/affiliations.

The Weald School serves a large rural catchment area comprising Billingshurst and its surrounding villages. Students come to school from a wide variety of home backgrounds although the balance is socio-economically above average. The school serves students who receive learning support throughout their time with us, as well as students who are likely to complete their education in a leading university department.

- We believe that all members of our college community are of equal value. This means that high but realistic academic expectations are applied to each student. This aim is supported by our student review, and target setting and tracking processes, as well as our framework for teaching & learning.
- We seek to ensure that students with modest means are not disadvantaged in the academic opportunities available to them.
- We believe that members of the school should treat each other with care and respect.
- We seek to encourage positive role modelling from all members of the community. This aim is supported by our behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy, disability equality policy, Equality Information and Objectives, curriculum support policy, form-time and PD programmes.
- We believe that equal opportunities issues should be addressed through a variety of learning mechanisms including the study of diverse literature, the promotion of racial equality and understanding through the offering of trips abroad for the full ability range of students and using group work to encourage working with a wide range of people.
- We challenge stereotyping through the RHPD and form-time curriculum, displays, assemblies and the monitoring of gender differences in academic performance.
- We promote religious tolerance through the celebration of major festivals and related use of assemblies and through experiential learning in IBEC.

- We encourage the involvement of all members of our local community to make use of our educational and recreational resources.
- We promote the concept of the dignity and equal value of work through our work experience and mock interview programmes.
- We monitor equal opportunities issues using parent, student and staff attitude surveys.
- Any incidences involving prejudice in any way are logged and discussed in appropriate meetings, with a view to taking appropriate action.
- We are also committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants for teaching and non-teaching posts at The Weald School. (Please refer to the equality & diversity policy for staff).

## 2. Scope Of The Policy

This policy applies to all employees within the school, regardless of how long they have been employed, their contractual hours and contract type.

### Definitions

For us “equality” is about opportunity, access, participation, and contribution on a fair and equal footing and providing a framework for this to happen.

The term “diversity” acknowledges there are differences between people and the school values and respects the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, values, and beliefs of its employees.

## 3. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the school to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

Refer to the information from the Department for Education titled [Equality Act 2010: Advice For Schools](#) which provides guidance to help schools understand how the act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the act.

## 4. Other Information And Policies

Refer to West Sussex County Council’s [Diversity and Inclusion information](#) for more details about the Council’s overall diversity and inclusion commitments. Read this page alongside the Council’s overall [Equality and Inclusion Policy](#).

The Behaviour in the Workplace policy sets out how we expect employees to behave toward one another and outlines the framework for addressing issues that are raised. This policy sets out the expected standards of behaviour and conduct for all employees.

These policies can be accessed via the 'key documents for staff' folder on the staff drive.

## **5. Guiding Principles**

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating discrimination. We will do this by ensuring that our practices reflect relevant employment legislation and good practice. Our employment decisions are based upon job related, objective criteria.

We are committed to having a workforce that reflects the diversity within our community where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

## **6. Employee Responsibilities**

All employees, irrespective of their role, have a personal responsibility to comply with this policy, associated policies and to abide by the Equality Act 2010, in dealing with each other, managing staff and in their relationships with children, parents, carers, governors and other stakeholders.

In particular, employees must not:

- Discriminate against colleagues, other workers, job applicants, children, parents, carers, governors, or other stakeholders.
- Bully or harass colleagues, other workers, job applicants, children, parents, carers, governors, or other stakeholders.
- Encourage or try to encourage another person to treat others unfairly or to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Victimise people who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who have provided information about such discrimination.

We will not tolerate any of the above behaviours. Where employees commit an act of unjustified or unlawful discrimination, or allow discrimination to occur without taking appropriate action, then they could be liable to a claim being brought against them as an individual, for example at an Employment Tribunal. The employee could also be liable to disciplinary action for a breach of the County Council's Standards of Conduct, which could result in dismissal.

## **7. Employer Commitment**

We will carry out the following activities in order to demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity, and also to fulfil our legal responsibilities.

## **7a. Employment Policies**

We will ensure that our employment policies, practices, and associated guidance are fair to all by undertaking an equality analysis when we carry out employee related projects, policy developments and reviews.

We will monitor the implementation of these policies to ensure that they remain fair in practice and that any barriers to and within employment are removed.

## **7b. Consultation**

We have consultation arrangements with a number of trade unions and professional associations.

## **7c. West Sussex County Council Staff Groups**

There are currently six staff groups that recognise and value West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) diverse workforce. All staff groups meet regularly at different locations across West Sussex to discuss issues that members may be facing. The groups welcome new members all year round. The full list of WSCC Staff Groups is as follows:

**BAME** - this group supports Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic groups, providing a resource of support, safety, innovation, and collaboration for members across WSCC.

Email: [BAMEstaffnetwork@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:BAMEstaffnetwork@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Carers** - this group provides support to all carers by working in partnership to change the culture of our organisation, so their needs are acknowledged and acted upon.

Email: [CarersStaffGroup@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:CarersStaffGroup@westsussex.gov.uk)

The **Disability Staff Group (DSG)** is a relaxed, informal group of employees dedicated to supporting staff who work for, or with, WSCC who consider themselves to have a disability. It aims to help ensure WSCC is a compassionate and inclusive place to work for people with disabilities.

Email: [Disability@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Disability@westsussex.gov.uk)

The **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Staff Group** is a relaxed, informal group of employees dedicated to supporting LGBT staff and ensuring that WSCC is a supportive, inclusive place to work for LGBT people.

Email: [WSCCLGBTStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:WSCCLGBTStaffNetwork@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Mental Health Staff Group (MHSG)** - the aim of this group is to embed a more positive and proactive approach to mental health within our organisation and culture.

Email: [MHSG@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:MHSG@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Women in the Workplace** - this group aims to address some of the barriers and issues affecting women, ranging from dealing with inappropriate office banter and building

confidence and negotiation skills, through to influencing policy and process to ensure that women do not feel disadvantaged.

Email: [women.intheworkplace@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:women.intheworkplace@westsussex.gov.uk)

## **8. Who Can Help?**

If **employees** have any questions about equality and diversity issues, they can contact HR Customer Services.

Telephone: 01243 6(42148)

Email: [hr.customer.services@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:hr.customer.services@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Headteachers / line managers** can also get support from HR Customer Services or, for more in- depth questions about diversity and equality issues they can contact the HR BP Schools And Education Team for advice

Telephone: 033022 22422

Email: [HR.Professional.Support@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:HR.Professional.Support@westsussex.gov.uk)