

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the School's objectives in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion over the next five years as it pertains to both pupils and all staff, both pupil-facing and professional services.

## 2. Background

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a priority in all sections of the School and as such, it is the responsibility of all staff to contribute to the achievement of these objectives. The Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Sustainability, reporting to the Principal via the Assistant Principal, is responsible for liaising with the different sections of the School to ensure that the strategy is being implemented and to provide specific support on various aspects of EDI as required.

## 3. What do we mean by "Diversity"?

Diversity most obviously includes those with a "protected characteristic" within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), but at George Watson's College we also understand it to include consideration of the needs of other people, for example people who are neurodivergent but who do not have a disability and those who are economically disadvantaged within our community. We also aim to celebrate other kinds of diversity, for example nationality, cultural background and the range of talents and interests of the people in our community. Above all, we respect and value people as unique individuals.

## 4. Risks and Mitigations

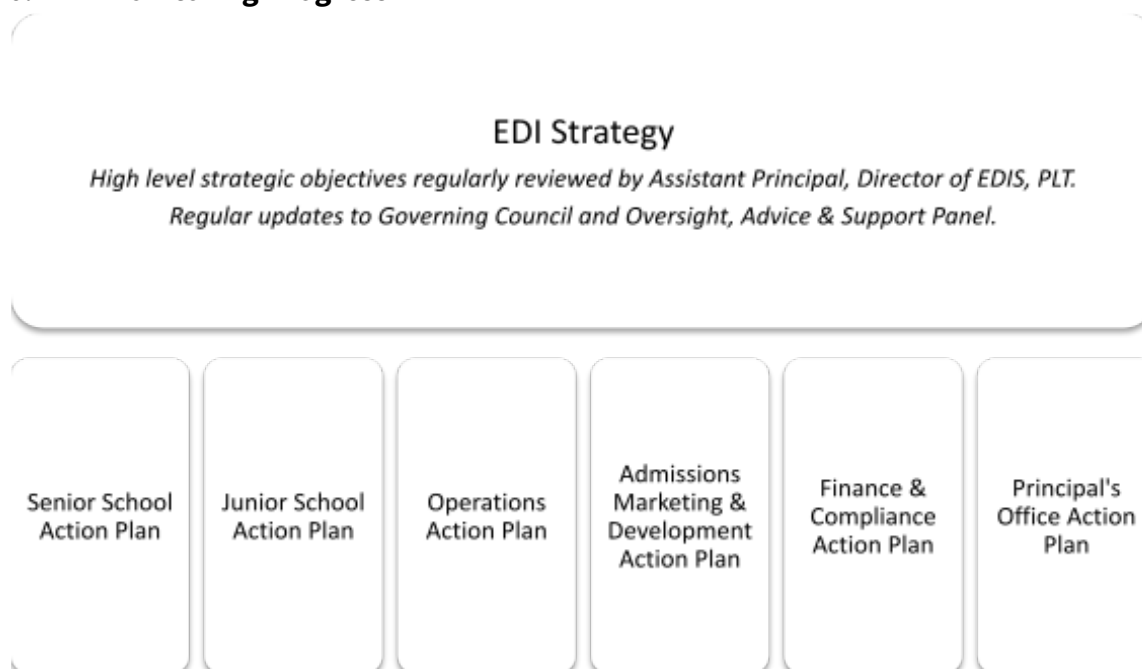
Risk	Mitigation
In an environment where independent schools are often held up for criticism, making progress in matters of diversity and inclusion may attract negative attention and be misrepresented.	Careful control of external messaging, with external professional support if required.
Pupils and other members of the community may perceive the celebration of diversity as undermining them if they do not identify as "diverse".	Careful messaging and an emphasis on the individuality of everyone, not just the diversity of identified groups.
Not having a relevant and effective policy could subject the school to litigation and/or reputational damage.	All policies and therefore subsequent practice are based on current legislation and legal advice is sought both during the policy writing process and, if required, as any issues arise where expert input is required.

There is a danger that there is a perceived focus on one particular area of Equality, Diversity and Equality and that other groups feel marginalised or ignored.	This strategy and its high-level aims seek to ensure that all areas are given equal importance and action plans for the sections of the School are scrutinised to ensure a balanced approach.
Viewing everything through a diversity lens could lead to a loss of focus on core objectives and service.	This strategy and its high-level aims seek to ensure that EDI is intrinsic to the core objectives and thus avoid any possible tension between the two.

## 5. Obstacles

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work is hard and there are many potential obstacles to its effectiveness. By its very nature, a diverse workforce or school population can be affected by language barriers, lack of intercultural understanding, cultural insensitivities, discrimination between members of the community, unconscious bias, an ‘us and them’ mentality and difficulty in reaching a consensus, issues around a perceived lack of equity in decision making, lack of representation and privilege. Furthermore, lack of resources in terms of time, expertise or money to meet the particular challenges, including in terms of sufficient staff training, could also be a barrier to perceived success in this area.

## 6. Monitoring Progress



## 7. Where are we now?

The School has undertaken considerable work on Equality Diversity and Inclusion in recent years, and it is important that this momentum is maintained. We have done considerable work on the Gender Pay Gap, produced a Menopause Policy and a Suite of Family Friendly Policies for staff and improved our data collection in both the staff and pupil populations, although this remains a priority area, as the data we hold is currently suboptimal. Our current response rate is

approximately 70% and this is broadly similar across all groups, leading to under-reporting of the diversity of our community.

We have also worked on identifying and celebrating diversity in the Watsonian community, and have LGBT and BAME Watsonian Club Sections, and have appointed a Wider Access Manager to work within the Admissions team, to ensure that our Foundation Place programme addressed barriers to participation by groups that have not traditionally been represented within our community.

Following the discovery of George Watson’s probable involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, we set up our Oversight, Advice and Support Panel, comprised of staff, parents, expert professionals and pupils, to act as a sounding board in our ongoing commitment to be a sector-leading Anti-Racist school. This process has included the development and continuing evolution of our new Foundation Day, which acknowledges the full history of George Watson whilst refocusing the day on a celebration of our school values and the diversity of our school community. This panel has also supported us in the creation of our Anti-Racist Key Performance Indicators, a set of measurable priorities to allow us to monitor our progress in this important area.

In both the Junior School and Senior School, through assemblies and our Personal and Social Development programmes, content pertaining to aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion features heavily, and our re-accreditation as a Gold Rights Respecting School in May 2023 is testament to our commitment to respecting the rights of every young person which is at the heart of our practice. We have also undertaken considerable work in developing our Inclusive Classroom Practice in both schools, with a recent focus on Neurodiversity helping to highlight this particular aspect of diversity in our community and improve awareness.

## 8. Where do we want to be?

This Strategy seeks to formalise our intention to put Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the very heart of all aspects of the work of the School. Our commitment to entrenching, through policy and practice, EDI as a constant in the life of the School underpins everything that we do and is enshrined in our four values: Aim High, Join In, Be Kind, Respect All.

The changes involved in the emerging Watson’s 2.0 Strategy will bring more opportunities to consider how we embed the respect for diversity within our school. However, care will be required to ensure that the changes made do not inadvertently have a negative impact.

### Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Aim High	Strategic Objective 3: Be Kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Removing barriers to achievement of all kinds for pupils and staff.</li> <li>● Supporting all pupils in finding positive destinations and staff in developing their careers.</li> <li>● Creating a culture of personal and professional accountability and commitment to the highest standards in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating a greater sense of belonging within GWC by actively celebrating diversity within the community, working in partnership to do the same in the wider Watsonian community, and seeking opportunities to collaborate with a more diverse community both locally and globally and to form meaningful EDI partnerships.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing all members of the community with a sense of agency in effecting change in all areas of EDI.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Join In</b>	<b>Strategic Objective 4: Respect All</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taking steps to monitor, recognise and celebrate the diversity of our community.</li> <li>● Removing barriers to participation in school life.</li> <li>● Continuing to develop inclusive classroom practice for pupils and staff.</li> <li>● Continuing to learn about EDI issues as professionals and pupils.</li> <li>● Reviewing and improving the curriculum at all levels to reflect greater diversity on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>● Encouraging and enabling pupil agency in making changes in school life.</li> <li>● Actively engaging with schools and other organisations in local communities and further afield in line with the Watson's Engage approach.</li> <li>● Celebrating different types of diversity within the Watsonian community now and in the past.</li> <li>● Actively seek staff ideas for improvement and take action on feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating a culture where all pupils and staff feel respected, supported, understood and acknowledged.</li> <li>● Creating and maintaining a physical environment that is inclusive and accessible to all.</li> <li>● Developing an understanding and appreciation of diversity through curriculum content, enrichment offer, assemblies and training for all staff and line managers.</li> <li>● Developing robust guidelines to empower all staff when dealing with discrimination so that pupils feel supported and there is gradual attitudinal change.</li> <li>● Promoting a culture where pupils and staff can raise concerns through robust and effective reporting and supporting procedures.</li> <li>● Ensure that our working practices and staff policies are neurodivergent inclusive.</li> <li>● Promote the School as a great place to work for people of all protected characteristics.</li> </ul>

## 9. How do we get there?/Action Plan

### Year 1 (2023/24 Session)

- Work to improve our data collection and monitoring to ensure data is as complete as possible and is used to inform decision making.
- Orchestrate a simple self-audit across all sections of the School, including Pupil Voice structures in Senior School and Junior School, to identify steady state and areas of focus for immediate improvement.
- Anti-racist Key Performance Indicators to be piloted as part of a three-year implementation plan.
- Assistant Principal to work with the Head of Estates and other key stakeholders to carry out a campus review in terms of physical accessibility and to build results into the whole-school campus masterplan and repairs and maintenance strategy.
- Accessibility Strategy to be produced and architecture of EDI policy suite to be reviewed.
- Restructure our Partnerships work under Engage.

- Establish priorities for EDI staff training across all sections of the School as informed by the self-audit and data collection.

### **Year 2 (2024/2025 Session)**

- Review effectiveness of implementation and reporting structures, including the possible introduction of a staff group.
- Move on to the second year of the implementation plan for the Anti-racist Key Performance Indicators.
- Review the scope and reach of the Oversight, Advice and Support Panel and consider whether it should be expanded to provide a sounding board on all areas of Equality, Diversity and inclusion.
- Have Action Plans in place for all six sections of the School and monitor progress at regular intervals.
- Begin to address priority areas for EDI staff training.

### **Year 3 (2025/2026 Session)**

- Move on to the third and final year of the implementation of Anti-racist Key Performance Indicators, which includes the consideration of expanding these to incorporate all areas of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Continue to address priority areas for EDI staff training.
- Review progress on sectional Action Plans and adapt as necessary.

### **Years 4 and 5 (2026/2028 Session)**

- The specific actions required in years 4 and 5 will be influenced by progress to date as well as any emergent issues in what is an ever changing landscape. Year 5 is likely to include a further self-auditing process across all sections of the School to establish the strategic priority areas for 2028-2033.

## **10. Relevant Documents**

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies](#)

## **11. Approval and Implementation**

This Strategy was approved by the Governing Council.

It will be made available on the School's website and the Staff and Parental Portals.

The owner of this Strategy is the Director of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Sustainability who will review the planned objectives on a monthly basis and provide progress reports PLT termly, or as requested.