Wolverdene Special School
Equality Policy 2026

Approved for School: Headteacher: Nathalie Akhmatova Date: 24th June 2026	Signature: 
Approved by Governing Body: Chair: Jo Lloyd Date: 24th June 2026	Signature: 
This policy will be reviewed every 4 years The next review date is July 2030	

Introduction

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 as both a provider of education and as an employer.

We believe that all pupils and members of staff should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential whatever their background, identity and circumstances. We are committed to creating a community that recognises and celebrates difference within a culture of respect and co-operation. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all who work, learn and use the services of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together – our pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers.

This document outlines the principles which will guide our approach to working with our school community and enabling an open culture.

For staff and prospective staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Employment Equality Policy.

National and Legal Context

We recognise that we have duties under the Equality Act 2010 in relation to the school community to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (applicable only to staff), disability, race, gender (including issues of transgender), maternity and pregnancy, religion and belief, sexual orientation and marital status (applicable only to staff).

We also recognise that we have a duty under the Education & Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion, i.e. developing good relations across different cultures and groups.

We also appreciate that these duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

School Context

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Wolverdene School is a mixed, 5-11 local authority maintained residential special school with a planned admission number of **55** students. All students have education, health and care plans (EHCPs) with social, emotional and mental health difficulties as the primary need. Additionally, many students have secondary needs of speech, language and communication (SLCN), moderate learning difficulties, autism, etc. The school is in an area of social advantage, the overall economic background is favourable and economic prospects in the area are good. The informal catchment of the school is large (there is no formal catchment area), in common with the majority of special schools and children who attend the school come from the length and breadth of Hampshire and occasionally from other neighbouring counties. A number of students come from split families and disturbed backgrounds in line with national trends. Students join the school at various points in their primary school life, often after one or more permanent exclusions or managed moves from mainstream schools. Although a mixed school, the large majority of students are boys (>96%). The residential part of the school has capacity for 10 students, but is currently unable to offer accommodation for neither girls nor students with significant mobility issues.

Ethnic composition of the school, linguistic and religious diversity
The school is largely homogeneous in its composition. The majority of students are of white British origin (95%), speak English as their first language (100%), and are of Christian religious denomination. This is broadly reflective of the ethnic, linguistic and religious demography of the local area (Updated June 2026)

Principles
To fulfil our legal obligations, we are guided by a number of principles.

1. **All pupils, families and staff are of equal value**

We see all pupils, potential pupils, their parents and carers, and staff as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status
- Whatever their gender and gender identity
- Whatever their religious and non-religious affiliation or faith background
- Whatever their sexual orientation
- Whatever their marital status
- Whether they are currently pregnant or have recently given birth
- Whatever their age

2. **We recognise and respect difference**

We recognise that treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We recognise that our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate but must take account of diversity and the kinds of barriers and disadvantage that staff, parents/carers or pupils may face in relation to their protected characteristics:

- Disability – we understand that reasonable adjustments may need to be made
- Gender (including transgender) – we recognise that people have different needs

- Religion and belief – we acknowledge that reasonable requests in relation to religious observance and practice may need to be made and complied with
- Ethnicity and race – we appreciate that all have different experiences as a result of our ethnic and racial backgrounds
- Age – we value the diversity in age of staff, parents and carers
- Sexual orientation – we respect that individuals have the right to determine their own sexual identity and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of their preference
- Marital status – we recognise that our staff, parents and carers may make their own personal choices in respect of personal relationships and that they should not experience disadvantage as a result of the relationships they have
- Pregnancy and maternity – we believe that our staff, parents and carers should not experience any unfair disadvantage as a result of pregnancy or having recently given birth

3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities should promote:

- positive attitudes and interaction between groups and communities different from each other
- an absence of harassment, victimisation and discrimination in relation to any protected characteristics

4. We observe good equalities practice in relation to staff

We ensure that our policies and practices for all staff and potential staff throughout the employment lifecycle, i.e. from recruitment through to the cessation of employment and beyond, are applied fairly and consistently across all groups with full respect for legal rights, taking into account aspects applicable to particular groups (e.g. duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff).

5. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist

We intend that our policies, procedures and activities avoid or minimise any possible negative impacts and we aim to reduce inequalities that exist between groups and communities different from each other.

6. We consult and involve to ensure views are heard

In our development of policies, we engage with groups and individuals, including pupils who are affected by a policy or activity to ensure that their views are taken into account. For policies and activities affecting pupils, we will take account of views expressed at school council; for parents, through parent governor representation and for staff, through staff governor representation. Where necessary, we will consult more widely with specific groups.

7. We aim to foster greater community cohesion

We intend that our policies, activities and curriculum offer foster greater social cohesion and provide for an equal opportunity to participate in public life irrespective of the protected characteristics of individuals and groups.

8. We base our practices on sound evidence

We maintain and publish information annually to show our compliance with the public sector equality duty, set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Our current equality information can be found in Appendix A to this policy statement.

9. We set ourselves specific and measurable equality objectives

We develop and publish specific and measurable objectives every four years based on the evidence that we have gathered (principle 8) and the engagement we have been involved in (principle 7).

The objectives can be found in Appendix B to this policy statement and take into account both national, county and school level priorities.

We will set ourselves new objectives every four years, but keep them under review and report annually on progress towards achieving them.

Application of the principles within this policy statement:
The principles outlined in the policy statement will be applied and reflected in:

- The delivery of the school curriculum
- The teaching and learning within the school
- Our practice in relation to pupil progress, attainment and achievement
- Our teaching styles and strategies
- Our policies and practice in relation to admissions and attendance
- Our policies and practice in relation to staff
- Our care, guidance and support to pupils, their families and staff
- Our policies and practice in relation to pupil behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Our partnership working with parents and carers
- Our contact with the wider school community

Addressing prejudice and prejudice-related bullying
The school is opposed to all forms of prejudice including, but not limited to prejudice related to protected characteristics. We will ensure that prejudice-related incidents in relation to staff and pupils are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Roles and responsibilities
The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented and that arrangements are in place to deal with any concerns or unlawful action that arises.

The headteacher is responsible for implementation of this policy, ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and given appropriate training and support and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

All staff are expected to work in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy to:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their practice
- deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver the curriculum and lessons
- support pupils in their class who have additional needs

EQUALITIES, SAFEGUARDING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Wolverdene, in all policies and procedures, will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds and ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of membership of any group including gender, sexual orientation, family circumstance, ethnic or national origin, disability (physical or mental) religious or political beliefs.
As part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Wolverdene school aims to:

- Provide opportunity to all
- Foster good relations, and create effective partnership with all sections of the community
- Only take actions which do not discriminate unlawfully in service delivery, commissioning and employment
- Provide an environment free from fear and discrimination, where diversity, respect and dignity are valued
- Demonstrate zero tolerance to any form of bullying, harassment or abuse.

Equalities Information **Appendix A**

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under 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 Specific Duties – information showing the school has complied with the General Duty	**Actions Taken**
To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under the Act	As a vision and values-led organisation Wolverdene School has identified key values to which all members of the school community have had an opportunity to contribute to and subscribe to. Through consultation the school has stated that its vision is to ensure that: - every pupil at the school has the right and the responsibility to learn in a safe and supportive environment that inspires their learning; - learning can make a positive difference to everyone's life; - partnerships with others will support improvement for pupils across the school and for our community; - working together we can face any challenge; - high ambitions for all pupils and staff will achieve positive results; - everyone can learn from a mistake when they take responsibility for putting it right. This places a responsibility upon the staff at Wolverdene to: - ensure that every child's individual needs are understood and met; - enable pupils to manage themselves so they can lead positive lives; - provide learning opportunities that are relevant, accessible and inspirational to all pupils; - provide a supportive and safe environment where every child will make progress academically, socially and emotionally; - support families to be better informed in order support their child's learning; - develop a reflective workplace so that all staff can perform to their full potential in order to get the best from pupils; - have clarity and consistency of communication in all areas of the school. Such an approach is fundamental in taking the

	destination-led view to our work and of articulating our commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, intolerance, harassment and victimisation, all of which are taken seriously and where identified are dealt with as effectively as possible. All instances of bullying, including prejudice-related bullying, are taken seriously. The school records racist incidents and has applied relevant sanctions where appropriate and adopts a restorative approach to dealing with conflict. The school takes very seriously its role in challenging tendencies to institutional racism through educating students and staff of negative experiences in the past, e.g. the death of Stephen Lawrence. We have worked hard on eliminating the pejorative use of language, especially ableist language given our designation as a special school, especially around the areas of autism or behaviour. These labels place a diagnosis or condition as the defining characteristic of that human being and it clearly is not.
To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	The school has a shared vision that is interwoven into the life of the school day and this is referred to on regular occasions in assemblies, lessons and tutor times. The notion of mutual respect is encouraged in one-to-one dialogue between students and staff. As a special school we are used to being flexible in our approach to the curriculum in order to meet the very diverse range of needs of our students, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. Interventions are arranged for students who face further challenges in their learning in and out of school, such as the use of one-to-one members of support staff where appropriate, or access to the residential provision in the school. School leaders analyse data to ensure that different groups within the school (i.e. children looked after or formerly looked after, children who join the school later in their primary school life) are not at significant risk of underachievement or are not making at least acceptable progress because of a lack of skills and/or understanding on the part of the staff. Student leaders play a vital role in promoting opportunity and ambition in the school and there is positive gender representation amongst the school leaders. The school is now seeking to become more visible in the wider community in order to educate mainstream schools and the general public as to the reality of special school life. Examples such the school's commissioned outreach support for mainstream colleagues allow them to learn more about our students and how best to support them. The school is currently unable to offer residential

	provision for girls, nor for students with disabilities that require physical access arrangements in the Lodge.
To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	The school aims to promotes positive attitudes towards all members of the community and helps understanding of the challenges faced by those who find access challenging. The PSHE programme addresses the issues of prejudice and disability as well as bullying, including cyber-bullying. Opportunities are provided for students to share their particular experiences during circle times or to role-play situations of other persons in difficulty. The curriculum in PSHE and RE allows students to learn about and understand the lives, attitudes and beliefs of people from different religious and social backgrounds so helping to dispel ignorance.

Pupil-related information

Information	Year	Evidence and commentary
Attendance	25-26	Boys:-80.3% Girls:-73.3%
	24-25	Boys:76.2 % Girls: 75%
	23-24	Boys:77.8% Girls:93.3%:
Permanent exclusion	25-26	Boys: 1 Girls: 0
	24-25	Boys: 0 Girls: 0
	23-24	Boys: 0 Girls: 0
Suspensions	25-26	Boys: incidents 28 Girls: incidents 0
	24-25	Boys: incidents – 28 Girls: incidents – 0
	23-24	Boys: incidents – 21 Girls: incidents -0

Staff information

Where schools have less than 150 staff, the Governing Body is not required to publish information in relation to their staff.

Date of publication of this appendix: June 2026

Date for review and re-publication: June 2027

Equality Objectives **Appendix B**

We recognise that the public sector equality duty has three aims, to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct under 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

We have considered how well we currently achieve these aims with regard to the protected groups under the Equality Act (race, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion and belief and sexual orientation).

Having referred to and analysed our equality information, we have set ourselves the following objective(s):

Objective 1:
Improve our analysis of wider attainment outcomes information for students to understand more accurately where the in-school variation in performance exists. (Key groups identified as: looked-after and previously looked-after children, students from an ethnic minority background, students with autism, and students who join the school from Year 4 onwards.)

Objective 2:
Improve our analysis of behaviour information, including for incidents of restrictive physical intervention, to ensure we identify and eliminate potential discriminatory practices. (Key groups identified as: looked-after and previously looked-after children, students from an ethnic minority background, students with autism, and students who join the school from Year 4 onwards.)

Date of publication: June 2026

Date for review and re-publication: June 2030