KING'S ELY

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

April 2026

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

This Policy does not form part of an Employee's contract of employment and the School may amend the Policy at any time.

Introduction

King's Ely is an equal opportunities employer with a community in which everyone's needs are recognised and everyone's talents and aptitudes are fostered. The School is committed to a policy of equal opportunity, and equal and fair treatment for all pupils, parents and staff; regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment and gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (actual and perceived) or social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (defined as **Protected Characteristics)**.

This Policy has regard to the Equality Act 2010 and recognises the School's duty to advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people of all groups. The School actively seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination, victimisation, and harassment – whether towards pupils (prospective, current or former), parents or Staff.

Procedures are in place to ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to the admission and assessment of pupils, treatment of visitors, parents, pupils and third parties dealing with the School, and current and former Employees.

The School is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment, and will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that its Employees are treated equally and fairly. All policies and practices will conform with the principle of equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career development, discipline, redundancy and dismissal.

King's Ely recognises that diversity is a reality of the School's community that brings significant educational benefits to all students; enabling the creation of learning experiences enriched by different life experiences, varied perspectives, flexibility and creativity. It is the School's policy to accept and celebrate diversity; any form of intolerance is counterproductive and unacceptable. The School is therefore committed to building an environment in which:

- all members of the School community are treated with dignity and respect;
- diversity is valued;
- stereotypes are questioned;
- bias, bigotry and prejudice (behaviour which leads, for example, to racism and homophobia) are wholeheartedly rejected.

This Policy is applicable to all Employees (whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts), to ex-employees, to job applicants, to individuals such as agency staff and consultants, Governors and volunteers who are not Employees but who work at the School, and to students across the whole School (including EYFS) and should be read in conjunction with the following other School policies:

- *Admissions Policy;*
- *Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy;*
- *Behaviour Policy;*
- *Disability Policy & Accessibility Plan;*
- *Additional Learning Needs & Special Educational Needs Policy;*
- *Recruitment Policy;*
- *Staff Code of Conduct.*

All Employees have a duty to act in accordance with this Policy, to always treat colleagues with dignity and respect, and not to discriminate against, harass or victimise other members of Staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, King's Ely may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of Staff and the School will not tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.

Governance and Management

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework governing equality (The Equality Act 2010). The Board of Governors has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, and ensuring its maintenance and review, to the Principal.

It is expected that those with responsibility for management or supervision of Employees have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the School's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and promote the aims and objectives of the School with regard to equal opportunities.

Forms of Discrimination

An Employee must not discriminate against, or harass, other people including current and former Employees, job applicants, parents, pupils, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with people such as parents, pupils, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when representing the School), and on School-related trips or events, including social events.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect, and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where:

- Someone is treated less favourably because of one or more Protected Characteristics. For example, rejecting an applicant because they would not "fit in" because of their race or sexual orientation would be direct discrimination.
- Someone is less favourably treated because of their association with someone who has a Protected Characteristic. For example, an Employee must not be treated less favourably because they have a disabled child.
- Someone is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic. For example, an Employee must not be treated less favourably because they are believed to be (but may not actually be) homosexual.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a policy, rule or practice that applies to everyone has the effect of disproportionately disadvantaging someone with a Protected Characteristic.
Discrimination also includes victimisation and harassment. Victimisation is when someone is treated less favourably as a result of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint. Harassment is any unwanted behaviour which intimidates, demeans or offends a person whether this is verbal, physical or psychological including sexual harassment, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. **See King's Ely's Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.**

Disability discrimination may be direct or indirect discrimination and is when someone suffers less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability or there is a failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability. If an Employee is disabled, or becomes disabled in the course of their employment, the Employee is encouraged to tell the School about the condition. This is to enable the School to support the Employee as much as possible and to ensure that they are not treated less favourably because of something related to their disability.

Equal Opportunities in Practice

Recruitment of Pupils

King's Ely is fully co-educational and believes that the educational experience is enriched by exposure to a wide range of cultural backgrounds.

The School caters for pupils with a range of academic ability and will consider applications from all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The School would not accept a pupil for whom the environment or courses available would be inappropriate and therefore likely to cause distress in the pupil. The Principal would give advice to parents of a disabled child concerning the problems of access which could arise as a result of the School's utilisation of ancient buildings. We refer parents to the *Admissions Policy*; the *Additional Learning Needs and Special Educational Needs Policy*; as well as the *Disability Policy* & *Accessibility Plan*.

Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many pupils as possible who meet the School's admission criteria to attend the School.

Access to the Curriculum

All pupils throughout the School will be given access to a broad and balanced curriculum and pupils in Y9-11 and Y12-13 will be expected to attempt the relevant examinations at the appropriate levels.

All pupils, including those with SEND and Additional Learning Needs are included, valued and supported, and reasonable adjustments, including the provision of additional support and aids, will be made for them. Support is provided through the Learning Support Department and this support includes a commitment to work with parents and external agencies if required. Pupils will normally be given support during non-core teaching time but support during core lessons may also be available. Furthermore, assistance for pupils with English as Second or Other

Language is also available. (More detailed information is available in our *Additional Learning Needs and Special Educational Needs Policy* and our *English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy*).

Religion and the Ethos of the School

King's Ely is proud of its Christian tradition and its close links with the Cathedral over many centuries; however, the School does not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and King's Ely welcomes pupils of all faiths. Although the School is pleased to accept pupils with other religious faiths, all members of the School are expected to attend Cathedral services, unless parents request otherwise. Religious Studies is a core subject and other religious faiths will be studied as part of the course of study. The ethos of the School has a firm foundation in Christian attitudes and values.

Access to Resources

All pupils have appropriate access to activities, facilities and resources and the School has regard to its duty to make reasonable adjustments and to provide, where reasonable, support and aids for pupils with disabilities.

Former Pupils

The School is also aware of the responsibility arising from the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that it does not discriminate against, harass or victimise a person who has left the School. This includes circumstances such as providing a reference for a former pupil or making reasonable adjustments for disabled former pupils.

Recruitment of Employees

The Recruitment Policy and procedures of the School for the appointment of Employees ensure that all applicants are considered equitably and consistently regardless of an individual's age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity. (Further information is contained within the *King's Ely Recruitment Policy*).

Offers of appointment may be made conditional upon a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which will not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

King's Ely is required to operate Safer Recruitment practices to ensure the suitability of all Staff working with the School's pupils in accordance with the guidance given in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSR) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS). These practices include carrying out pre-employment checks: appropriate DBS checks; Barred List checks; Prohibition Order checks for new Staff who undertake teaching work; checks for prohibition from management of independent schools directions; and, for applicants who have lived or worked overseas, a check for any restriction imposed by the appropriate regulating authority in that country/ies; and reference checks.

Disabilities

If an Employee is disabled or becomes disabled, the School encourages the Employee to advise their Line Manager of any reasonable adjustments to the working environment or the duties which the Employee considers to be necessary, or which would assist in the performance of their duties. This may involve the provision of an additional piece of equipment or assistance in helping the Employee to perform their duties. The School may wish to consult with the Employee and with medical adviser(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of the work. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for the School to accommodate the suggested adjustments and the School will ensure that information as to the basis of a decision not to make any adjustments is shared with the Employee.

The School site and buildings consist of many separate, and some historic and listed, buildings of several storeys and without lifts, which have grown up since the School was founded. The School's Disability Policy & Accessibility Plan shows the ways in which King's Ely plans, within the physical limits of the site, to make the School buildings progressively more accessible to disabled pupils, parents, Staff, and visitors. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take reasonable steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises.

Objectives

The School will:

- ensure that teachers, parents and pupils are aware of the School's policy of Equal Opportunities (the Principal refers pupils and parents to the existence of such policies on an annual basis in a letter at the beginning of each academic year);
- provide time and resources to ensure that the Policy can be carried out;
- provide appropriate training to all staff and pupils;
- through the Learning Support Department, provide members of the teaching Staff with any necessary training, as well as information, concerning the educational needs of pupils new to the School and the changing needs as pupils move up the School;
- make use of assemblies, PSHE, RE, Drama, English and other lessons to:
    - promote tolerance of each other and respect for each other's position within the School community;
    - promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues;
    - foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures;
    - understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour;
    - understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

Members of Staff will:

- ensure that their pupils experience equality of treatment. Pupils' individual educational needs must be considered; not only those with recognised learning needs, but also those with needs arising from Protected Characteristics;

- think about the way teaching is delivered to ensure there is no inadvertent discrimination against pupils and ensure that all pupils get their fair share of attention, time and resources;
- check assessment results for bias in methods against any group of students, investigate the causes and try to remedy them, for instance, under-achievement by boys or girls;
- ensure that all pupils are involved in group work e.g. during practical classes, as the development of the skills required is an important educational objective in its own right;
- check that neither teacher nor pupils use discriminatory language;
- ensure that discriminatory behaviour does not pass unchallenged and encourage pupils to oppose discrimination;
- bear in mind that the Principal, as far as is reasonable, is empowered by law to regulate the behaviour of pupils even when they are off the school site[1].
- avoid stereotyping of both negative and positive types. Positive stereotyping causes pressure for pupils who feel that they must live up to, what might be for them, unrealistic expectations. Negative stereotypes encourage pupils to 'live down' to expectations;
- be prepared to give praise and criticism in support of equal opportunities.

Pupils will:

- understand the concept of equal opportunities, through assemblies, class discussion, PSHE and through the ethos of the School;
- understand the concept of difference and its value;
- be aware that equal opportunities are also their responsibility;
- feel empowered to deal with any discrimination that they encounter themselves;
- talk to parents or teachers and use the appropriate formal complaint procedure where necessary.

Parents / Guardians should:

- be aware of the School's policy and communicate with the Principal and/or the relevant Head of Section, should they become aware that members of Staff or pupils are acting in breach of this Policy.

This Policy is reviewed triennially to ensure its effectiveness and continued compliance with legislation. In the event of a complaint about the operation of this Policy, a copy of the *Parental Complaints and Concerns Policy* is available on the School's website or upon request.

Breach of this Policy

The School takes a strict approach to breaches of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. Any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the *Disciplinary Policy and Procedure*. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination by Staff may amount to gross misconduct, resulting in dismissal.

If an individual believes that they may have suffered discrimination or that they may have been harassed because of a Protected Characteristic, that individual is encouraged to raise the matter

[1] Section 89(5), Education and Inspections Act 2006

through the School's *Grievance Procedure* or through the School's *Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy*. Allegations regarding potential breaches of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant Policy.

If, after investigation, an Employee is proven to have engaged in any unwanted conduct because of a Protected Characteristic or otherwise acted in breach of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, the Employee will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct, and as such, may result in summary dismissal. The School will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

Employees who make allegations of discrimination in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, making a false allegation of a breach of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy which is found to have been made in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the *Disciplinary Policy and Procedure*.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

The School is required to publish an Annual Report containing data of the School's Gender Pay Gap. The report is published on the School's website.

Part-time and Fixed Term Appointed Staff

Part-time and fixed-term employees will be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.