WESTHOLME
PREP | SENIORS | SIXTH FORM

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Reviewed:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
Produced by:	Principal
Approved by:	EdCom Committee
Cross referencing	To be read in conjunction with the below policies: Complaints Policy SEND Policy Accessibility Plan Safer Recruitment Policy PHSE Policy RSE Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Staff Code of Conduct Behaviour Management Policy Discipline, Exclusions and Required Removal Staff Handbook Staff Code of Conduct Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures Teaching and Learning Policy Educational Visits Policy Visitor Policy Whistleblowing

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The School will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Policy Statement

At Westholme, our mission is to inspire every pupil to achieve their personal best through academic excellence, exceptional pastoral care and a rich breadth of opportunity. We nurture confident, compassionate and well-rounded individuals who are equipped with the character, curiosity and ambition to thrive in a changing world.

Rooted in our Christian heritage and forward-thinking in our approach, we foster a vibrant learning community where every child is known, valued and challenged. We believe in education that goes beyond the classroom; empowering pupils to lead with integrity, contribute meaningfully to society, and embrace life with resilience and purpose.

At Westholme School we recognise our responsibility to ensure positive attitudes to diversity, difference and inclusion for all. Every child will be included and not disadvantaged and learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society. We understand the importance of providing a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development and we undertake to make reasonable adjustments to enable all to participate in our programme of learning, where all are valued and supported.

Westholme School is totally committed to promoting equal opportunities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This applies to all pupils, parents, staff members, and prospective pupils and staff members.

Westholme School will strive to treat all members of the school community equally and will not treat anyone less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics).**

Westholme often invites speakers from the wider community to give talks to enrich our pupils' experience. Westholme recognises the enormous benefit gained by pupils from speakers from all walks of life. Both Westholme and pupils greatly appreciate the time and effort that visiting speakers put into their presentations.

We seek to ensure that the individual needs of all our pupils, including those with health issues, a disability or have special educational needs (SEND) are met and pupils are included, valued and supported, and that where required reasonable adjustments are made for them (see separate policy).

We undertake to work with the school community, with parents and with other relevant agencies to ensure that any form of discriminatory behaviour is treated seriously, and action is taken to prevent any repetition. This policy statement and the effectiveness of our inclusive practices at Westholme School are reviewed annually by the Board of Governors.

Procedure for Pupils

Westholme School seeks to implement this policy statement effectively through the following actions:

- Provision of our policy statement for equal opportunities to all pupils, staff and parents, including those of prospective pupils.

- Relevant annual training of all staff and relevant to their roles on equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as all forms of discrimination/harassment.
- Working with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists, family/pupil medical practitioners, and mental health agencies (e.g. CAMHS) to support the endeavour of the school in serving the needs of all pupils, parents and staff.
- Discussing, where appropriate, equal opportunities and the special needs of individuals at staff meetings.
- Delivering a message of equal opportunities within PSHE, the wider curriculum and through the extracurricular programme.
- Dedicating whole school and class assemblies, and form time and 'circle time' to the importance of kindness, care and unconditional respect for members of the school and the wider community, and on promoting and valuing diversity and differences.
- Meeting the individual needs of pupils, as detailed by parents and by the pupil's previous setting, through teacher, assistant and outside agencies working together with the pupil and the pupil's parents.
- Proportionate disciplinary action will be taken against a pupil or staff member who discriminates against another pupil/staff member, whether intended or not. This is detailed further in the Rewards, Sanctions and Behaviour Management Policy.
- Including the special needs coordinator and other relevant staff, in discussing pupil needs and progress in staff meetings and leadership meetings. On such occasions the strategy for each individual child is focused around respect for the child's needs, the need for the pupil to have access to all opportunities within the school and the child's right to feel confident, happy and valued.
- Monitoring the needs of all pupils as they progress through the school, through discussion at meetings, and written information circulated confidentially, relating to specific support for learning or emotional, social, mental, physical or other difficulties.
- Discussing, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating at staff meetings and leadership meetings, the effectiveness of inclusive practices which enable all pupils, parents and staff to access and enjoy school life.
- Ensuring that the Personal, Social, Health and Educational Programme includes discussion of Equal Opportunities.
- Ensuring school documents demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities and avoid inappropriate discrimination of all forms.
- Making appropriate provision or exemption, where feasible and desirable, for pupils with special dietary or religious observance requirements or needs because of religious or cultural backgrounds.
- Operating a student council who meet once every half term. This provides an outlet for our students to voice their opinions, concerns and needs and for these to be listened to

Ensuring we have in place appropriate risk assessments with action plans to reduce the risk of harassment on grounds of any protected characteristic that may occur within the School and extending to harassment from Third Parties (ie visitors, contractors, parents etc).

Procedure for Members of Staff

To ensure the elimination and prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.

Discrimination

Staff will not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former staff members, pupils, parents, prospective pupils and staff members or visitors on grounds of any **protected characteristic**.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- **Direct discrimination**: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because of their sexuality.
- **Indirect discrimination**: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement maybe be discriminatory unless it can be objectively justified.
- **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- **Victimisation**: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- **Disability discrimination**: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Our recruitment procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of the Principal. For example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process). Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation (see Recruitment and Selection Policy and Safeguarding Policies for details).

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we often monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity. Please refer to the School's Privacy Notice on the website for detailed information on how we handle sensitive data.

Training and Promotion

Training needs will be identified through appraisal. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Termination of Employment

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination,

whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. If preferable you may choose to contact a member of the Leadership Team to discuss your concerns.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

Part-Time and Fixed-Term Work

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

Breaches of this Policy and Reporting Concerns

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure the principles and ethos of this policy are upheld across the School. To that extent, where any staff member witnesses any act or omission that could be a breach of our policy we encourage them to report the concern to the Principal, to enable the School to intervene early and investigate the matter promptly where required.

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If staff believe that they have suffered discrimination, they can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or whistleblowing policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

Commented [OM1]: What about pupils. Parents?

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who in good faith raise genuine concerns about potential discrimination or other breaches of this policy. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.