PRESTFELDE

Equal Opportunities Policy

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Website requirement	Yes
Inspection folder requirement	Yes

Significant amendments

Date	Amendment	Initials
27/8/25	Updated to align with KCSIE 2025, incorporating ISBA model guidance on regulatory framework, related policies, reasonable adjustments, and emphasis on British values, cyberbullying, and gender questioning support. Enhanced structure for clarity and compliance with Equality Act 2010.	MH

PRESTFELDE

Equal Opportunities Policy

Prestfelde School

September 2026

Prestfelde School and boarding refers to many authorities whilst compiling this policy

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Prestfelde School. The School recognizes the benefits of having a diverse community, with individuals who value one another and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils will be taught to value and respect others. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities school and to equal treatment for all pupils, regardless of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity ("protected characteristics").

Prestfelde School and boarding refers to many authorities whilst compiling this policy, including:

- The Department for Education (DfE)
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)
- The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Prestfelde is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in our care, and our ethos is positive and inclusive. It is acceptance rather than tolerance that underpins our vision of school life, and pupils are taught to celebrate and appreciate diversity. Kindness, care, and unconditional respect lie at the very fabric of community life.

The School is committed to securing equitable opportunity through the creation of an environment in which individuals are treated on the sole basis of their respective merits and abilities. Discrimination based on protected characteristics is not tolerated at Prestfelde.

The School views discrimination as a serious offense, whether by a pupil or a member of staff. Where pupils are suspected of discrimination, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy. Appropriate sanctions may include suspension or, in grave circumstances, requiring a pupil to leave the school. Where a member of staff is subject to such an allegation, procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and Complaints Procedures will be followed.

As a school, we appreciate the importance of providing an appropriately challenging, stimulating, enriching, and enjoyable educational experience for all pupils. Pupils identified as having a particular/special educational need are supported, included, and valued within the school community. We undertake to work with all members of the school community, as well as external agencies where appropriate, to ensure that any form of discriminatory behavior is treated seriously and that appropriate action is taken as and when required.

This policy document has been produced in line with the guidelines provided in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, The Equality Act 2010, and revised National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022.

AIMS

The aims of this policy and Prestfelde's ethos as a whole are to:

- Communicate the School's commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities for its pupils.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- Promote equality of opportunity for all members of the School community.
- Comply with the School's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010.
- Create and maintain an open and supportive environment, free from discrimination.
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School.
- Remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist.
- Ensure that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We strive to achieve a cohesive community and expect that children respect one another and behave with respect to one another, and that their parents feel fully engaged in the school. We aim to enhance a wider sense of community locally, as well as in the context of the UK and the world communities.

We support the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998. Through our policies and actions, we undertake to ensure that every child and young person is healthy, safe, enjoys and achieves in their learning experience, and contributes to the wider community.

We consider it prudent and sensible to maintain the practice of logging racist incidents and reporting them to the local authority. We monitor and log incidents that discriminate against children and young people or adults in our school with protected characteristics, e.g., homophobic bullying. We also monitor and log bullying incidents, particularly those directed towards those with special educational needs.

Monitoring, evaluation, and review carried out by the Leadership Team will ensure that procedures and practices within the school reflect the objectives of this policy.

Parents and governors will be involved and consulted about the provision being offered by the school.

Teachers will ensure that teaching and learning takes account of this policy.

The diversity within our school and the wider community will be viewed positively by all. Diversity will be recognized as a positive, rich resource for teaching, learning, and the curriculum.

Professional development opportunities will be provided for staff to provide them with the knowledge, skills, and understanding they need to meet the requirements of this policy.

Contributions will be sought from parents and others to enrich teaching, learning, and the curriculum.

The positive achievements of all pupils will be celebrated and recognized.

This policy will play an important part in the educational development of individual pupils.

It will ensure that all pupils are treated equally and as favorably as others.

The school will make all reasonable adjustments to promote equal opportunity and equal treatment of all members of the school community.

We are committed to meeting the individual needs of each child and will take full account of their age, disability, gender, gender-identity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation in accordance with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010.

All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy.

All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the School's ethos of tolerance and respect.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2024.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This policy has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- Equality Act 2010 explanatory notes.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2023).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025).

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Admissions Policy.
- Behavior Policy.
- Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Discipline and Exclusions Policy.
- Accessibility Plan.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities Policy.
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Complaints Policy.

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy.
- Transgender Policy (integrated elements below).
- Equal Opportunities for Staff Policy.

ADMISSIONS

The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and the School's Admissions Policy. The School accepts applications from, and admits, all prospective pupils irrespective of their gender, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) or special educational needs ('SEN').

Parents must inform the School when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the School. The School will not offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School cannot adequately cater for or meet their needs.

Bursaries are means tested awards offered to those who meet the School's admission criteria but may otherwise be unable to attend the School due to financial hardship. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the bursar's office.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The School affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The School will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

The School will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils and staff
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE to:
- Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.

The School recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether it was intentional or not. Harassment and bullying in all its forms are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Although the School's religious ethos is based on Christian values and tradition, the School is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the School community.

The governing body, through the senior leadership team, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

GENDER

The school will support pupils who initiate a process of gender fluidity, it is classified as one the nine 'protected characteristics' on the grounds of which people are protected against discrimination. Prestfelde School aims to give support and understanding to those pupils and parents who wish to take steps to present themselves in a gender different to the one assigned them at birth.

We aim to foster an attitude and environment that is free from discrimination or harassment where all pupils are treated with dignity and respect.

In order to assist staff in developing the relevant skills and expertise to deal with transgender issues, the school will ensure INSET training covers a range of relevant topics including:

- Safeguarding and confidentiality.
- Anti-Bullying procedures.
- Issues relating to gender identity.
- Relevant and changing legislation.

The School follows the PSHE programme of study which supports the DfE RSE guidance (February 2019). This ensures that age-appropriate issues relating to gender identity are studied as part of this PSHE programme. (See RSE policy.)

The School's curriculum does not rely on stereotypical assumptions and does not contain material that could be deemed as 'transphobic'.

Sport and games form an intrinsic element of the school curriculum. A transgender pupil has the same entitlement to participate in these activities as any other pupil in the school. Participation in sport will be managed as sensitively as possible, and appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken. It may be the case that in certain circumstances involving contact sports, participation may have to be limited. The school will consider this at the appropriate moment and would consult with the pupil as well as their parents/guardians.

When swimming, careful consideration of suitable swimming attire is made to ensure the safeguarding of each child. A navy full suit costume is suggested in line with School uniform.

The use of changing room facilities will be carefully considered. The school will endeavor to be sensitive to the needs of any transgender pupils while also recognizing the needs of other pupils. Communication with parents to ensure inclusion and equality.

The additional toilet within the swimming pool is used as the unisex changing area.

Signage for toilets which are unisex to be put into place where possible.

When competing against another school or at another venue, appropriate provisions and risk assessments will be in place.

Children identifying as the opposite gender have the right to access facilities according to gender identification. Risk Assessments will be in place to ensure the safe usage of the toilets by all children, and this will be subject to regular review to continually monitor any risk of harm.

Regular risk assessments will be carried out to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils.

INSET & TRAINING

In order to assist staff in developing the relevant skills and expertise to deal with Transgender issues, the school will ensure INSET training covers a range of relevant topics including

- Safeguarding and confidentiality
- Anti-Bullying procedures
- Issues relating to gender identity
- Relevant and changing legislation

THE CURRICULUM

The School follows the PSHE programme of study which supports the DFE RSE guidance (February 2019). This ensures that age-appropriate issues relating to gender identity are studied as part of this PSHE programme. (See RSE policy)

The School's curriculum does not rely on stereotypical assumptions and does not contain material that could be deemed as 'transphobic'.

PE, SPORTS & GAMES

Sport and games form an intrinsic element of the school curriculum. A transgender pupil has the same entitlement to participate in these activities as any other pupil in the school. Participation in sport will be managed as sensitively as possible and appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken. It may be the case that in certain circumstances involving contact sports participation may have to be limited. The school will consider this at the appropriate moment and would consult with the pupil as well as their parents / guardians.

When swimming, careful consideration of suitable swimming attire is made to ensure the safeguarding of each child. A navy full suit costume is suggested in line with School uniform.

CHANGING & TOILET FACILITIES

The use of changing room facilities will be carefully considered. The school will endeavour to be sensitive to the needs of any transgender pupils while also recognising the needs of other pupils. Communication with parents to ensure inclusion and equality.

The additional toilet within the swimming pool is used as the unisex changing area.

Signage for toilets which are unisex to be put into place where possible. Adults are not to use pupil's toilets. Appropriate adult toilets are provided.

When competing against another school or at another venue appropriate provisions and risk assessments will be in place.

Children identifying as the opposite gender have the right to access facilities according to gender identification. Risk Assessments will be in place to ensure the safe usage of the toilets by all children, and this will be subject to regular review to continually monitor any risk of harm.

Regular risk assessments will be carried out to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils.

REQUESTS FOR VARIATION IN THE SCHOOL UNIFORM

All pupils are required to wear a uniform. The Head will consider requests from parents and pupils for variations in the uniform for reasons related to disability, gender reassignment and/or on religious grounds provided they are consistent with the School's policy on health and safety and it is reasonable in all the circumstances including in light of the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR PUPILS WITH DISABILITY

The School has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils.

Where the School is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the School is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage. The School will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School. Further information on the School's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's SEN and Disability Policy.

The School has an Accessibility Plan in place which can be found on the School website and a hard copy can be made available upon request. This sets out the School's plan to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the School's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the School for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the School; and improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Headmaster regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to the governors annually on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Pupils who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

If you believe that a pupil has received less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to a pupil's detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the School's complaints procedure (available from the school's website.

Woodard Statement of Intent – Diversity, Inclusion, Equity

Today, educational excellence means creating a learning environment where every student feels safe, included and empowered to achieve. As a Woodard school which is grounded in the Christian gospel we believe in the equality of all peoples and value the richness that comes from the different people within our Prestfelde community.

In the story of creation, the Bible affirms that all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), are loved by God, each one unique and valued by God, and thus the intrinsic worth of every human being is to be upheld.

In the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus Christ bestows upon his followers two unassailable truths:

'"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.' (Mark 12:30-31)

Christ did not give any exceptions for this love of our neighbour; therefore, any kind of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour is incompatible with our faith. Whilst we acknowledge that progress has been made, unfortunately prejudice still exists today both explicitly and implicitly, and many still face discrimination due to their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

The impact that schools have in shaping the attitudes of generations of children is undeniable. Therefore, Woodard schools must be positive working environments where all pupils and staff can flourish free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Schools are, by their nature, individual and distinct organisations. Each school within the Woodard community has been asked to consider for themselves what equality, diversity and inclusion means in the context of their school, and this has helped Prestfelde to inform our approach to achieving a more equitable culture. Some key overarching principles include:

- **Diversity** is about the ways in which people differ. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 we are told: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." The diversity of identity and gifts given to God's people is not an end but is for the purpose of building up the Body of Christ. People with differing identities, backgrounds and experiences should all have equitable access to resources and decision-making. Diversity is a strength and differences should be recognised and valued. Prejudice and stereotyping will be challenged, concerns and disclosures taken seriously, and due process will be

followed including, where necessary, liaising with external authorities. At Presteflde we will consider Diversity and follow guidance from the DfE and ensure we protect the characteristics identified by the 2010 Equalities act.

- **Equity** means treating people in ways that make sure they are not unfairly prevented from accessing resources and opportunities nor that others have an unfair advantage. Simply providing the same opportunities to everyone is not an effective way to create equality of outcomes. Rather than giving everyone the same, equity is about giving people what they need for fair access. This is about removing inequalities to make sure everyone has the chance to realise their ambitions.

- **Inclusion** means that all people, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or health care needs, have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities. Inclusion means being proactive to make sure people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate. It is not only about creating a diverse environment but also about ensuring a culture exists where individuals can be their full selves. Everyone in the Woodard community is equal, regardless of their religious beliefs, race, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, disability, or age.