



‘Improving the quality of family life’

Equal Opportunities Policy

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1. Rationale

This Equality Policy for Snowflake school brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability. It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is aligned with:

- Equality Act 2010 (including disability duties and reasonable adjustments)
- Independent School Standards (ISSR)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Human Rights Act 1998

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies.

The school recognises all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 including: disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age and marriage/civil partnership (employment).

The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between groups

It explains how we aim to listen and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Although an independent school, Snowflake School adopts the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty by actively promoting equality, inclusion and accessibility for autistic pupils and those with complex SEND.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and SEND policies.

2. General

Snowflake School is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all employees, workers and applicants. The policy will be adhered to and reviewed on an on-going basis. As a specialist autism provision, the school adopts a neurodiversity-affirming approach and recognises autism as a difference, not a deficit. Equality practice is adapted to meet communication, sensory, social and emotional needs of pupils. The policy covers all aspects of recruitment to avoid unlawful or undesirable discrimination. Snowflake School will treat everyone equally irrespective of sex or marital status (including civil partnerships), sexual orientation, race, disability, age or religious belief and places an obligation upon all staff to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

Snowflake School shall not discriminate unlawfully when recruiting or in offering any terms of employment or terms of engagement for temporary workers. Snowflake School requires that each candidate for employment be assessed only in accordance with the candidate's merits, qualification and ability to perform the relevant duties required by the vacancy.

3. Sex, race, sexual orientation and religious belief discrimination

Under the relevant statutes and regulations, direct discrimination occurs where one individual treats another individual less favourably on grounds of their sex, race, sexual orientation or religious belief than he treats or would treat other persons. Snowflake School will not discriminate against any person on these grounds and will not tolerate any discrimination by employees.

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their sex, race (i.e. colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation or religious belief:

- In the arrangements made for the purpose of determining who should be employed and by refusing or deliberately omitting to offer employment
- In the terms of employment which are offered or afforded
- In the way opportunities for promotion, training or transfer or any other benefits are offered
- By dismissing or subjecting the person to any other detriment

4. Disability discrimination

The school will not discriminate against a disabled job applicant or employee on the grounds of disability or (in the absence of justification) for reasons relating to disability: -

- In the arrangements made for the purpose of determining who should be employed and by refusing or deliberately omitting to offer employment
- In the terms of employment which are offered or afforded
- In the way opportunities for promotion, training or transfer or any other benefits are offered
- By dismissing or subjecting the person to any other detriment

Wherever practical, Snowflake School will make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and workers.

The school will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, including autistic pupils, to ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This includes:

- Sensory adjustments
- Communication supports (AAC, visuals, structured environments)
- Curriculum differentiation
- Behaviour support approaches based on understanding autism
- Environmental adaptations

5. Age discrimination

Snowflake School is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience, and attitude are appropriate to the requirements of the various positions regardless of age.

As far as possible, no age requirements will be stated in any job advertisements on the school's behalf.

Snowflake School may request age information as part of its recruitment and employment processes for lawful monitoring, safeguarding, workforce planning and equality compliance purposes. Any such information will not be used in a discriminatory manner and will be processed in accordance with data protection legislation and the Equality Act 2010.

6. Complaints and monitoring procedures

Any complaints of discrimination on any ground should be brought to the immediate attention of the Head Teacher of Snowflake School in writing. If the complaint relates to the Head Teacher, it should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team will:

- Monitor equality incidents and trends
- Review this policy annually
- Analyse data relating to behaviour, exclusions, bullying and access
- Ensure compliance with Equality Act and ISSR standards

7. Part-time workers

This Equal Opportunities Policy also covers the treatment of employees and workers who work part-time. Snowflake School recognises that it is an essential part of this policy that part-time employees are treated on the same terms as full-time employees (albeit on a pro rata basis) in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, maternity leave and parental leave. The school also recognises that part-time employees must be treated the same as full-time employees in relation to training and redundancy situations.

8. Harassment policy

Snowflake School is committed to providing a work environment free from unlawful harassment, because of sex or marital status (including civil partnerships), sexual orientation, race, disability, age or religious belief is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the school.

This policy prohibits unlawful harassment by any employee or worker of the school.

Examples of prohibited harassment are:

- Sexual advances

- Derogatory or sexually explicit jokes, comments, photographs, cartoons, drawings or gestures
- Unwanted physical contact
- The use of unwelcome comments
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment

If you believe that you have been unlawfully harassed, you should make an immediate report to the Head Teacher followed by a written complaint as soon as possible after the incident. If the complaint relates to the Head Teacher, it should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Trustees.

Your complaint should include:

- Details of the incident
- The name or names of the individual or individuals involved
- The name or names of any witness or witnesses

The school will undertake a thorough investigation of the allegations. If it is concluded that unlawful harassment has occurred, remedial action will be taken.

Any employee who the school finds to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to the disciplinary procedure and any sanction may include termination.

9. Pupils

Applications for a place at the school will be assessed based on a pupil's Special Educational need as detailed in their statement. This will be balanced against the places available and the school's ability to fulfil the need.

Admissions decisions are made in a non-discriminatory manner and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The school will not unlawfully discriminate and will consider reasonable adjustments and accessibility before determining whether needs can be met safely and effectively.

Pupils are taught both individually and in groups, programmes that promote our inclusive ethos and encourage communication and social interaction with everyone, as far as each pupil is able. Every effort will be made to ensure that all pupils, including non-speaking and minimally verbal pupils, have the opportunity to access all areas of the curriculum in a manner and at a level that reflects their stage of development. All pupils will be treated with dignity and respect.

Discipline and our response to pupil behaviour will not be determined by race, gender, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

10. Responding to prejudice-based incidents

Snowflake School recognises that pupils with SEND and autism are more vulnerable to discrimination, bullying and abuse. Any prejudice-based incident, discriminatory behaviour or harassment will be treated as a safeguarding concern and recorded in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and overseen by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour. We will also record all hate incidents and prejudice-based bullying.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

All incidents will be logged, analysed and used to inform safeguarding, behaviour planning, staff training and curriculum development, particularly recognising the heightened vulnerability of autistic pupils to discrimination and misunderstanding.

11. Staff Training

All staff will receive regular training on:

- Equality and diversity
- Autism awareness and neurodiversity
- Anti-bullying and discrimination
- Inclusive communication and behaviour support

Training will be refreshed at least annually and during staff induction.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to legislative changes, inspection requirements (Ofsted/ISI), or safeguarding updates.

Revision

Version Update	March 2026
Review due	March 2027
Reviewed By	Sumen Starr
Approved by Board of Trustees on	March 2026