EQUALITY, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
ISSR Reference:	Part 3 – Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils Part 5 – Premises of and Accommodation at Schools Part 8 – Quality of Leadership in and Management of Schools
Date of review:	Summer 2026
Approved by:	Group Board
Date of next review	Autumn 2026

Version Control Information

Reason for Amendment	Role	Date	Main Changes
Tier 1 policy formatted into SDEG house style and running order	Chief Executive Officer	Group Board – Summer 2026	Streamlined format, monitoring wording and policy links aligned to house style

1. Aims

This Policy retains the strong purpose and practical content of the previous Group policy, while aligning governance with the single Group Board, CEO executive ownership, Local School Boards and current Tier 1 architecture. It does not require a subcommittee or standing EEDI committee. Heads may establish proportionate working arrangements where those arrangements help delivery, but accountability remains with the named role holders in this Policy.

The practical test

Who may be excluded, disadvantaged, unheard or unable to participate? What barrier is creating that outcome? What lawful, reasonable and proportionate action should SDEG take? How will we know that the action worked?

SDEG believes that equality, equity, diversity and inclusion strengthen education, organisational culture and community life. Diversity supports creativity and open-minded, principled thinking. Equity recognises that fair participation may require different support or reasonable adjustment. Inclusion means people experience dignity, belonging, voice and genuine opportunity to contribute.

This Policy applies across all schools, nurseries, professional services, governance and Group activity. It applies to pupils and prospective pupils, parents and carers, staff and applicants, governors, volunteers, contractors, visitors and partners where relevant.

The Policy supports Excellence. Differently by connecting high expectations with fairness, inclusion, wellbeing, confidence, service and strong community roots in South East London.

SDEG opposes unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and will take reasonable, proportionate and timely action to remove or reduce barriers. The Group will promote respectful relationships, inclusive education, fair employment and access to the widest possible range of opportunities.

Equality does not always require identical treatment. Decisions will consider relevant circumstances, legal duties, safeguarding, the rights and interests of others, operational context and the need for reasonable adjustment. Protected characteristics do not prevent schools from applying lawful academic, behavioural, safeguarding or employment expectations fairly.

2. Legislation and Regulatory Framework

- Equality Act 2010, including the protected characteristics and duties applying to education, employment and services;
- Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010 concerning school accessibility plans;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Employment Rights Act 1996 and applicable employment law;
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; and
- relevant Equality and Human Rights Commission codes and technical guidance.

The Group will keep evolving law and statutory or technical guidance under review and will update related policies and procedures where required.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Group Board

- approves this Policy and retains ultimate oversight;
- holds the CEO to account for implementation and assurance;
- receives annual evidence on culture, access, representation, incidents, complaints, adjustments and improvement;
- ensures applicable legal and regulatory standards are met; and
- challenges material disparities or recurring barriers.

3.2 Chief Executive Officer

- owns this Policy and provide executive leadership;
- sets Group expectations and ensure alignment across schools and professional services;
- holds Heads and Directors to account for implementation;
- ensures material concerns and improvement priorities are addressed;
- connects EEDI to strategy, the SOP, SDPs, people planning, risk and assurance; and
- provides annual assurance to the Group Board.

3.3 Heads of Schools

- own local implementation and pupil experience;
- ensure curriculum, co-curriculum, admissions, safeguarding, behaviour and accessibility arrangements comply with this Policy;
- appoint or identify suitable local leadership for EEDI activity where helpful;
- ensure staff understand reporting, support and reasonable-adjustment routes;
- review local evidence and improvement actions; and
- report proportionately to the CEO and Local School Board.

3.4 Directors and professional services leads

- apply this Policy within people, finance, estates, admissions, marketing, digital, philanthropy, governance and other services;
- identify and address barriers created by Group systems, processes or communications;
- ensure procurement, recruitment, employment and service design are fair and accessible; and

- provide evidence and actions for Group assurance.

3.5 Local School Boards

- receive local assurance on inclusion, access, culture and significant themes;
- support and challenge the Head while remaining non-operational; and
- escalate material or recurring concerns through the agreed governance route.

3.6 Staff

- complete required induction and refresher learning;
- model respectful and inclusive practice;
- apply reasonable adjustments and agreed support;
- challenge and report discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying;
- avoid assumptions and seek advice where circumstances are complex; and
- contribute to an inclusive curriculum, workplace and community.

3.7 Pupils, parents and carers

Pupils and families are expected to respect the dignity and rights of others, engage with the school's expectations and reporting routes, provide relevant information where adjustment or support may be required and work constructively with the school. Concerns will be heard and considered through the appropriate safeguarding, behaviour, complaints or other procedure.

4. Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion management system

4.1 Definitions and core principles

Equality	People are protected from unlawful discrimination and can access fair treatment and opportunity.
Equity	Barriers and differing needs are recognised so that support or adjustment can enable meaningful participation.
Diversity	Difference within the community is recognised, respected and valued.
Inclusion	People experience dignity, belonging, voice, safety and the opportunity to participate.
Reasonable adjustment	A lawful and proportionate step to avoid substantial disadvantage related to disability.
Protected characteristics	The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 in the contexts to which the Act applies.
Principle	Application
Dignity	People are treated respectfully and as individuals.
Belonging	Schools and services foster participation rather than symbolic inclusion.

High expectations	Inclusion supports ambition and does not presume reduced potential.
Fair and evidence-informed	Decisions use relevant evidence and guard against bias or stereotype.
Reasonably adjusted	Barriers are anticipated and addressed where the law and circumstances require.
Safeguarding-led	Equality and inclusion operate alongside safeguarding and child-centred judgement.
Transparent	Expectations, decisions, routes for support and reporting are communicated clearly.
Representative and connected	SDEG seeks to remain connected to the diverse communities of South East London.
Learning-focused	Concerns and evidence improve policy, curriculum, systems and culture.

4.2 Group-wide minimum expectations

4.2.1 Curriculum and education

- curricula are reviewed for breadth, representation, accuracy and age-appropriateness;
- pupils learn about equality, rights, responsibilities, respectful relationships, diversity and bias;
- teaching avoids stereotype and enables thoughtful discussion and disagreement;
- resources and examples support belonging without reducing complexity to tokenism; and
- schools evidence progression through their curriculum and wider educational programme.

4.2.2 Co-curriculum, trips and school life

- participation is planned inclusively and barriers are considered early;
- reasonable adjustments and alternative arrangements are considered where needed;
- financial, physical, medical, SEND, cultural or other relevant barriers are addressed proportionately; and
- decisions about participation are recorded where significant judgement is required.

4.2.3 Admissions and transition

SDEG welcomes applications from a wide range of families and will not unlawfully discriminate. Every school applies its published admissions criteria fairly. Reasonable adjustments to admissions assessment or process are considered on the basis of relevant information and evidence. Parents and carers are expected to disclose relevant needs so that suitable adjustments and provision can be considered.

Admission and transition decisions remain subject to published criteria, the ability of the receiving school to meet need with reasonable adjustment and the relevant admissions, SEND, safeguarding and Parent Contract arrangements. Any adjustments panel or equivalent process is advisory to the authorised decision-maker and must record the evidence and rationale.

4.2.4 SEND, disability and accessibility

Each school will maintain a current Accessibility Plan consistent with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The plan will address increasing access to the curriculum, improving the physical environment and improving the availability of accessible information for disabled pupils. Accessibility planning will be connected to estate planning, digital accessibility, educational delivery and reasonable adjustment.

- needs and barriers are identified as early as reasonably practicable;
- disabled pupils and families are involved appropriately in planning;
- reasonable adjustments, auxiliary aids and support are considered without delay;
- historic buildings or practical constraints are not treated as reasons to avoid considering alternative adjustments;
- medical, temporary, hidden, sensory, physical, neurodevelopmental and mental-health related disability may require consideration; and
- adjustment decisions and review dates are recorded where appropriate.

4.2.5 Examinations and assessments

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will be managed under current examination, awarding-body and centre requirements. Arrangements must reflect evidence, normal way of working and applicable rules, and must not compromise assessment integrity.

4.2.6 People, recruitment and employment

- recruitment, selection, development, promotion, remuneration and employment decisions are fair, evidence-based and free from unlawful discrimination;
- reasonable adjustments are offered throughout recruitment and employment;
- the People function supports employees and managers to discuss disability or other relevant needs constructively;
- workforce information may inform strategy and assurance where lawful and proportionate;
- staff concerns may be raised through line management, the People Team, grievance, dignity-at-work or Speaking Up arrangements; and
- no person will suffer retaliation for raising a genuine concern or requesting a lawful adjustment.

4.2.7 Governance and representation

The Group will seek a breadth of background, perspective and experience in governance and leadership, while making appointments on lawful, role-relevant criteria. Representation information may be reviewed where lawful and proportionate to identify barriers and inform outreach, recruitment and succession planning.

4.2.8 Communications, events and services

- communications use respectful, accessible and audience-appropriate language and formats;
- digital and physical services consider accessibility at design and procurement stage;
- events, facilities and arrangements consider access, dignity, safety and participation; and
- marketing reflects the community honestly and avoids tokenism or stereotype.

4.3 Reporting and responding to concerns

Discrimination, harassment, victimisation and identity-based bullying will be challenged and addressed. A concern may be reported to any trusted member of staff or through the relevant safeguarding, behaviour, complaints, employment, grievance or Speaking Up route.

Concern about a pupil or pupil conduct	DSL where safeguarding applies, otherwise behaviour or anti-bullying route.
Concern about staff conduct	Line manager and People Team; safeguarding route where applicable.
Concern about a governor	Chair or governance route.
Request for pupil adjustment	Head, SENCO or relevant admissions/educational lead.
Request for staff adjustment	Line manager and People Team.
Complaint by a parent or carer	Complaints Policy, without delaying safeguarding action.
Systemic or serious wrongdoing	CEO, Governance & Compliance or Speaking Up route.

Responses will protect immediate safety, establish facts, consider impact and context, support those affected, preserve confidentiality on a need-to-know basis and identify proportionate action. Where behaviour reflects lack of understanding, education may form part of the response, but education does not replace accountability.

4.4 Training, participation and voice

- all staff receive EEDI and Equality Act awareness at induction and appropriate refreshers;
- role-specific development is provided for leaders, governors, recruiters, admissions staff, teachers, SENCOs and others as required;

- training addresses practical decision-making, reasonable adjustments, bias, inclusive teaching and reporting routes;
- pupil and staff voice contributes to evaluation and improvement; and
- schools may use working groups, forums or other mechanisms where proportionate, but no standing subcommittee is required by this Policy.

4.5 Evidence, assurance and improvement

Culture and belonging	Pupil, staff and family voice; behaviour and safeguarding themes; confidence in reporting.
Access and participation	Curriculum, co-curriculum, trips, facilities, digital access and reasonable adjustments.
Admissions and transition	Adjustment requests, process assurance, concerns and recurring barriers.
People	Recruitment, retention, development, adjustments, employee relations and training.
Representation	Lawful and proportionate information about leadership, governance, workforce and pupil community.
Incidents and complaints	Themes, response, recurrence, support and learning.
Accessibility plans	Progress, overdue actions, estate and information-access priorities.
Curriculum	Coverage, representation, pupil understanding and review actions.
Improvement	Named actions, owners, due dates, resources and verified closure.

Heads and Directors review implementation at least annually. Local School Boards receive relevant local assurance. The CEO provides an annual Group effectiveness report to the Group Board and escalates material concerns promptly. Significant risks and overdue actions are connected to the Group Risk Register and Annual Audit & Assurance Plan where appropriate.

Data will be handled lawfully, proportionately and with appropriate confidentiality. Numerical representation is one source of evidence, not the sole measure of inclusion or organisational health.

4.6 Implementation priorities

Refresh school Accessibility Plans	Heads, SENCOs and Operations/Estates leads; Current plans aligned to the three statutory accessibility domains.
Map local curriculum delivery	Heads and curriculum leads; Evidence of representation, pupil learning and review actions.
Confirm reporting routes	Heads, Director of People and Director of Governance & Compliance; Clear staff, pupil and family guidance.

Review recruitment and adjustment practice	Director of People; Assurance across recruitment, employment and staff development.
Create Group EEDI assurance view	CEO with Heads and Directors; Consistent annual evidence and improvement actions.

5. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive Officer or sooner where required due to:

- legislative change;
- regulatory change;
- inspection findings;
- organisational change.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Group Board of Governors.

6. Links with other policies

- School Accessibility Plans;
- SEND and Individual Pupil Needs policies;
- Admissions policies;
- Curriculum, Educational Visits and Co-curricular policies;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policies;
- Expected Pupil Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies;
- Staff Code of Conduct and People policies;
- Safer Recruitment Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Speaking Up (Whistleblowing) Policy;
- Data Protection Policy; and
- Risk, Assurance & Compliance Policy.

Appendix 1: Local annual EEDI review

Leadership	Named owners, local priorities, resources and completed actions.
Belonging and culture	Pupil and staff voice, behaviour and safeguarding themes.
Curriculum	Representation, coverage, pupil understanding and staff development.
Participation	Trips, clubs, events and evidence of barriers or adjustments.
Accessibility	Progress against curriculum, physical-environment and information objectives.
Admissions and transition	Adjustment practice, concerns and learning.
People	Recruitment, retention, development, adjustment and employee relations.
Reporting	Accessibility and confidence of routes, response quality and recurrence.
Assurance	Evidence supplied to Head, Local School Board, CEO and Group Board as appropriate.