Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School- *The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day School or Schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.*

ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL BRAMLEY

WHOLE SCHOOL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

'Believe… Achieve… Succeed'

Policy Holder	Sarah Watson-Saunders
Date Approved	September 2026
Approval	Pastoral and Wellbeing Committee
Date for next review	September 2027

This policy is reviewed annually or following significant changes in statutory guidance.

The Policy

The concept of equal opportunities for all is embedded in the School's Ethos and Aims.

St. Catherine's School is committed to avoiding all forms of discrimination as set out in the UK Equality Act (2010). This applies to pupils (including those in our EYFS setting), staff, governors and parents and includes discrimination on the grounds of: age; religion or belief; physical ability or disability (including HIV status), learning ability or difficulty; race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, family or linguistic background); marital status and civil partnership; sex; sexual orientation; trade union membership; part-time and fixed-term working; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity.

St Catherine's School has a statutory duty under the Equality Act to ensure curriculum access, the physical environment, and delivery of information are all covered.

Bullying in connection with any of the topics in this policy would be dealt with under the Prep School and separate Senior School Anti-Bullying Policies (pupils) or Anti-Bullying in the Workplace Policy (staff). This policy should be viewed in association with the School's Statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion seen on the website and the following school policies: Complaints, SEND and Inclusive Learning, Staff Recruitment, Staff Code of Conduct, English as an Additional Language and the Staff Employment Manual.

Aims and Objectives

St Catherine's School:

- does not discriminate against anyone, be they governor, staff, pupil or parent, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- promotes the principle of fairness and justice for all through the education which is provided in the school;
- seeks to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school;
- strives to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups;
- ensures that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all and provide opportunities for everyone;
- challenges personal prejudice and stereotypical views wherever they occur;
- values each pupil's and employee's worth and shows respect for all minority groups;
- is aware that prejudice and stereotyping are caused by poor self-image and by ignorance. Through positive education and experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all.

Issues of Equal Opportunities in respect of Protected Characteristics as identified by the Equality Act 2010 are summarised under the following headings:

Racial Equality

At St Catherine's School we strive to:

- eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups;
- make our school welcoming to all minority groups;
- ensure that our curriculum reflects the attitudes, values and respect that we have for all people regardless of ethnicity.

SEND and Inclusive Learning/English as an Additional Language (EAL), Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility Consideration

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that no pupil is put at a significant disadvantage due to disability and/or other relevant Protected Characteristics and will take reasonable steps to provide educational opportunities that are as equal as possible for all pupils.

The definition of the term "disabled" in the Equality Act is broad, defining it 'a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities'. There is a significant overlap with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The School adopts a whole-setting approach to the disability duties, ensuring that accessibility considerations are embedded within leadership decision making, curriculum planning, estate development and wider school improvement thus detailed in the Accessibility Plan.

The School recognises that disabilities and needs are diverse and that reasonable adjustments are often individual and responsive. Therefore, alongside planned actions, the school retains the flexibility to respond promptly to emerging needs which are operational responsibility for.

The school recognises its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and therefore seeks, wherever reasonably practicable, to identify and remove potential barriers in advance rather than solely responding to individual need as it arises.

The Chief Operating Officer has overall operational responsibility for implementation of the Accessibility Plan, working closely with the Head, Head of Inclusion and Learning (SENCO) and Estate and Facilities Manager.

St. Catherine's has a duty:

- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils or employees as required so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage;
- to treat all with dignity, respect and equality;
- to ensure Teaching and Learning styles are appropriate for the inclusion of all St Catherine's pupils and their educational needs.

The School welcomes pupils who may have a special educational need and/or disability as well as those for whom English is not their first language. Provision is made for the educational and/or social needs of these pupils in line with the school SEND and Inclusive Learning Policy and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy.

St. Catherine's School monitors the individual needs of pupils working with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists and mental health agencies (e.g., CAMHS) to support the school in serving the needs of all pupils, parents/guardians and staff.

Religion

St. Catherine's School was founded as a Church of England School and its pupils are offered and accept places with parents fully aware of this and acknowledging in writing and accepting that there will be a requirement for pupils to attend Chapel regularly. However, the issue of religious discrimination and the promotion of understanding and tolerance of different faiths is an integral part of the Religious Studies curriculum and is also encompassed within Chapel services and assemblies.

Similarly, staff are informed at interview of the role of the Chapel in school life and those with pastoral roles are informed that they will be asked to attend weekly Chapel with their tutees and are aware of this commitment before they join the staff. In addition, all staff are expected to attend the annual Carol Service and, in the Preparatory School, the Harvest Service.

In 2004, the school applied for and was granted the status of a "School with a Religious Character" and is thereby allowed to appoint a teacher who is sympathetic to the school's religious principles over another who in every way might be equally suitable for the post advertised.

Gender

The issue of gender equality is promoted positively when it arises, and stereotyping is actively discouraged.

Gender aspects are considered when appointing staff to specific responsibilities, such as those living and working within the boarding community.

Sexual Orientation and Homophobia

Within the Futures: Life (PSHE and RSE) curriculum, sex and relationships education teaches the girls to understand human sexuality and to respect the sexual orientation of others. Teachers and pupils deal with these issues honestly and sensitively.

All employees must respect the sexual orientation of others.

Other aspects to also be considered within this policy are as follows:

Admissions

The school offers education to girls in Pre-Prep, Reception and PPII-U6 (Years 1-13) inclusive and does not discriminate against any prospective pupil or their parents/guardians/carers. We welcome any additional information from the prospective pupil's current school or her parents/guardian/carers to assist us in ensuring our understanding of the pupil's circumstances is as accurate as possible and to allow for consideration of any potential reasonable adjustments which may be necessary.

Code of Conduct

The school does not tolerate discrimination or intolerance, whether intentional or otherwise, in respect of all individual characteristics including the Protected Characteristics as identified by the Equality Act 2010. Procedures for dealing with discrimination or intolerance amongst the pupil body are contained within the school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies. If a member of staff is found to be acting in a discriminatory or intolerant way, then they will be managed in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure.

Curriculum and Learning

Whilst considering the specific requirements of public examination specifications, relevant aspects of the curriculum will aim to achieve the following:

- Reflect aspects of diversity in subject content and include appropriate examples
- Acknowledge and investigate the influence of a range of cultural groups and individuals within the Protected Characteristics framework
- Consider the significance of both equality and difference within society

Diversity within the Protected Characteristics framework will also represent a significant element of the Relationship and Sex Education programme (RSE).

Special Dietary Requirements

Pupils are expected to eat school meals as provided based upon their status as a day pupil or boarder but individual requirements relating to medical needs (including food allergies and intolerances) which have been notified to the school, and/or religious observation, will be met where possible.

Responsibility for overseeing this policy falls to:

The Governing Body

St Catherine's School's Governing Body is committed to equal opportunities and will do all it can to ensure that the school community is treated both fairly and equally.

The Governing Body by way of its relevant Committees monitors:

- Admissions
- Attainment
- Rewards and sanctions
- Any parents' and pupils' questionnaires from time to time undertaken to assess levels of satisfaction, e.g., the annual boarding pupils' questionnaire.

The Governing Body and School Leadership

- welcome applications to join the school, regardless of the background or any disability of a prospective pupil;
- seek to ensure that no pupil is discriminated against while at St Catherine's School;
- seek to ensure that when appointing new staff, they are given equal consideration regardless of the background, gender or disability of the candidate when applying for a job at St Catherine's School;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment properly accommodates people with disabilities;
- seek to ensure that they follow the statutory regulation regarding maternity/paternity leave and returning to work thereafter;
- ensure equality and diversity training is available to all staff at St Catherine's School.

The School Heads

It is the role of the Prep School and Senior School Heads to:

- implement the school's policy on Equal Opportunities and any statutory regulations, with the support of the Governing Body;
- make sure that all staff are aware of the school's policy on Equal Opportunities and apply these guidelines fairly when appropriate;
- ensure that all appointments' panels give due regard to this policy so that no-one is discriminated against;
- promote the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and in providing opportunities for training;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life, e.g., in assemblies;
- view all incidents of unfair treatment and any racist incidents with due concern and act appropriately in line with school policies and legislation.

Staff

Staff should:

- recognise their own potential preconceptions but do their best to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and with respect;
- not knowingly discriminate against any child;

- challenge all incidents of prejudice, discrimination or racism they encounter and are brought to their attention.