

Education And Children's Services: Local Procedure Template

<b>Local Procedure Title</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity Local Procedure</b>
<b>Site</b>	<b>Sketchley School: Sketchley Hall, Forest House and Progression House</b>
<b>Local Procedure date</b>	August 2025
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<b>Local Procedure Author(s)</b>	Megan Surridge
<b>Local Procedure Ratification</b>	Daniel Showler

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<p><b>1. Aim</b></p> <p>At Sketchley School, we are committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring every student feels valued, respected, and able to reach their potential. This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and the national curriculum, embracing all protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.</p> <p><b>Aims of the Policy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure every student has equitable access to the curriculum and school activities.</li> <li>• To promote understanding and respect for diversity within the school community.</li> <li>• To foster a safe, inclusive and autism-friendly environment that celebrates differences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Embedding Equality in the Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching will include diverse perspectives, reflecting different cultures, identities, and abilities.</li> <li>• Adaptations will be made to support all students, considering sensory and communication needs.</li> <li>• The curriculum will include topics that promote awareness of inclusion, respect, and protected characteristics.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Promoting Student Voice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Student Council will advocate for inclusivity and represent diverse student needs.</li> <li>• Worry Monsters (Primary Site) will provide an accessible platform for students to share concerns.</li> <li>• Student Ambassadors will promote equality and support peers, especially during transitions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Creating an Inclusive Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustments will be made to ensure accessibility for all students.</li> <li>• Staff will use inclusive language and visual supports to promote understanding.</li> <li>• The school will actively challenge discrimination and promote positive behaviour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Equality</b></p>

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This section outlines our commitment to promoting equality and safeguarding the rights of all individuals within our framework.

Our school aims to create an inclusive environment where every pupil is valued, respected, and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

This policy is aligned with the 2014 National Curriculum in England and adheres to the expectations set by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Compliance Statement**

Sketchley School is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010). We actively promote equality and eliminate discrimination across all aspects of school life. Each year, we review and publish how we are meeting the three aims of the PSED:

1. Eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
2. Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Our actions include:

- Embedding inclusive practices across our curriculum, policies, and enrichment activities
- Monitoring and analysing student outcomes and participation to identify and address inequalities
- Promoting student voice through councils, ambassadors, and feedback systems to ensure all learners are heard and valued

This statement is reviewed and updated annually.

### **6. Promoting Inclusivity**

- Communication methods will be adapted to meet the diverse needs of our students (e.g., visual supports, assistive technology).

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- Alternative methods of participation, such as anonymous feedback boxes and sensory-friendly discussion groups, will be provided.

**7. Responsibilities**

**Governance**

The Equality and Diversity Local Procedure will be approved by Sketchley School governance and they will hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

**8. Our Objectives**

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**Objective 1: Promote Inclusive Access to Learning and the Environment**

**How we will achieve this:**

- Ensure all learners have equitable access to a broad, balanced and autism-friendly curriculum.
- Provide personalised, reasonable adjustments informed by EHCPs, risk assessments, sensory profiles and therapeutic recommendations.
- Conduct regular environment walks with Estates, H&S and SLT to ensure accessibility for all learners and visitors, including those with physical disabilities or complex sensory needs.
- Ensure communication is accessible through visual supports, assistive technology and adapted language.
- Ensure staff and visitors can request adjustments (e.g., PEEPs, flexible working arrangements, OH referrals).

**Objective 2: Celebrate Diversity and Foster a Culture of Respect, Safety and Belonging**

**How we will achieve this:**

- Deliver assemblies, student council projects, and Culture Days that celebrate diverse identities, cultures, families and communities.
- Promote awareness days and events that enhance understanding of protected characteristics and intersectional identities.
- Maintain student-voice groups, including student council, ambassador programmes, diversity groups and sensory-friendly discussion opportunities.
- Embed respectful language and behaviour expectations into all school routines, reinforced through the behaviour curriculum and relational practice.

**Objective 3: Remove Barriers to Achievement, Participation and Progression**

**How we will achieve this:**

- Identify and address gaps in attainment, engagement and attendance for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Use data to monitor participation in leadership roles, extracurricular activities, work experience and enrichment opportunities.
- Provide flexible pathways (academic, vocational, life skills - FOX) that reflect individual strengths and aspirations.

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- Implement multi-disciplinary meetings to coordinate pastoral, therapeutic and curriculum-related interventions.

### **Objective 4: Advance Opportunities for Independence, Employability and Life Beyond School**

#### **How we will achieve this:**

- Embed independence and life-skills teaching across Years 7–14, including ASDAN Employability links (Years 12 & 13), throughout our Preparation for Adulthood Programme
- Provide meaningful work experience, enterprise projects and community engagement opportunities.
- Offer transition support for post-16 and post-18 pathways, working collaboratively with parents, professionals and external agencies.
- Empower learners to explore identity, aspiration and future goals through structured personal development.

### **Objective 5: Promote Wellbeing, Emotional Regulation and Inclusion**

#### **How we will achieve this:**

- Provide early pastoral and therapeutic interventions through SALT, OT, counselling, ELSA, mental-health support and sensory regulation plans.
- Ensure staff are trained in autism-specialist practice, trauma-informed approaches and positive behaviour support.
- Build supportive relationships that reduce anxiety, promote co-regulation and enable learners to feel safe, understood and valued.
- Maintain safe spaces and sensory areas that support emotional regulation and readiness to learn.

### **Objective 6: Strengthen Collaboration with Families and the Wider Community**

#### **How we will achieve this:**

- Ensure communication with parents is accessible, supportive and personalised, including for families for whom English is an additional language.
- Develop community links that broaden learners' experiences, cultural awareness and opportunities.

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- Provide resources, workshops and information to families to support equality, wellbeing and inclusion at home.

**Objective 7: Challenge Discrimination, Bias and Prejudice****How we will achieve this:**

- Ensure all staff understand how to identify, record and respond to discriminatory incidents.
- Challenge language, behaviour or attitudes that reinforce stereotypes or cause harm.
- Embed anti-discriminatory education across PSHE, RSE, British Values and wider curriculum content.
- Review policies annually to ensure they actively protect learners and staff from discrimination or harassment.

**8. Monitoring and Review**

- The SLT will review equality initiatives termly, with input from students and families.
- Student voice initiatives will be evaluated to ensure inclusivity and impact.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, incorporating feedback from the school community.

**9. Unlawful Discrimination**

This Equal Opportunities Local Procedure sets out how the School intends to meet these aims and comply with its equality duties, and is written under the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) ('the Act'), and draws upon the DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014). All members of the School community are expected to comply with this policy. The School seeks to encourage greater awareness of its aims, policies and procedures in relation to equal opportunities and will provide information and training as required. The Act defines four kinds of unlawful behaviour (direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation) as defined below:

9.1. Direct discrimination This occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear cut and obvious examples of

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discrimination (e.g. if the School were to refuse to let a pupil become a Student Ambassador because they are gay).

9.2. Indirect discrimination This occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting pupils with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to pupils without that characteristic (e.g. if the School were to hold a parents' meeting on a Friday evening, which would make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend).

9.3. Harassment. This is defined in the Act as "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person". This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable.

9.4. Victimisation. This occurs when a pupil is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. If a pupil has carried out a protected act themselves (e.g. making a complaint of discrimination against a teacher) then the pupil's own good faith will be relevant (e.g. if the parent's complaint is based on information from their child and the child was deliberately lying, it is not victimisation for the school to punish the pupil in the same way as it might do any other dishonest pupil). A pupil must not be victimised because of something done by their parent or a sibling in relation to the Act.

### **10. Failure to Adhere to this Local Procedure**

Sketchley School will do its utmost to protect pupils from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or groups within the school. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of pupils or staff will be handled under the relevant policy: the pupils' Behaviour Policy or the Staff Grievance / Disciplinary Policies.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the:

- Admissions Policy
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- PSHE Policy

This policy has regard to Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (2010) as outlined in the Independent School Standards Regulations.

### **12. Disability**

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The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities.' While some students with autism may meet this definition, others may not, as there can be overlap with the definition of 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) in the Children and Families Act (2014). For the purposes of this policy, 'disabled students' includes those whose autism, sensory sensitivities, communication challenges, or associated mental health needs significantly impact their daily activities and meet the legal criteria of disability.

### Disability and discrimination

- Direct discrimination: the School will not treat a disabled pupil less favourably simply because that pupil is disabled.
- Indirect discrimination: the School will not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only unless the School can show that it is done for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.
- Discrimination arising from disability: the School will not discriminate against a disabled pupil because of something that is a consequence of their disability (e.g. by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break because it would take them too long to get out and back).
- Harassment: the School will not harass a pupil because of their disability (e.g. a teacher shouting at the pupil because their disability means that they are constantly struggling with classwork or unable to concentrate).

### **13. Reasonable Adjustments**

The School is committed to providing full educational inclusion and will take reasonable steps to ensure all pupils have equal access to the School environment and all opportunities available.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils (the 'reasonable adjustment' duty). 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 aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and the resources available to the School.

#### **13.1 Reasonable adjustments and pupils' behaviour**

Independent schools must comply with the Act in relation to pupil exclusions. The Act does not prohibit schools from excluding pupils with a protected characteristic but does prohibit schools from excluding pupils because of their protected characteristic or from discriminating unlawfully during the exclusion process.

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Schools also have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusions process for disabled pupils.

Please also see the Accessibility Local Procedure for further information.

### **14. Curriculum and Teaching**

The Act explicitly states that the content of the School's curriculum is excluded from discrimination law. However, the delivery of the curriculum is explicitly included. As such, Sketchley School will ensure that the way in which its teaching covers issues, thoughts and ideas of all kinds does not subject individual pupils to discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics listed above.

Staff are expected to be sensitive about equal opportunities in their teaching and guard against the transmission, through the content and delivery of the curriculum, of attitudes which stereotype people or label individual pupils as inferior or limited. This includes through the planning of lessons, teaching methods, classroom resources, behaviour management, etc., and through the 'hidden lessons' implicit in other activities about their value as a person, their human rights, the options available to them and their expectations for adult life.

For further information about the content and delivery of the curriculum, please see the School's Curriculum and Teaching Local Procedures.

All school staff are expected to implement this policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHE, and the curriculum to:

- Help pupils to develop self-esteem and recognise that they are valued as individuals
- Promote respect for each other within the school community
- Promote positive images and role models to challenge prejudice and raise awareness of related issues
- Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures, and so enable pupils to contribute actively to the process of education by bringing to it their cultural experiences, values and perspectives
- Understand why and how we deal with offensive language and behaviour
- Understand why we will deal with any incidents in a sensitive manner and as promptly as possible

### **15. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

## 11.1 Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Sketchley School is committed to building an environment where all members of our community feel valued, respected and able to thrive. We uphold the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We are dedicated to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering positive, inclusive relationships across our school community.

We recognise our responsibility not only to avoid discrimination but to **actively promote equity**, ensuring that barriers to participation, wellbeing, independence and achievement are identified and removed. Inclusion is embedded across our curriculum, our pastoral systems, our environment and our wider ethos.

Our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion aligns with the wider organisational commitment set out in the Aspris Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (AHR04.1) and reflects our belief that **EDI is the responsibility of every colleague**, and foundational to the culture of the school.

## 11.2 Our Vision for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

At Sketchley School, equality and inclusion underpin our mission to support autistic learners to develop independence, confidence and the skills for adulthood. We embrace individuality, celebrate difference and promote a culture where every learner—regardless of background, identity or need—has the opportunity to succeed.

Our EDI ethos aligns with our commitment to:

- Supporting learners to understand and value diversity
- Ensuring that the school environment, curriculum and community are accessible, autism-friendly and inclusive
- Encouraging respectful dialogue, curiosity and cultural awareness
- Ensuring no learner or colleague feels marginalised or misunderstood

## 11.3 Protected Characteristics

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We actively protect learners, prospective learners, staff and visitors from discrimination related to all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We ensure that teaching, interactions and decision-making reflect this commitment and challenge stereotypes, bias or discriminatory behaviour wherever they arise. In teaching about sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, teachers must have regard to statutory guidance on sex and relationship education. For further information, please see the School's PSHE and RSE Local Procedures.

### 15. References

This Local Procedure at Sketchley School is informed by the following DfE guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Respectful School Communities;
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools;
- Equalities Act 2010;
- SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools;
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying, including cyberbullying;
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools;
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission Advice and Guidance;
- Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools.

### Local Procedure Review History:

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Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Summary of revisions
14/02/2025	Megan Surridge	Local Procedure Created
23/09/2025	Daniel Showler	Policy reviewed