



KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL
BIRMINGHAM



KING EDWARD VI
HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF KING EDWARD VI IN BIRMINGHAM

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Committee	Risk and Compliance
Policy Type	School
Policy Owner	Second Master KES & Vice Principal KEHS
Statutory	
Published on website	Yes
Last review date	May 2026
Next review date	May 2027
Review Cycle	Annual
Expiry date	This policy will not expire but will be reviewed as per its designated cycle. This policy remains effective whilst the review is taking place and will become non-applicable once the updated version has been approved.
Version	v.1.0

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **The Schools:** King Edward's School and King Edward VI High School for Girls (The Independent Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham) are selective day schools and welcome staff, workers, volunteers, pupils, parents and applicants from all ethnic groups, backgrounds and creeds.

1.2 Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of the Schools. We welcome applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish.

1.3 The Schools recognise the benefits of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Pupils are taught to value and respect others. The Schools are committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and is committed to equality of opportunity for all members of the school community. In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of:

- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief);
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- age.

These are called the **Protected Characteristics**. The Schools also oppose all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need, disability or learning difficulty (SEND) or because English is an additional language.

1.4 The Schools aim to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The Schools will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example; through the Personal, Social and Health Education programme (PSHE); through the Assembly programme; in English, RS and other lessons; through the supportive School culture; and through the Schools' policies.

1.5 **Related policies:** This Equal Opportunities Policy and the principles underpinning it are consistent with all the Schools' policies, including but not limited to the Admissions Policy, Discipline and Behaviour Policies, the Exclusion, Removal and Review Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy, Accessibility Plan, the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy and the SEND Policy, and the policy and practices on school uniform.

1.6 All policies can be found on the Schools' website and made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 **Scope:** This policy applies to all members of the current and prospective school community.

2.2 **Policy aims:** Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- communicate the commitment of the Schools to the promotion of equal opportunities;
- promote equal treatment within the Schools for all members of the school community;
- create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination;
- foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the Schools;
- be alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties, and respond as appropriate;
- remove or help to overcome barriers for pupils where they already exist;
- ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against any person on any ground listed at paragraph 1.2
- make it clear, and ensure, that all discriminatory words, behaviour and images are treated as unacceptable

3. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

3.1 **Types:** Discrimination may be direct or indirect, or arising from disability, and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

3.2 **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic as set out in paragraph 1.2 above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race, would be direct discrimination.

Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a protected characteristic (other than pregnancy or maternity). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil.

Direct discrimination also occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic. For example, an employee may be treated less favourably because they are believed to be (but may not actually be) LGBTQ+.

3.3 **Indirect discrimination:** Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a minimum height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with biological sex, they would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.

3.4 **Discrimination arising from disability:** Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a pupil with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

4. ADMISSIONS, EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

4.1 **Admissions:** The Schools welcome applications from and admit pupils irrespective of their race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or special educational needs and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. The Schools' Admissions Policy affirms our commitment to equal opportunities and outlines how our practices ensure that the admissions process is free from discrimination of any kind.

4.2 **Equal access:** The Schools will afford all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects including all sports, irrespective of their race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, whether English is an additional language for a pupil, or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

4.3 **Positive action:** The Schools may afford pupils of a particular racial group, or pupils with a disability or special educational needs, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group; for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

4.4 **Teaching and School materials:** Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, religious or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the Schools' teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias. Consideration is given to including positive examples drawn from the Protected Characteristics listed in paragraph 1.3 above within curricular materials in order to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the Schools.

4.5 **Pupil interaction:** All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the Schools, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

4.6 **Bullying:** The Schools will not tolerate bullying or cyberbullying for any reason. Specific types of bullying include:

- bullying relating to race, religion, belief or culture;
- bullying related to SEND;
- bullying related to appearance or health conditions;
- bullying relating to sexual orientation;
- bullying of young carers;
- bullying of care experienced children;
- bullying related to an individual's home circumstances;
- sexist or sexual bullying.

The Schools' Anti-Bullying Policies contain more details about the School's anti-bullying practices.

5. SCHOOL UNIFORM

5.1 **The Schools' policy on uniform is consistent with this policy.** The same policy applies equally to all pupils, irrespective of their gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, the Schools will consider reasonable requests to alter the School uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements, and reasonable adjustments for children with disabilities.

5.2 **Symbols of faith:** Certain items of jewellery, such as the Kara bangle, and certain items of headwear, such as the turban and headscarves may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare, and the Schools' existing policy on uniform principles (with regard to the Schools' colours, for example). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or her parents to the Second Master / Head of School, whose decision will be final, subject to the Complaints procedure.

6. RELIGIOUS BELIEF

6.1 **Religion:** The Schools' religious ethos, services and school timetable are set in accordance with the Christian tradition, but the School respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths, or no faith, subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of the school community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

7. PROVISION WITH PUPILS WITH PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS, DIETARY, OR CULTURAL NEEDS

7.1 Parents may request leave of absence from school so that their child(ren) may observe major religious festivals. Such leave of absence will be considered and recorded in accordance with the Schools' Attendance Policy.

7.2 The Schools will endeavour to cater for all dietary needs; parents should contact the Catering Manager with any requests or questions about the Schools' provision of food.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES AND MONITORING

8.1 All members of the school community are expected to comply with this policy and therefore to treat others with dignity and respect at all times.

8.2 Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the Schools with regard to equal opportunities.

8.3 The Second Master (KES) and Head of School (KEHS) are responsible for the ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the records made under Section 9 below and will arrange for the taking of appropriate positive steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination where necessary. The Second Master and Head of School are also responsible for reviewing whether the aims and objectives of this policy are implemented throughout all areas of the Schools, and taking appropriate action where necessary.

9. REPORTING AND RECORDING INCIDENTS OF DISCRIMINATION

9.1 **Questions about this policy:** If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Second Master (KES) or Head of School (KEHS).

9.2 **Complaints:** If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed in the paragraph 1.3 above, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Schools' Complaints Procedure. Copies can be sent to you on request and are available on the Schools' websites. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the Complaints Procedure.

9.3 **Reports:** If you would like to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint under paragraph 9.2 above, please contact the Second Master / Head of School.

9.4 **Enforcement:** We will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint and report. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the school community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.

9.5 **Record:** All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded by the Second Master / Head of School and reviewed annually to ensure that the Schools are operating in accordance with this policy and the principles which underpin it.