

THE WILLOWS WAY



Equalities Policy

2025/26

Equalities Policy

‘All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood’

(Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

‘Belong, Believe, Achieve’

Willows High School is located in Tremorfa, in Cardiff. There are currently 780 full time pupils on roll. 50.7% of our pupils are girls and 49.3% are boys. 56% are currently eligible for Free School Meals. 10% are on the SEN register. Pupils are from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities, with our largest ethnic groups being, White British, White and Black African, and White and Black Caribbean, Other Black African, EU Roma, and Somali. The different faiths represented at the school are Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism.

There are 43 different languages spoken by our pupils as their first language; the greatest numbers being English, Arabic, Czech and Somali. Approximately 41% of our pupils currently speak English as an additional language. No pupils are from a Welsh speaking home background.

We have pupils with disabilities including visual impairment, speech, language & communication disorders and medical issues including Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit hyperactivity disorder, Type 1 Diabetes and Global Developmental Delay. We are fully inclusive of all pupils.

There are 3 members of staff who are first language Welsh-speakers and there are 8 members of staff who have a first language other than English. 31 members of staff are male and 65 members of staff are female.

We comply with the Local Authority Online Recruitment Policy and Procedure, which now monitors sexual orientation of staff. However, as a school, we do not currently monitor the sexual orientation of our school staff. We are also aware that we may have parents in same sex relationships and LGBTQ+ members within our school community.

The school values each of these people, their faiths, cultures, communities and languages equally.

Aims

We recognise and celebrate the fact that British and Welsh society is made up of people from diverse backgrounds and life experiences. It is important that all pupils are prepared to live in such a society. The purpose of our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) is to fulfill the duties to promote equality for people with ‘protected characteristics’, and embed fairness and equality at the heart of our school community and in all aspects of our school plans and policies. ‘Protected characteristics’ refer to the following groups: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The protected characteristics of age and marriage and civil partnership only apply to schools as employers, but not in relation to their provision for pupils.

Through the equality improvement actions and strategically planned tasks detailed in this document, we aim to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

We have based our Strategic Equality Objectives on local, regional and national priorities within education as well as feedback from engagement with our school community and our own school data. These actions are set out in Strategic Equality Plan for 2025-29.

Objectives and Action Plans

Our chosen Strategic Equality Objectives are:

1. Ensure equality of opportunity and access for pupils and other stakeholders from protected groups
2. Develop the quality and use of our equality monitoring and data collection and progress of pupils from protected groups
3. Raise awareness of equality and diversity issues among pupils, staff and governors

We have planned strategic tasks to enable us to meet these objectives. They are listed in the Strategic Equality Plan and cover all relevant protected characteristics. They describe how we are taking action to fulfill both the general and specific duties.

Scope

The policy applies to all full time, part time, job-share, permanent, temporary and supply staff. It also applies to all pupils, parents, service users and visitors to the school, in line with equality legislation and the school's legal responsibilities to promote equality in employment, education and access to services.

Equalities Summary Statement

At Willows High School we aim to provide a happy, caring environment in which all children can feel confident and able to learn. We seek to foster an environment of mutual respect and support between all staff, pupils, parents and carers and the wider community.

Our school is committed to eliminating any unlawful discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation by creating an environment where every individual, regardless of ability or background, is able to participate and is valued fully as a member of the school community. Being opposed to all forms of discrimination and prejudice we promote a positive attitude towards differences and expect respect for people of all backgrounds.

Stereotyped ways of thinking are the result of ignorance and may result in low self-esteem and limited aspirations. The school values and encourages involvement of people from all sections of the local community and through this involvement aims to provide positive images, which challenge stereotyped thinking.

Any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or potentially damaging to any group will not be tolerated and will be challenged and monitored. Information derived from monitoring will be used to plan whole-school strategies to combat incidents. Information on identity-based incidents and bullying will be shared regularly with the Local Authority through the 'Incident and Bullying Monitoring System' (which is currently being re-evaluated by the LA), in order to assist in combating hate crime across the city.

Commitment

The Governing Body and management of the school will work with all its partners to be proactive in promoting equal opportunities, fostering good relations and in tackling unlawful discrimination. They will encourage support and enable all pupils and staff from all protected characteristics to reach the highest standards possible as indicated in the school's vision statement and this equality policy.

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with equality legislation and fulfils its legal responsibilities. In collaboration with the Headteacher, the Governing Body will ensure that the policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented. The governing body includes equality issues as a regular item on the agenda of Governing Body meetings and has a Governor with responsibility for equal opportunities who is Richard Strudwick.

Headteacher

The head teacher, Mr. C. Norman is responsible for:

- Making sure the equality policy is readily available, along with related policies, for example, the anti-bullying policy and harassment policy and that governors, staff, pupils, parents and guardians are made aware of its existence
- Making sure the policy and its procedures are followed
- Producing regular information for staff and governors about how the policy is working, and providing training for them on the policy if necessary
- Making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out
- Taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination
- Making sure the equality policy is regularly monitored and reviewed

The named person with responsibility for dealing with reported incidents of unlawful discrimination is Chris Norman.

Staff and pupils are aware of whom the named person is. The named person ensures that all reported incidents are recorded in the Equality Incident and Monitoring Database, analysed within the school and forwarded to the LA, as requested.

The Equal Opportunities Coordinator is Mr. Simon Thomas.

The Equal Opportunities Coordinator ensures that the school regularly reviews and evaluates all policies and practices in relation to equal opportunities, leading to the setting of targets which address aspects of inequality or disadvantage in all of the school's activities.

All staff are responsible for:

- Dealing with incidents of unlawful discrimination and bullying
- Being able to recognise and tackle bias and stereotyping
- Promoting equality and good relations between all groups
- Keeping up to date with the law on discrimination, and taking up training opportunities
- Striving to provide images and lesson plans that show positive images of and are inclusive of people from the protected characteristics

Information gathering and engagement

The collection of information is crucial to supporting us in deciding what actions to take to improve equality and eliminate discrimination within the school community. The information also subsequently helps us to review our performance, so it needs to be detailed enough to enable us to measure how we are delivering on equality duties. The information also helps us to do accurate impact assessment and identify which of the school's aims have been achieved and what we need to do better.

Engagement is based on the information gained about representation of different groups. We aim to do this as fully as possible while recognising issues of sensitivity in relation to the different protected characteristics. We take particular steps to ensure disabled children and young people, parents and carers are involved as is their entitlement. The reason that this progress is important is to understand the full range of needs of the school community.

The equalities policy will be updated by the school on an annual basis, in order to include accurate data relating to the whole school community. The strategic equalities objectives will be monitored termly and evaluated on an annual basis by the Headteacher/ SLT, in line with the school's School Improvement Plan (SIP).

As a school we are fully committed to inclusive practice. To this end, we will continue to engage and consult with our whole school community on issues relating to further developing our practice.