



Oliver House School

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Local Procedure

Procedure date: August 2026

Review Date: October 2027, or earlier following legislative or organisational change

Author: Headteacher- Lisa Sharrock

Approved by: Regional Director- Wendy Sparling

Policy commitment: Everyone will be treated with dignity and fairness. Difference will be recognised and valued, barriers will be removed, and support will be adapted so that every member of the school community can participate, belong, learn and achieve.

1. Purpose and status

This local procedure sets out Oliver House School's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for pupils, prospective pupils, former pupils where relevant, parents and carers, employees, applicants, visitors, contractors, multi-agency professionals and other stakeholders.

It explains how the school will prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; make reasonable adjustments; advance equality of opportunity; foster good relations; identify and respond to prejudice-related incidents; and publish evidence and measurable equality objectives.

This procedure should be read alongside the school's Accessibility Plan, SEND policy and SEN Information Report, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Curriculum Policy, Complaints Procedure, Admissions arrangements and Aspris employment policies.

2. Vision and aims

Oliver House School's core values are resilience, teamwork, respect, courage and pride. We will treat people fairly, celebrate difference and respond to individual need so that everyone is free to live, learn and achieve their potential.

- model and explicitly teach respect, dignity, empathy and acceptance of difference;
- maintain honest and respectful partnerships with pupils, families, commissioners and the wider community;
- help pupils understand the diverse world in which they live, recognise the rights of others and develop the knowledge and skills needed for life in modern Britain;
- provide age-, stage- and developmentally appropriate opportunities for pupils to explore their own identity, culture and beliefs and those of others;
- remove or reduce barriers to learning, communication, participation, attendance and wellbeing;
- provide bespoke and meaningful curricula through the Explore and Aspire pathways, with personalised teaching, reasonable adjustments and multidisciplinary support;
- identify and address gaps in experience, participation and outcomes; and
- give every pupil the best possible opportunity to achieve ambitious outcomes and prepare for adulthood.

3. Legal and statutory framework

This procedure has been reviewed with reference to the following legislation and guidance in force in England at the date of approval:

- Equality Act 2010, including the education and employment provisions, the reasonable adjustment duty and the Public Sector Equality Duty framework in section 149;
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, where applicable, including publication of equality information annually and equality objectives at least every four years;
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014;
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, particularly the standards relating to curriculum, personal development, welfare, health and safety, and leadership and management;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation;
- Keeping children safe in education 2026; and
- statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education, as applicable to the school and pupils' age and stage.

Important: The Equality Act applies to all schools. Oliver House adopts the three-part Public Sector Equality Duty framework as the organising standard for this procedure and for its published equality information and objectives. The proprietor and commissioners retain their own legal duties.

4. Definitions

4.1 Equality, equity and inclusion

Equality means fairness and freedom from unlawful discrimination. Equality of opportunity does not require identical treatment. Some people need different provision, additional support or reasonable adjustments to remove disadvantage and enable meaningful participation.

Equity is the proportionate allocation of support and resources in response to identified barriers and need. Inclusion means that people are welcomed, represented, listened to and enabled to participate as full members of the school community.

4.2 Diversity

Diversity means recognising and valuing visible and non-visible differences between people. These may relate to protected characteristics, neurodiversity, communication, care experience, socio-economic circumstances, family structure, health, language, culture, background or lived experience. The school will not unfairly discriminate on any ground.

4.3 Protected characteristics

The nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The way the Act applies differs by context. For pupils, age and marriage/civil partnership do not operate in the same way as they do in employment. The school nevertheless considers all nine characteristics when developing an inclusive culture, employing staff and reviewing policy and practice. Protection can also apply where discrimination is based on a perceived characteristic or association with someone who has a protected characteristic.

4.4 Prohibited conduct

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination: applying a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages people sharing a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.

Harassment: unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, subject to the statutory definitions applying in the relevant context.

Victimisation: subjecting someone to detriment because they have carried out, or are believed to have carried out, a protected act such as raising or supporting an equality concern.

Discrimination arising from disability: treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something arising from disability where that treatment cannot be justified.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments: not taking reasonable steps to avoid substantial disadvantage for a disabled person.

5. Public Sector Equality Duty framework

When exercising its functions and making decisions, Oliver House will have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Advancing equality of opportunity includes removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting different needs and encouraging participation where it is disproportionately low. Fostering good relations includes tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Due regard must be conscious, timely and evidence-informed. Equality considerations will therefore be recorded, where relevant, when the school develops or reviews policy, curriculum, staffing arrangements, timetables, admissions practice, premises, procurement, visits, exclusions, significant behaviour decisions and strategic change. Decision-makers remain responsible for considering the actual impact; a template alone is not sufficient.

6. Reasonable adjustments and accessibility

Oliver House anticipates the needs of disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors and will make reasonable adjustments where a provision, criterion, practice, physical feature, or absence of an auxiliary aid or service would place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage, subject to the legal duty applying in the relevant context.

For pupils, the reasonable adjustment duty includes auxiliary aids and services. Physical access is addressed proactively through the school's Accessibility Plan. The school will not wait for a formal diagnosis where there is sufficient evidence of need and a reasonable adjustment can be made safely.

Adjustments may include:

- adapted communication, visual supports, processing time and accessible formats;
- sensory and environmental adjustments, including access to regulation spaces;
- changes to routines, teaching approaches, assessment arrangements or the timing and location of activities;
- assistive technology, specialist equipment or auxiliary services;
- individual risk assessment and positive support planning;
- accessible alternatives that preserve the purpose and ambition of an activity; and
- adjustments to recruitment, induction and employment practice for staff.

Adjustments will be agreed with the person and/or family wherever possible, recorded in the appropriate plan, communicated to relevant staff, implemented promptly and reviewed for effectiveness. Cost, practicality, effectiveness, resources, health and safety and disruption may be relevant to reasonableness, but blanket assumptions will not be used.

Separate statutory plan: The Accessibility Plan must set out how the school will increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum, improve the physical environment, and improve access to information. It should be reviewed at least every three years and published on the school website.

7. How the school promotes equality and inclusion

7.1 Curriculum, teaching and assessment

- Personalised thematic learning is embedded across the Explore and Aspire pathways and reflects EHCP outcomes, communication profiles, sensory needs, SCERTS-informed priorities and multidisciplinary advice.
- Curriculum plans and resources represent diverse families, cultures, faiths, disabilities, identities and contributions, and avoid tokenism and stereotyping.
- Teaching about protected characteristics is factual, respectful and appropriate to pupils' age, developmental level and communication needs.
- Staff create psychologically safe opportunities for pupils to ask questions, disagree respectfully and communicate views through their preferred methods.
- Assessment information is interpreted carefully so that disability, communication need, interrupted education or care experience is not mistaken for low potential.
- Careers, preparation for adulthood, educational visits, enrichment, pupil leadership and work-related learning are planned so that barriers and participation gaps are identified and addressed.

7.2 Pastoral, therapeutic and multidisciplinary support

The school supports emotional wellbeing and access to learning through trauma-informed practice and, according to assessed need, Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), Occupational Therapy (OT), animal-assisted interventions, mentoring, counselling and other specialist input. Support is coordinated through pupil plans and reviewed with the pupil, family and professionals.

7.3 Admissions, attendance, behaviour and exclusions

- Admissions decisions follow the school's published arrangements and are not influenced by unlawful assumptions about a protected characteristic.
- Attendance is analysed in context. The school identifies disability-, health-, transport-, care- or family-related barriers and works with families and agencies to provide appropriate support.
- Behaviour is understood as communication. Policies and responses take account of disability and the need for reasonable adjustment without lowering expectations for safety, dignity and respect.
- Any suspension, exclusion or other significant restriction is reviewed for lawful, fair and proportionate decision-making, including whether unmet need, discrimination or a reasonable adjustment is relevant.

7.4 Employment and professional culture

- Recruitment, selection, pay, development, promotion, flexible working, capability and disciplinary processes will be fair and consistent with Aspris policy and equality law.
- Health or disability information will be requested only where lawful, relevant and necessary, and will be handled confidentially.
- The school will consider workplace reasonable adjustments and obtain occupational health or HR advice where appropriate.
- Staff must use respectful language, challenge discriminatory conduct and model inclusive professional behaviour.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Proprietor, Regional Director and governance oversight

- ensure the school meets applicable legal and Independent School Standards requirements;
- approve this procedure and hold leaders to account for its implementation;
- review published equality information, objectives, progress and significant themes at least annually;
- assure that resources, training and oversight are proportionate to identified need; and
- consider equality implications in strategic decisions and challenge unexplained disparities.

8.2 Headteacher and senior leaders

- lead an inclusive culture and ensure this procedure is implemented consistently;
- maintain the equality evidence base, objectives and annual website publication;
- ensure curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, complaints, recruitment and staff-development systems align with this procedure;
- commission equality impact consideration for significant decisions;
- ensure reasonable adjustments are identified, recorded, communicated and reviewed;
- analyse incidents and participation or outcome gaps and report themes to governance; and
- seek HR, safeguarding, legal or specialist advice where required.

8.3 DSL and safeguarding team

- recognise when discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, prejudice-based bullying or online abuse may also be a safeguarding concern;
- follow Keeping children safe in education 2026 and the school's safeguarding procedures;
- ensure victims are heard, protected and supported, and that alleged perpetrators receive proportionate assessment and support; and
- liaise with children's social care, the local authority designated officer, police or other agencies where thresholds are met.

8.4 All staff

- read and follow this procedure and complete required training;
- promote equality through day-to-day language, curriculum delivery and relationships;
- challenge and report discriminatory language, stereotypes, harassment and prejudice-related behaviour;
- implement agreed reasonable adjustments and raise concerns if they are ineffective;
- record incidents factually using the school's agreed system; and
- maintain confidentiality and share information only on a lawful, need-to-know basis.

8.5 Pupils, parents, carers, visitors and contractors

All members of the school community are expected to treat others with dignity and respect, follow school expectations, avoid discriminatory conduct and raise concerns. Expectations will be communicated accessibly and applied in a way that reflects pupils' developmental level and individual need.

9. Preventing and responding to prejudice-related incidents

A prejudice-related incident is any incident perceived by the victim or another person to be motivated wholly or partly by hostility, prejudice or stereotyping related to an actual or perceived protected characteristic, association, identity or difference. It may be verbal, physical, sexual, written, visual, relational or online and may involve pupils or adults.

The school will:

- act promptly to secure safety and wellbeing;
- listen to the person affected and provide communication support;
- record the incident, the perceived characteristic or prejudice, context, impact and actions taken;
- investigate fairly, without requiring the victim to resolve the matter directly;
- consider safeguarding, SEND, disability and reasonable-adjustment factors;
- provide support to the victim and appropriate education, support or sanction for the person responsible;
- inform parents or carers where appropriate and lawful;
- refer externally where statutory thresholds are met; and
- review for recurrence, patterns, hotspots and the effectiveness of action.

Incidents will not be dismissed as banter or an inevitable feature of a pupil's needs. At the same time, responses will be individualised and proportionate, taking account of intent, understanding, impact, communication, disability and risk. The impact on the person harmed remains central.

10. Concerns, complaints and breaches

Equality concerns should normally be raised as soon as possible with a member of staff or the Headteacher. Formal complaints will be considered under the school's Complaints

Procedure. Complaints may be made in an accessible format and reasonable adjustments will be offered.

Complaints should be addressed to the Headteacher, Lisa Sharrock. Where the complaint concerns the Headteacher, or where escalation is required, it should be addressed to the Regional Director, Wendy Sparling, in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.

No person will be victimised for raising a concern in good faith or supporting another person's complaint. Confidentiality will be respected, but absolute confidentiality cannot be promised where information must be shared to safeguard a child, investigate fairly or meet a legal duty.

Discrimination or serious failure to follow this procedure may constitute misconduct. Staff allegations will be referred to HR and, where relevant, the DSL or LADO. Investigations will be undertaken by an appropriate person who is sufficiently independent of the matter. Outcomes may include training, management action, disciplinary action, contractual action, safeguarding referral or referral to the police or another regulator.

11. Information, monitoring and publication

The school will use evidence it already holds and proportionate additional evidence to understand equality issues. This may include attendance, progress, behaviour, exclusions, complaints, prejudice-related incidents, participation in enrichment and educational visits, pupil leadership, careers and work experience, destination information, accessibility actions, staff training, pupil and parent voice and curriculum audits.

Information will be considered, where meaningful and lawful, by characteristics or groups including sex, race/ethnicity, disability/SEND, looked-after or previously looked-after status, pathway, age/stage and other locally relevant factors. Small cohorts will be interpreted cautiously and no publication will identify an individual or enable identification by combination of data.

The school will maintain an accessible equality page on its website containing:

- this procedure or a link to it;
- information demonstrating how the school gives effect to the three PSED aims, updated at least annually;
- one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, published at least every four years;
- annual progress against the objectives; and
- the current Accessibility Plan or a clear link to it.

Where employee numbers, pupil numbers or combinations of characteristics create a risk of identification, the school will publish narrative evidence, ranges, suppression or aggregated information rather than personal or small-number data. Internal monitoring will be more detailed than public reporting where this is necessary to act on barriers safely.

12. Equality objectives 2026-2030

These objectives have been designed to be proportionate to a small specialist school. They will be reviewed termly by senior leaders and at least annually through governance. Baselines will be confirmed during the autumn term 2026 and progress will be published annually.

Objective 1 - Inclusive curriculum representation

Specific aim: By July 2027, complete and quality-assure an equality and representation audit of 100% of Explore and Aspire pathway long-term plans and sampled resources.

Key actions:

- Map planned, age- and stage-appropriate opportunities to learn about difference, rights, respectful relationships and contributions across protected characteristics.
- Identify gaps, stereotypes or inaccessible resources and revise plans or resources.
- Include pupil voice and a termly work/resource sample in quality assurance.

Measures and target: 100% of pathway long-term plans audited by December 2026; identified actions allocated and dated; 100% of priority actions completed or carried forward with a recorded rationale by July 2027.

Owner: Deputy Headteacher - Curriculum, reporting to the Headteacher

PSED link: Eliminate discrimination; foster good relations

Objective 2 - Equitable participation and access

Specific aim: By July 2027, identify and reduce material gaps in participation in enrichment, educational visits, pupil voice, careers and preparation-for-adulthood opportunities.

Key actions:

- Establish an autumn 2026 baseline using available participation data and individual pupil review.
- Review participation by sex, race/ethnicity, disability/SEND need, looked-after status and pathway where group size makes comparison meaningful.
- For any unexplained gap of 10 percentage points or more, record a barrier analysis, reasonable adjustments and an owner.

Measures and target: Baseline completed by 31 October 2026; 100% of identified material gaps have an action plan by 31 December 2026; by July 2027 each gap is reduced by at least 5 percentage points or has documented evidence of suitable alternative access and an individualised rationale.

Owner: Assistant Headteacher - Achievement and Aspire Curriculum, with Educational Visits Lead

PSED link: Advance equality of opportunity

Objective 3 - Prevent and respond to prejudice-related incidents

Specific aim: From September 2026, strengthen recording, response and learning so that prejudice-related incidents are addressed consistently and preventable recurrence is reduced.

Key actions:

- Introduce a consistent incident category covering actual, perceived and associated characteristics.
- Review incidents and actions termly through safeguarding and behaviour oversight.
- Use findings to inform pupil education, staff coaching, environmental changes and support plans.

Measures and target: 100% of identified incidents logged, investigated and closed with victim support and follow-up recorded; 100% of repeat incidents receive a multi-factor review; reduce repeat incidents by 20% against the autumn 2026 baseline by July 2027. If the baseline is fewer than five incidents, success will be no preventable repeat and 100% completion of agreed actions.

Owner: Deputy Headteacher - Inclusion/MDT and DSL

PSED link: Eliminate discrimination; foster good relations

Objective 4 - Staff confidence and accountability

Specific aim: Ensure staff understand equality duties and can apply them confidently to reasonable adjustments, curriculum, language, incident response and decision-making.

Key actions:

- Deliver whole-school equality, diversity and inclusion training and scenario-based discussion.
- Build key expectations into induction and relevant supervision or appraisal.
- Provide targeted refresher support where monitoring identifies inconsistent practice.

Measures and target: 100% of staff in post complete core training by 30 November 2026; 100% of new starters complete it within six working weeks; termly audit confirms all missed training is rearranged and completed; annual staff survey establishes and then improves the confidence baseline.

Owner: Headteacher and designated training lead

PSED link: All three aims

13. Review and quality assurance

The Headteacher will review this procedure annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, school structure, pupil need, audit findings or a significant incident requires change. Review will draw on pupil, parent/carer and staff views in accessible ways and,

where useful, advice from commissioners, external agencies or groups with relevant expertise.

Senior leaders will monitor objective actions termly. The Regional Director or nominated governance representative will review progress and challenge at least annually. The website publication will be checked annually for accuracy, accessibility, working links and evidence of progress.

14. Related procedures and documents

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions arrangements
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Curriculum Policy and pathway documentation
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Staff Code of Conduct and Aspris HR policies

15. Authoritative sources

[Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

[DfE: Equality Act 2010 - advice for schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools) -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

[Public Sector Equality Duty](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty>

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

[Keeping children safe in education 2026](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

[The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents) -

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents>

Local procedure review history

Date	Reviewer	Summary of revisions
May 2025	Lisa Sharrock, Headteacher	Original local procedure.
September 2026	Lisa Sharrock, Headteacher	Full statutory review: clarified Equality Act scope and prohibited conduct; added reasonable adjustments, accessibility, safeguarding links, publication duties, governance oversight, monitoring and four SMART equality objectives for 2026-2030.

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