Birkett House School

Equality Information and Objectives Policy

STATUS: DUE FOR REVIEW / AWAITING APPROVAL / IMPLEMENTED (HIGHLIGHT AS APPROPRIATE)	
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Headteacher:	Tom Harrup
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Chair of Governors or Committee:	Tim Pearce

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1. Aims

Birkett House School is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents, governors, and visitors, regardless of Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil, partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation.

Inclusiveness is at the heart of our ethos. We aim to be an inclusive organisation that supports and promotes equality for all within our school and the wider community.

As a public authority, our school aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations across all characteristics—between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy complies with all current UK legislation and departmental guidance, including:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and consolidated discrimination laws.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information demonstrating compliance with the PSED and to publish measurable equality objectives.
- Department for Education (DfE) guidance: *The Equality Act 2010 and schools*, technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and guidance from the Government Equalities Office.

- Our funding agreement and articles of association as a single academy trust.

3. School Context and Special Educational Needs

Birkett House School is a specialist setting catering for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

- We recognise that equality for our pupils often involves specialised provision, customised support, and reasonable adjustments to ensure everyone can access learning, thrive, and participate fully.
- We actively monitor the progress and achievements of our pupils, analysing data by protected characteristics where appropriate (such as race, gender, and disability) to support pupils, close any achievement gaps, and raise standards.
- We celebrate diversity as a strength, promoting respect, positive behaviour, and inclusion across all aspects of school life.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives set out in this statement are published, communicated, and accessible across the school community (staff, pupils, parents, and carers).
- Ensure that published equality information is updated at least annually, and that equality objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years.
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of objectives on a daily basis to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the school environment is accessible and that communications are inclusive.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Headteacher and SLT will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality policy and objectives among staff, pupils, and stakeholders.
- Have "due regard" when making decisions or taking actions to ensure they consider implications for people with protected characteristics.
- Monitor success in achieving objectives and report progress back to the governing body at least annually.

- Handle incidents of discrimination, bullying, or unfair treatment with due seriousness, following robust recording and reporting procedures.

All School Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Treat colleagues, pupils, and visitors fairly, equally, and with respect, upholding the principles of this policy.
- Maintain awareness of equality considerations in curriculum planning and daily teaching as part of the curriculum (including PSHE, English, RE and History).
- Use inclusive resources that challenge stereotypes and promote positive images of diverse groups.
- Challenge and report any incidents of prejudice, racism, homophobia, or discrimination immediately to senior leaders.

5. Eliminating Discrimination

- Birkett House School complies fully with the non-discrimination provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- School policies explicitly reference the importance of avoiding discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under equality legislation (e.g., during staff meetings and governing body meetings), and key discussions are recorded.
- New staff receive guidance on equality duties during induction, and refresher training is provided periodically.
- Discriminatory Incidents: Any form of harassment or discrimination (verbal, physical, online, or written abuse based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
    - A racist incident is defined as *"any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person."*
    - All discriminatory incidents are logged, investigated, addressed through our Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy, and reported to governors and (where statutory requirements dictate) external authorities.

6. Advancing Equality of Opportunity

As set out in DfE guidance, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people connected to a particular characteristic (e.g., meeting the specific physical or communication needs of pupils with disabilities).

- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who share a protected characteristic.
- Encouraging participation in school activities, trips, and student leadership roles for all pupils.
- Analysing performance and attendance data to ensure vulnerable and protected groups are supported to make strong progress.

7. Fostering Good Relations

The school fosters good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship, and understanding of diverse religions, cultures, and family backgrounds through our curriculum, RE, PSHE, assemblies, and daily interactions.
- Utilising school councils and pupil voice initiatives to encourage collaborative working across different ages and backgrounds.
- Engaging positively with parents, carers, and the local community, inviting visitors and utilising community resources to broaden pupil awareness.

8. Equality Considerations in Decision-Making

- The school ensures it has "due regard" to equality considerations whenever significant decisions or policy changes are made.
- Before implementing new trips, activities, or structural changes, leaders evaluate whether the decision:
    - Respects religious holidays and cultural sensitivities.
    - Remains fully accessible to pupils and staff with disabilities.
    - Offers equivalent opportunities for all participants.
- Where appropriate, equality implications and risk assessments are documented to demonstrate active consideration of our legal duties.

9. Equality Objectives (2025–2029)

In compliance with the specific duties of the PSED, Birkett House School has established clear, measurable equality objectives:

Objective 1: Curriculum and Diversity Representation

- **Objective:** Further develop the curriculum, school environment, and displays to ensure positive representation, diverse role models, and enhanced awareness of modern British values and global diversity.

- **Why we chose this objective:** To ensure our pupils, despite operating within a specialist setting, gain a rich, inclusive understanding of the diverse society in which they live.
- **Action and Monitoring:** Subject monitoring audits, student surveys, and learning walks led by SLT and reported annually to the Quality Committee.

Objective 2: Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

- **Objective:** Regularly review, monitor, and evaluate physical access, learning resources, and staff support mechanisms to ensure robust reasonable adjustments are in place for all pupils and staff with disabilities.
- **Why we chose this objective:** To continuously reduce barriers to learning and employment within our single academy context.
- **Action and Monitoring:** Annual audit of site accessibility, staff wellbeing/reasonable adjustment reviews, and updates to the school's Accessibility Plan.

Objective 3: Staff Recruitment and Equal Opportunities Monitoring

- **Objective:** Monitor recruitment, continuing professional development (CPD), and personnel data to ensure fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory employment practices across all protected characteristics.
- **Why we chose this objective:** To maintain a fair workplace where recruitment and progression are based strictly on merit and equal opportunity principles.
- **Action and Monitoring:** Annual recruitment data tracking and reporting to the Governing Body or it's relevant Committee.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

- **Equality Information:** Published on the school website and reviewed/updated annually.
- **Equality Objectives:** Reviewed and updated by the Governing Board at least every 4 years.
- **Policy Review Cycle:** This policy is reviewed and approved by the Governing Body annually.

11. Links with Other Policies

This policy links closely with the following school documents:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and Information Report
- Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy / Safer Recruitment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy