

# Equality & Diversity Policy



Policy Document	Equality & Diversity Policy
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**The Maples – Equality & Diversity**

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## The Maples – Equality & Diversity

### 1. Aims

At The Maples, we are committed to creating a supportive, inclusive, and equitable learning environment where all students, staff, parents, and stakeholders feel valued and respected. We recognise the diversity of our school community and are dedicated to promoting equality of opportunity, eliminating discrimination, and fostering positive relations among all individuals.

Our school aims to;

- Promote respect and equal opportunities for all individuals regardless of disability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.
- Prevent all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Ensure that every child's specific needs are identified, supported, and addressed appropriately to help them achieve their full potential.

Our school aims to promote respect for difference and diversity in accordance with our school values.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy complies with and should be read in conjunction with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the *Public Sector Equality Duty* and protects individuals from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information demonstrating how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to set and publish measurable equality objectives.
- Department for Education (DfE) guidance: *The Equality Act 2010 and Schools* (updated 2024).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2025), which reinforces schools' responsibilities to safeguard all pupils, promote inclusion, and ensure that no pupil is treated less favourably due to a protected characteristic or vulnerability.
- Independent School Standards (ISS, 2024) – Parts 2.13 and 2.14, which require schools to promote the welfare of pupils and actively encourage respect for all protected characteristics.
- Children and Families Act 2014, Part 3, relating to pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Human Rights Act 1998, which protects the rights and freedoms of all individuals.
- Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR), ensuring the fair and lawful processing of personal data related to equality monitoring and compliance.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- In relation to admissions
- In the way it provides education for pupils
- In the way it provides access to benefits, facilities, or services
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment

The protected characteristics under the Act are:

- Age
- Disability

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- Race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origin
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

In line with KCSIE 2025, the school actively promotes equality, inclusion, and diversity across all areas of provision, recognising that eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity are integral to safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The proprietary board will:

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives set out in this policy are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Oversee the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy
- Ensure that the equality information and objectives set out in this policy are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year

The Head of School will:

- Ensure that all who enter the school are aware of, and comply with, the Equality and Diversity Policy
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given relevant training and support
- Take appropriate action in any cases of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying
- Regularly review data related to prejudice-related incidents and take necessary steps to reduce occurrences of incidents within the school
- Work with parents to help overcome barriers

All staff are responsible for:

- Refraining from engaging in behaviour that constitutes discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying
- Understanding and complying with the Equality and Diversity Policy
- Making reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled students do not experience discrimination or exclusion
- Dealing with prejudice-related incidents, following the specific procedure

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- Attending training sessions as necessary to carry out this policy and keep up to date with equalities and legislation
- Challenging bias and stereotyping
- Promoting an inclusive and collaborative ethos

All parents/carers are responsible for:

- Refraining from engaging in behaviour that constitutes discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying
- Understanding the ethos of the school and complying with the schools Equality and Diversity Policy

All students are responsible for:

- Refraining from engaging in behaviour that constitutes discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying
- Understanding the ethos of the school and complying with the school's policy
- Reporting prejudice-related incidents
- Understanding, valuing and celebrating diversity
- Challenging stereotypes and prejudices
- Treating others as equals

## **4. Equality Aims**

At The Maples, we are committed to promoting the welfare, equality, and inclusion of all members of our school community — pupils, staff, parents, and visitors. We recognise, value, and celebrate diversity and are dedicated to ensuring that everyone is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. Our commitment to equality underpins all aspects of school life, including teaching and learning, recruitment, leadership, and community engagement.

To achieve this, the school has established the following aims:

- **Curriculum Access and Outcomes:**  
Monitor and review the curriculum to ensure it provides ambitious and inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils, with a particular focus on the progress and attainment of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including those with SEND, EAL, or who are in care. The curriculum will continue to be reviewed in line with national frameworks and any new performance measures.
- **Quality of Support:**  
Assure the quality and consistency of support for pupils in all vulnerable groups within the classroom, ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made and that all pupils are fully included in learning.
- **Use of Technology:**  
Continue to explore and implement the use of assistive and adaptive technologies to support pupils' access to learning and remove barriers for those with additional needs or disabilities.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:**  
Maintain and review the Accessibility Plan regularly, ensuring that physical, curricular, and informational access is improved year on year for pupils, staff, and visitors with disabilities or additional needs.

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- **Safeguarding and Wellbeing:**  
Ensure that equality, inclusion, and respect for protected characteristics are embedded within the school's safeguarding culture, in line with KCSIE 2025, so that all pupils feel safe, valued, and able to succeed.
- **Staff Development:**  
Provide regular training and professional development for all staff to strengthen awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that these principles are reflected in everyday practice and decision-making.

## **5. Collecting and using information**

At The Maples, we collect and use equality information to ensure our policies, procedures, and practices promote fairness, eliminate discrimination, and advance equality of opportunity for all members of the school community.

The purpose of collecting this information is to:

- Identify key issues, such as potential inequalities or instances of unlawful discrimination in teaching, recruitment, or employment practices.
- Assess performance, for example by benchmarking data against similar organisations locally or nationally.
- Take informed action, such as adapting working practices or policies to better meet the needs of pupils, staff, or other stakeholders who share protected characteristics.

The school will maintain an equality profile of its workforce and pupil population to support analysis, planning, and accountability. For staff, the following information may be collected and monitored:

- Recruitment, promotion, and retention data
- The number of full-time and part-time employees
- Pay, remuneration, and progression data
- Access to training and professional development
- Return to work of women following maternity leave
- Return to work of employees following disability-related absence
- Appraisal outcomes
- Grievances and complaints
- Disciplinary procedures and outcomes
- Dismissals and other reasons for leaving employment

This data will be analysed to identify any patterns, imbalances, or barriers related to equality, diversity, or inclusion. Where issues are identified, appropriate actions will be taken to address them.

All personal data collected will be handled and stored in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently, and used solely for the purpose of promoting equality and fulfilling the school's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010.

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### 6. Promoting equality

At The Maples, we are committed to actively promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across all areas of school life. We aim to remove barriers that prevent individuals from thriving, ensuring that all pupils and staff are treated fairly and supported to achieve their full potential.

In order to meet these aims, the school has identified the following key priorities:

- **Access and Inclusion:**  
Provide auxiliary aids, reasonable adjustments, and personalised support to enable pupils with disabilities or additional needs to participate fully and equally in all aspects of school life.
- **Curriculum and Participation:**  
Ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced, and representative, meeting the needs, abilities, and learning styles of all pupils. The curriculum and enrichment offer will reflect diversity, challenge stereotypes, and promote understanding of different cultures, beliefs, and identities.
- **Enrichment and Cultural Capital:**  
Guarantee that all pupils are able to participate in extra-curricular activities, visits, and cultural capital opportunities. Participation will be monitored to ensure no pupil is disadvantaged or excluded due to a protected characteristic, financial hardship, or accessibility need.
- **Bullying and Prejudice:**  
Ensure that all forms of bullying, discrimination, or prejudice-based behaviour — including those related to protected characteristics — are taken seriously, recorded, and addressed consistently and fairly, in line with the Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and KCSIE 2025.
- **Physical Environment:**  
Continue to review and improve access to the physical environment, ensuring that the school site remains safe, accessible, and welcoming for all pupils, staff, and visitors.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:**  
Seek and act upon the views of external agencies, advisory services, local schools, and families to strengthen inclusive practice and ensure provision remains responsive and evidence-based.

To sustain a culture of equality and respect, all incidents of prejudice-related bullying or discriminatory behaviour are carefully monitored, recorded, and reviewed. Outcomes are analysed termly to identify trends and inform preventative action.

All staff receive regular training to ensure they are aware of equality legislation, understand how to identify and respond to prejudice-related incidents, and know the procedures for reporting and following up concerns in accordance with the school's safeguarding and behaviour protocols.

### 7. Addressing prejudice-related incidents

At The Maples, we are firmly opposed to all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and harassment. We recognise that prejudice, whether related to race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic, can cause significant harm to individuals and the wider school community.

The school promotes a culture of respect, tolerance, and inclusion through its curriculum, daily routines, and relationships. Staff and pupils are supported to understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination, and how these behaviours contradict the values of equality and respect that underpin our ethos. Preventative work is embedded through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), and the wider SMSC and British Values curriculum.

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All incidents of prejudice or discriminatory behaviour are taken seriously, addressed immediately, and recorded in accordance with school procedures. Incidents will be investigated promptly, with appropriate action taken to support victims, educate those involved, and prevent recurrence.

Where necessary, and in line with Independent School Standard 4.20, the school will report serious or repeated incidents of prejudice-related behaviour to the local authority and/or other relevant external agencies.

Patterns and trends in prejudice-related incidents will be monitored and analysed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), with findings used to inform staff training, curriculum development, and ongoing safeguarding work.

## **8. Appeal process**

At The Maples, all staff have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect in all matters relating to employment and conduct. Where a staff member wishes to appeal a decision regarding the acceptability of their appearance, dress code, or professional presentation, they may do so in accordance with the school's Grievance Policy.

All appeals will be considered fairly, objectively, and without bias. The staff member will have the opportunity to state their case, present evidence, and be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative if they wish.

The school will follow the procedures outlined in the Complaints and Grievance Policy, ensuring that decisions are made transparently, consistently, and in line with statutory requirements. The process will adhere to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, as required by Independent School Standard 2.35.

Outcomes of any appeal will be communicated in writing, and appropriate actions or adjustments will be made where necessary. All appeal records will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR) and retained in line with the school's Data Retention Policy.

## **9. Curriculum**

All pupils at The Maples are entitled to access a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum that meets their individual needs and enables them to achieve their full potential. Teaching and learning opportunities will be designed to ensure equality of access, inclusion, and high expectations for all. This includes providing additional or adapted support where a statutory or identified need exists.

When planning and delivering the curriculum, the school will actively seek opportunities to promote equality, celebrate diversity, and challenge discrimination. Lessons, resources, and enrichment activities will reflect the varied backgrounds, experiences, and cultures of our pupils and wider society.

The school is committed to developing an inclusive curriculum that supports the progress and personal development of all pupils, including those in vulnerable groups such as pupils with SEND, EAL, children in care, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

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Through the PSHE and RSHE curriculum, pupils will develop an understanding of respect, tolerance, and equality, in line with British Values and the requirements of KCSIE 2025. These lessons will help pupils to explore their place in the world, recognise and challenge prejudice, and value diversity as a strength.

To achieve this, we will:

- Tailor learning experiences to meet the individual needs of pupils, using Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and individualised targets where appropriate.
- Differentiate teaching and assessment to ensure accessibility for all learners, supported by specialist strategies and reasonable adjustments.
- Use diverse and representative teaching materials that reflect a range of cultures, identities, and perspectives.
- Promote open discussion and critical thinking about equality, diversity, and inclusion through age-appropriate learning experiences.
- Review the curriculum regularly to ensure that equality and representation remain central to its intent, implementation, and impact.

This approach fulfils Independent School Standard 2.1, which requires the school to provide full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age that gives them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education — while promoting respect for others and equality of opportunity.

## **10. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, Section 149), The Maples demonstrates due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The school actively considers these three principles when making decisions, developing policies, and reviewing practices. Evidence of compliance is maintained internally through school development planning, staff training records, policy reviews, and equality monitoring data.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

At The Maples, we are committed to ensuring that our approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion remains effective, compliant, and embedded across all aspects of school life. This policy and its implementation will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet statutory requirements and reflects the evolving needs of our school community.

The Executive Headteacher, Head of School, SENDCo, and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the operational effectiveness of this policy, supported by the Proprietor. Monitoring will include:

- Reviewing equality objectives and progress towards them on an annual basis.

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- Analysing pupil data, including attainment, progress, attendance, exclusions, and participation in enrichment activities, to identify and address any disparities between groups.
- Reviewing staff recruitment, retention, and professional development data to ensure equality of opportunity.
- Monitoring incidents of prejudice, discrimination, or bullying, ensuring appropriate responses and follow-up actions.
- Evaluating feedback from pupils, parents, and staff through surveys, meetings, and consultation opportunities.

The findings of this monitoring will inform the School Development Plan (SDP), staff training priorities, and future equality objectives.

This policy will be formally reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Proprietor to ensure continued compliance with the Equality Act 2010, KCSIE 2025, and relevant DfE guidance, or sooner if significant changes occur in legislation, school practice, or local context.

A summary of progress against the school's equality objectives will be published on the school website each year, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

## **12. Links to other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and documents, which collectively support our commitment to equality, inclusion, and safeguarding:

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- PSHE and RSHE Policy
- Recruitment and Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy

These policies together ensure that The Maples meets its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, KCSIE 2025, Independent School Standards (2024), and other relevant legislation, promoting an inclusive environment where all pupils and staff are respected, valued, and supported to succeed.