

Equality Policy

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Signed:	Principal
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Date of next review:	April 2027

1. Aims

At Felixstowe International College we seek to ensure a personalised learning journey for every student, every day. In doing so we are: dedicated to learning; guided by Christian values; and striving to offer individualised support. Our international community – with pupils and staff of many nationalities, languages, cultures and faiths living and learning together – makes equality central to our ethos of ‘friendship through education’.

Equality is about much more than simply narrowing gaps in examination performance. Equality allows each student to: foster personal aspirations; maximise their opportunity; nurture positive relationships; and promote positive wellbeing.

As an independent school, the College is not a public authority and is therefore not subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 or its specific publication duties. However, the College voluntarily adopts the three aims of the PSED as a framework of good practice, and this policy sets out how we have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin); religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. In relation to pupils, the Act’s schools provisions protect all of these except age and marriage/civil partnership (which apply in relation to staff and employment). Given our intake, the College is particularly mindful that race includes nationality and national origin, and that religion or belief includes all faiths and none.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is written to meet the College’s duties as an independent school under the following legislation and standards:

- Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (section 85), which prohibits schools – including independent schools – from discriminating against, harassing or victimising pupils and prospective pupils in admissions, in the provision of education, in access to any benefit, facility or service, in exclusions, or by subjecting them to any other detriment
- The duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, so that disabled pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, which requires all schools, including independent schools, to prepare, implement, review and revise an accessibility plan – increasing disabled pupils’ access to the curriculum, improving the physical environment, and improving the availability of accessible information
- Part 5 of the Equality Act 2010, which applies to the College as an employer in respect of all nine protected characteristics

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014: paragraph 2(2)(d) (PSHE which encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics) and paragraph 5 (actively promoting fundamental British values, including mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and precluding the promotion of partisan political views)
- Standard 3 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (May 2026), which requires that boarders are not discriminated against and that boarding is organised with sensitivity to the different needs arising from boarders' backgrounds, cultures, languages, religions and any special educational needs or disabilities
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015

It is also based on the DfE's advice 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools' and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's technical guidance for schools in England, both of which apply to independent schools. The Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require state-funded schools to publish equality information and objectives, do not apply to the College; the practices in this policy are adopted voluntarily. As permitted by the Equality Act, the College selects pupils on the basis of academic ability; selection is applied consistently and without regard to any protected characteristic.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Advisory Board will:

- Ensure that the equality information set out in this policy is published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, pupils and parents/carers, and that this policy is reviewed and updated at least annually, in line with the review cycle on the cover
- Ensure that the school's accessibility plan is prepared, implemented, and reviewed and revised at least every three years
- Hold the Principal to account for compliance with the Equality Act across the school, including boarding

The Principal will:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality aims amongst staff and pupils
- Have due regard, when making a significant decision or taking an action, to whether it may have particular implications for people with particular protected characteristics
- Line-manage the designated mental health lead (the Assistant Principal) and ensure they receive relevant training

Members of the leadership and extended leadership teams will:

- Support the Principal in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality aims amongst staff and pupils
- Support the Principal in identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary
- Ensure they are familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training, including relevant training for the designated mental health lead
- Liaise with relevant members of staff to discuss any issues and how these are being addressed

All school staff, including boarding staff, are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the school's equality aims.

4. Eliminating discrimination

The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with its non-discrimination provisions. Prohibited conduct includes: direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; discrimination arising from disability; failure to make reasonable adjustments; harassment; and victimisation of anyone who raises a concern under the Act. Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct.

- Admissions: pupils are selected on academic ability and suitability for our higher-tier curriculum, applied consistently; no applicant is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic (see the admissions policy).
- Reasonable adjustments: the school makes reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils, including providing auxiliary aids and services where reasonable, and maintains an accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act (see the SEN policy and accessibility plan).
- Boarding: boarding provision does not discriminate, and house routines, catering, and pastoral care are organised with sensitivity to boarders' cultures, languages, religions and individual needs (NMS Standard 3).
- Prejudice-related incidents: any incident perceived to be prejudice-related by the victim or any other person is recorded, reported and investigated as such, in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy, and patterns are reviewed by the leadership team and Advisory Board.
- Staff and governors are regularly reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act, for example during meetings; where this has been discussed during a meeting it is recorded in the minutes. The school's professional learning programme addresses Equality Act issues through relevant CPD activities, and new staff receive equality content within induction.

5. Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic (for example, religious requirements such as prayer, worship, diet and dress, and language support for pupils whose first language is not English)
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities (e.g. encouraging all pupils to be involved in the full range of school societies and electives)

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Analyse student progress and attainment data in relation to groups with different characteristics – including nationality, first language, sex, SEND and boarding/day status – to determine strengths and areas for improvement, and implement actions in response to support students' academic progress
- Analyse student and parent feedback, and boarders' views gathered under NMS Standard 13, and implement actions to ensure the school's aims are met
- Ensure that any data considered or shared does not identify individual pupils or staff where numbers are small

6. Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it by:

- Promoting tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in philosophy and ethics, PSHE and RSE education, assemblies and guest speakers, but also across the curriculum – and through the cultural exchange at the heart of our electives programme, where ESL students explore British culture and English-first-language students learn about Korean and Mandarin culture.
- Making pupils aware of our behaviour and anti-bullying policies, which expressly address prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Working with our local community. This includes inviting leaders of local faith groups to speak at assemblies, and organising school trips and activities based around the local community, including work placements at local primary schools and volunteering with local charities.
- Encouraging and implementing initiatives via our school council.
- Offering a variety of methods for student voice via our school council, grumbles book, worry box, pastoral and academic tutorials, and the independent listener (the ‘independent person’ whom boarders may also contact under NMS 11.4).
- Raising awareness of how students can seek help from external counselling services, such as Level 2 for face-to-face mentoring support and ‘It’s OK’ online for online support.

7. Equality considerations in decision-making

The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made, and always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip: cuts across any religious holidays; is accessible to pupils with disabilities; and has equivalent provision for boys and girls. In boarding, equality considerations inform decisions about rooming and house allocations, menus and dietary requirements, provision for prayer and religious observance, and travel arrangements at the start and end of term for pupils travelling internationally. A brief written record of equality considerations is kept alongside the risk assessment for trips and significant activities.

8. Links to other policies

- Accessibility plan (Schedule 10, Equality Act 2010)
- Admissions policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy (prejudice-related incidents)
- Behaviour policy
- Teaching and Assessment policy
- PSHE/SMSC/RSE policies
- SEN policy
- Statement of boarding principles and practice
- Staff recruitment, grievance and disciplinary policies (employment duties)

This policy is reviewed annually by the Principal and approved by the Principal and the Advisory Board.