

## Policy Coversheet

<i>Policy reference</i>	AE1
<i>Policy Category</i>	A. Student and Parent-facing policies
<i>Name of policy</i>	<b>Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy</b>
<i>Purpose of policy</i>	To ensure that the school meets its commitment under the Equality act to treat all students and staff with equity and to go further than this by ensuring that the school environment embraces, diversity and inclusion in all its forms.
<i>Regulatory or legal requirement addressed by policy</i>	The Equality Act 2010 DENI strategy for school improvement, <i>Every School a Good School</i> , 2009. Human Rights Act 1998, The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
<i>Other policies referred to</i>	The Behaviour Policy
<i>Policy owned by</i>	Senior Deputy Head
<i>Policy must be approved by</i>	HR Board and SLT
<i>Period of review required</i>	2 yearly
<i>Date current version approved</i>	December 2021
<i>Date effective from</i>	Immediately
<i>Next review due</i>	December 2023
<i>Published on website</i>	Yes

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Sevenoaks School is committed to ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusion are at the very heart of our culture and community. We are proud of the fact that we are a British school with a global, progressive outlook. The student body is diverse; 70 nationalities and a variety of beliefs are represented. A culture of inclusion is central to the school's beliefs. However, we recognise that this important part of our education should be constantly discussed and reviewed. We, along with other educational institutions, must work tirelessly to eradicate all forms of discrimination both in school and in the wider community. This effort has been sharply focused by recent movements which have highlighted racism and sexism within society. We are dedicated to eradicating discrimination against any person or group protected by the 2010 Equality Act and ensuring that every member of the Sevenoaks community feels respected, valued and supported.

### **Responsibility:**

Everyone in the community (staff, governors, contractors, students, parents and visitors) has responsibility for ensuring that the school environment fully supports equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the policy and for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are supported in taking appropriate action against prejudice and discrimination.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, which is chaired by the Senior Deputy Head, has overall responsibility for developing and embedding the school's strategic commitment in this area.

### **Policy Aims:**

For all students and staff to have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential to flourish.

For the school environment to be one where prejudice of any kind is challenged and where relationships are based on the values of respect, dignity and kindness.

For students and staff leaving the school to be prepared for global citizenship: empowered to lead with understanding and act in a way which embraces the diversity of global society.

### **Legal Framework**

We embrace our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to foster respectful and dignified relationships amongst the school community, and in particular to ensure that there is no discrimination against members of the community on grounds of the following **protected characteristics**:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity (including paternity)

- Race (colour, ethnic or national background)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

We also welcome our duty under the DENI strategy for school improvement, *Every School a Good School*, 2009. The British legal framework reflects international standards of human rights, as expressed in the Human Rights Act 1998, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, Sevenoaks School defines:

**EQUITY** as the quality of being fair to every individual in our community. This recognises that justice is not necessarily achieved by treating everyone the same (i.e. *equally*). Instead, reasonable adjustments may be applied where appropriate.

**DIVERSITY** as recognising people's differences and embracing the beauty and power of those differences.

**INCLUSION** as a community where all are valued and respected and where none feel marginalised.

## **Equal Opportunities:**

**Students:** The school will not discriminate against, harass, or victimise a student or potential student whether through the admissions process, the education we provide, or by excluding them or subjecting them to disadvantage. The school welcomes disabled students and has an Accessibility Plan to ensure that where possible reasonable adjustments are made for students; current and future.

**Staff:** The school is committed to ensuring that equal opportunities principles are implemented and monitored for staff. Appointments and promotions are made based on merit and ability and in compliance with the law. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff to reflect the diverse student body. The school will seek to ensure that staff are treated with dignity throughout the employee life cycle and are not subjected to discrimination in the workplace.

## **Discrimination:**

We will seek to ensure that no member of our community suffers from:

**DIRECT DISCRIMINATION** – where a person is treated less favourably than others in comparable circumstances because of one or more protected characteristic.

**INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION** – where a person is at a disadvantage because provision, though equally applied, fails to account for a specific need they may have as a result of their protected characteristic.

**VICTIMISATION** – where a person who may have brought a complaint in respect of discrimination is then treated less favourably as a result.

**HARASSMENT** – where a person's personal safety and dignity is violated by a hostile environment created by a person or persons reacting to the first person's protected characteristic.

**Awareness, Development and Implementation:**

The EDI Steering Group and the specific working groups which sit within that (for gender equality, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ rights, disability and the religious preferences group) will discuss new developments, strategy, and specific projects. These will be considered by SLT before implementation.

The school curriculum is at the heart of delivering an education which ensures every student is aware of the challenges around equality and the need to respect the open, respectful and progressive environment. EDI messages are embedded in subject topics and examples, PSHEE, the external speaker programme, and co-curricular provision.

Just as important are the messages delivered through our pastoral provision: for example discussions in tutor time and assemblies.

Staff will receive regular training on supporting those with protected characteristics, and how best to help maintain and enrich a school culture which is warm, respectful and progressive. They will also have opportunities through the working groups, and through teaching and support staff representatives, to feed back their views on EDI issues.

Our expectation is that Sevenoaks staff will:

- Promote a positive, collaborative and inclusive culture across all areas of school life.
- Uphold high standards for all students; challenging prejudice and discrimination in accordance with our Behaviour Policy. Bullying of any kind, and in particular on the basis of protected characteristics, will be dealt with firmly.

**Monitoring and Review**

The EDI Steering Group and its affiliated groups will monitor the progress of projects through a combination of student and staff involvement, surveys, feedback from Sixth Form, Middle and Lower School committees as well as anonymised reporting.

Staff observations and feedback will form an important part of monitoring.

Careful review of data collected by the school can also be used to monitor equity and diversity and to inform future planning and decisions.