

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy

Introduction

The Stowe Group is committed to inclusivity as we see diverse population of both pupils and colleagues as one of The Group's greatest aspirations. To ensure everyone can thrive and meet their full potential, equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging are held as core values at the heart of all The Group's activities.

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of The Group community, including parents. This policy is available on The Group website and can be made available on request. All School policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

The Group is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and inequality and preventing any unlawful or unfair discrimination, harassment, and victimisation set out in the legal framework.

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Part-Time Working Regulations 2000
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

As an organisation, The Group acknowledges and seeks to address existing and historical inequalities in society and develop equitable practices and procedures beyond what is required by law.

The Group is committed to promoting and developing equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging in all its functions as part of our Change Makers vision and will seek to do this by:

- Communicating our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging to all members of our community.
- Ensuring all governors, colleagues and pupils are aware of the aims of this policy.
- Briefing for governors, colleagues and pupils on matters relating to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- Developing monitoring, evaluation and review mechanisms of School policies and procedures and decision-making.
- Demonstrating our zero-tolerance attitude towards discrimination by taking all allegations seriously.

Responsibility

The Group Governing Body, Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Teams have responsibility for ensuring that The Group operates within the legal framework for equality and for implementing the policy throughout The Group.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy



Senior managers lead by example, exhibiting inclusive behaviour and embedding processes that promote an inclusive, safe working and learning environment. They also ensure that individuals understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Line managers support and enable their teams, making reasonable adjustments to facilitate the adequate performance of all individuals. They undergo EDIB training to demonstrate appropriate behaviours and foster an inclusive environment. Additionally, they ensure that individuals are informed about their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Each member of The Group community is responsible for being alert to and challenging discrimination; embracing inclusion; respecting different faiths and beliefs; and upholding equality of opportunity for all.

The following types of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010:

Direct Discrimination: This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic. It can also include discriminating against someone because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views, because they might be gay, or because they associate with someone who is disabled.

Indirect Discrimination: This occurs when a provision, criterion, or practice applies to everyone but puts people with a specific protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage (compared to others who do not share that protected characteristic) and is not objectively justifiable as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time could adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be objectively justified.

Harassment: This is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that individual. This might include microaggression, micro-assault, microinsult, or gaslighting. It also includes sexual harassment. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.

Victimisation: This is where an employee is subjected to a detriment or retaliated against because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or because they are suspected of doing so.

Disability Discrimination: Discrimination arising from disability is where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something arising as a consequence of

their disability, and the treatment is not objectively justifiable as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, if an employee tends to make spelling mistakes as a result of their dyslexia and is disciplined as a result.

Aims and Values

The aims of this policy and The Group's ethos as a whole are to:

- Eliminate all discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics and beyond.
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a learning difficulty or special educational need, or because English is an additional language.
- Promote equity of opportunity for all members of The Group community.
- Comply with The Group's equality obligations contained in the Equality Act 2010.
- Provide a secure environment in which all our children can thrive and achieve all of the outcomes of Every Child Matters and Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Provide a learning environment where all individuals through the Equal Opportunities Policy and other School policies such as PSHE, feel valued and feel they have a sense of belonging.
- Prepare pupils for life in a diverse and inclusive society in which everyone can take their place in the familial, local, regional, national and international community.
- Include and value the contribution of all to our understanding of equality and inclusion.
- Provide and promote positive information about the diversity of UK society.
- Actively challenge discrimination and ensure that all members of The Group community learn from these experiences.
- Create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all.
- Implement inclusive and equitable recruitment practices.
- Ensure that development and progression opportunities are available to all.
- Regularly review our service provision to ensure it is accessible, fair, and appropriate to all groups within society.
- Ensure that no person or group of people will suffer detrimentally in promotion or dismissal.
- Embed EDIB into our policies, procedures, everyday practices, and behaviours.
- Embed inclusion through all our activities.

To achieve these aims we will:

- Involve, where reasonably practicable, all members of The Group community in the development, review, evaluation, and impact assessment of all relevant improvement plans, policies and procedures.
- Publish and share school policies to The Group.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy

- Collect and analyse data (such as admissions data and examination results) to monitor any potential disadvantage amongst the pupil body.
- Help to overcome any potential barriers to learning by providing for pupils' diverse needs and learning styles including any learning support needs and/or disabilities a pupil may have.
- Ensure the wider school curriculum promotes and celebrates equality and diversity.
- Operate a clear zero tolerance policy towards abusive or discriminatory behaviour.
- Work in partnership with families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and help tackle discrimination.
- Implement positive action.

We will ensure that The Group is a welcoming environment and that everyone is valued highly and that tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of difference, to maximise their potential and thrive.

At The Stowe Group we aim to promote inclusion and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of School life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

Scope

This policy applies equally to current and prospective members of the School community, including parents and visitors. The School is committed to a zero tolerance policy in relation to less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010.

The protected characteristics are defined as:

- Age
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender identity or reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race and ethnic origin, including colour
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes (including banter) that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated.

Admissions

The Group treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy and The Group's Admissions Policy. The Group accepts applications from, and admits, pupils irrespective of any protected characteristic.

Parents must inform The Group when completing the registration form of any special circumstances affecting their child (such as learning support needs) which may affect the child's ability to fully participate in the education provided by The Group. The Group will not offer a place to a child if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, The Group cannot adequately cater for and/or meet their needs.

Educational Services

The Group affords all pupils access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities irrespective of any protected characteristic subject to The Group's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and considerations of safety and welfare.

The Group will not discriminate against a pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment. The Group will seek to educate pupils in a multicultural, anti-racist environment using the curriculum, assemblies, PSHE programme and external speakers to promote understanding and appreciation of other faiths, races and cultures.

The Group recognises that discrimination may be, for example, direct, indirect or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with The Group's policies.

The Group will:

- Treat all members of The Group community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination.
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above.
- Ensure those pupils with a statement of special educational needs (or Education Health and Care Plan) receive necessary educational and welfare support.
- Ensure that pupils with English as additional language receive additional support, such as extra English tuition, where required.
- Monitor the admission and progress of pupils from all backgrounds.
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by pupils, colleagues and parents.
- Offer all pupils access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that all colleagues are aware of their responsibilities promote equality of opportunity and are given appropriate training and support.

- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in our schools.
- Ensure that we review, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

Religious Belief

The Group's religious ethos is based on Protestant Christian values and tradition. The Group is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from other religions and faiths (or no religion or faith).

Colleague Recruitment

The Group commits to removing barriers which directly or indirectly restrict equality of opportunity and ensure that our employment practices are compliant with UK legislation and regulations. We require our colleagues to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

Specifically, The Group aims to ensure that no employee or candidate is subject to unlawful discrimination or unconscious bias, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- Transparent recruitment and selection processes based on merit, including advertisements and job descriptions.
- Interview and selection procedures.
- Ensuring a work environment free from discrimination.
- Training opportunities.
- Promotion and career development opportunities.
- Terms and conditions of employment including pay, access to employment related benefits and facilities and requests for flexible working.
- Grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures.
- Selection for redundancy.

The Group will seek to attract and retain people from the widest possible diversity of backgrounds and experiences to and at all levels of the organisation. We will ensure that recruitment and selection, and promotion is transparent merit-based and fair. We commit to providing recruitment and selection training, including training on equal opportunities and unconscious bias, to support these objectives.

We expect all our people will use appropriately inclusive language and behave in a way that will uphold the dignity of colleagues, the people we work with, and our stakeholders.

We commit to providing and supporting channels for our people to have their voices heard. This includes opportunities to network with one another, and feedback to organisational proposals. For example, through the Colleagues Engagement and Wellbeing Surveys.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy

Where reasonable we will make tailored adjustments to accommodate the needs of our people, including those seeking to join The Group.

The Group will engage in comprehensive diversity data collection to ensure effective monitoring and implementation of this policy across the organisation, specifically including analysis of our recruitment process and colleagues' profile across all levels of the organisation.

Positive Action

Positive action refers to the steps that an employer can take to encourage people from groups with different needs or with a past track record of disadvantage or low participation to apply for jobs. An employer can use positive action where they reasonably think (based on evidence) that:

- People who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.
- People who share a protected characteristic have needs that are different from the needs of people who do not share it.
- Participation in an activity by people who share a protected characteristic is disproportionately low.

Positive action can also be taken about service delivery when the following three conditions are met:

- You reasonably think that a group of people who share a protected characteristic and who are, or who could be, using your services suffer a disadvantage linked to that characteristic.
- You reasonably think that the group has a disproportionately low level of participation in this type of service or activity.
- The group needs different things from this service from other groups.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Group has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils or Colleagues with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled pupils or Colleagues. The Group will inform and consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, The Group are able to make for their disabled child. The Group will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a pupil's disability and, for example, the resources available to The Group. The Group has a duty to make reasonable adjustments (case by case considerations) for Colleagues or pupils who request to be known as gender neutral, gender fluid, are undergoing gender reassignment or are transgender.

The Group is not legally required to make alterations to The Group's physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustment's duty. However, The Group monitors and reviews the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to disabled pupils. The Group has an

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy

Accessibility Plan in place (which can be made available upon request).

Responsibilities

The Group's Governing Body

It is the Governing Body's responsibility to establish policies which require that:

- a) Colleagues act as role models of inclusive behaviour and practice.
- b) The Group complies with its equality obligations.
- c) The Group's policies & procedures are monitored considering this policy and The Group's wider equality obligations.

Together with the Head, the Governors will deal with serious breaches of this policy.

The Head

It is the Head's responsibility to:

- a) Ensure effective implementation of this policy and its and procedures.
- b) Ensure that all Colleagues are sufficiently aware and trained within equality & inclusion.
- c) Actively challenge and take appropriate action in any cases of discriminatory practice within The Group, be it by Colleagues, pupils, parents or visitors.
- d) Have procedures in place to deal effectively with any reported incidents of discrimination, victimisation or harassment.
- e) Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with this policy.

Colleagues

It is the responsibility of all Colleagues to:

- a) Positively role model inclusive behaviour
- b) Actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying.
- c) Promote an inclusive curriculum, identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in The Group's culture.
- d) Commit to broadening their knowledge, confidence and inclusive behaviour by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- a) Positively promote inclusive and anti-discriminatory behaviour, including a willingness to reflect on attitudes and/or behaviours and be open to challenge.
- b) Support any measures introduced by our schools to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and report any issues associated with equality and diversity to their Houseparent, DSL, or any member of staff.
- c) Be alert to and actively challenge any forms of discrimination, victimisation,

harassment or bullying, including banter. This includes identifying and using each schools' reporting systems to challenge bias and stereotype within the curriculum and in the School's culture, taking all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation from taking place.

Curriculum

The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for pupils, including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for traditionally and newly disadvantaged groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and wider curriculum.

The curriculum will aim to:

- Normalise diversity in the content and examples utilised.
- Stress the contribution and achievements of all kinds of individuals and cultures, actively challenging bias and stereotyping.
- Reinforce the importance of embracing difference and of equality of opportunity as a desirable aim.
- Provide inclusive and accessible activities, including educational trips and co-curricular provision.
- Resources and activities should be monitored for possible bias, reinforcing stereotypes and ethnocentric elements.

Concerns and Complaints

The Group will seek to provide a supportive environment for those who make claims of discrimination and/or harassment. Any pupil who believes that he/she/they have been discriminated against or have been subject to discriminatory conduct should talk to the Deputy Head: Pastoral or may use The Group's pupil complaints procedure to seek remedy to such matters. Any member of Colleagues should speak to the People Team.

Any pupil who harasses another pupil on the grounds of any protected characteristic will be subject to The Group's disciplinary and (re)education measures. If parents feel this policy has been breached, they should raise their concern or complaint in accordance with The Group's Complaint's Policy which is available on The Group website or can be available upon request. Or contact Tori Roddy, Group Director of Marketing and Admissions and EDI Lead.

Training and Development

The success of the EDIB Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation.

Each school will endeavour to:

- Enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status.

- Promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution made by our staff, governors, parents, pupils and wider community.
- Equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions to discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote inclusive behaviour generally.
- Ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy.
- Respond to changing and emerging training needs, providing opportunities for reflection, feedback and shared learning.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure appropriate steps can be taken to eliminate unlawful discrimination. This policy is usually reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the aims of the policy are carried out in accordance with The Group's equality obligations.

Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the Executive Leadership Team.

Links

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by government publications and other external guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (updated Feb 2019)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (updated Aug 2018)
- Teacher Standards 2011 (introduction updated 2021)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, 2022
- Statutory Framework for EYFS (updated Sept 2023)
- Data Protection Act 2018 Overview and GDPR (updated Aug 2020)
- Equality Act 2010 (updated June 15)
- Charities Act 2011
- <http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

This policy works in conjunction with a range of internal school policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Colleague Code of Conduct
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy (pupils)
- Digital Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy



- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Allegations Against Colleagues Policy

Appendix 1: Definitions

EDIB can be understood in many different ways, with each individual holding a unique perspective on its meaning. At Stowe, we use the terms Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Equity and equality, while often used interchangeably, diverge in their connotations despite being linked to 'fairness'.

Equality, as mandated by the Equality Act 2010, remains a legal and moral obligation at Stowe, emphasising fairness and equal treatment.

In The Stowe Group, we uphold the principles of equality while striving for equity. We understand that different individuals require different levels of support to thrive.

Conversely, **equity** encompasses understanding and providing individuals with the necessary resources to fulfil their potential. In line with our values of community and respect, at Stowe, we perceive equity as tailoring support to individuals, acknowledging and addressing structural barriers that may impede specific individuals' progress. We recognise the existence of systemic barriers that disadvantage certain groups, and we are committed to improving organisational practices, systems, and processes which may present these barriers.

Diversity, on the other hand, entails acknowledging and valuing differences. It underscores the advantage of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes and advocates for a workforce that mirrors our organisation's pupil body and the wider community.

Inclusion signifies an environment where individual differences and experiences are esteemed and leveraged to facilitate the flourishing of all. We believe an inclusive environment is one where every individual feels a sense of belonging, can express their authentic selves, perceives their contributions as significant, and is empowered to realise their full potential, irrespective of their background, identity, or circumstances.

Belonging is the final pillar of our strategy, underscoring the importance of creating a culture where all community members feel valued, accepted, and able to contribute as their true selves. This sense of belonging is essential for fostering an inclusive environment.

Policy Owner: Group Director of Marketing & Admissions/People Team

Reviewed Date: 02 April 2026

Next Review Date: 02 April 2027