

Equal Opportunities (GDST) Policy

ISI Regulation	
Reviewed by	Chrystal Cunningham, Director of Inclusion and Wellbeing
Date	September 2026
Date of Next Review	September 2027

This policy applies to Junior School, Senior School and EYFS

To be read in conjunction with the Learning Support Policy, Pastoral Policy, Admissions Policy, Accessibility Policy

Stepping in: we aim for every girl to feel known, supported, confident and able to shine at Wimbledon High

EDUCATION

Policy Statement

The Council of the GDST is committed to equal opportunities in education and will not unlawfully discriminate against, or treat less favourably, any student at, or applicant to the school on the grounds of race, disability, religion or belief (or lack thereof), gender reassignment, sexual orientation, or pregnancy or maternity ('protected characteristics'). The Trust will also not discriminate against, or treat less favourably, any student at, or applicant to, its schools because they are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, as laid out in the 2010 Equality Act. All pupils and staff should be encouraged to value and respect others and to challenge inappropriate attitudes, behaviours and practices.

This policy embraces the following areas:

Admission

Admission to the school is dependent on achieving an acceptable standard in assessment or examination appropriate to the age group and academic pace of the school, as well as the availability of places. Due consideration will be given to educational experience in assessing pupils' achievement of an 'acceptable standard', and to maximising access for pupils to whom the school can add value. All examinations and tests are free of bias, based on accredited testing, and broadly reflect the expectations of students at the relevant stage of their development, regardless of background.

Arrangements for tests are also made with the intention of ensuring that no candidate is unfairly disadvantaged, and, where practicable, reasonable adjustments will be made to cater for individual needs.



Access

In addition to admission, pupils with protected characteristics (as defined above) will not be discriminated against in relation to access to the school's benefits, curriculum, facilities or services. There are special considerations in relation to pupils with a disability and access for pupils with disabilities is dealt within our [Admissions Policy](#) and [Accessibility Policy](#).

Transfers

Arrangements for transfer between key stages (i.e. the Junior School into the Senior School/ Y11 into the Sixth Form) are subject to the terms of the contract with parents and written criteria published by the school.

Continuity of education is anticipated normally throughout each age range (ie the Junior and Senior Departments) and at the key stages of transfer unless in the professional judgement of the Head after due deliberation the pupil will not benefit from continuing to be educated at the school or has not attained a sufficiently high standard of work or behaviour for continuation or for entry to the next stage. Factors such as poor behaviour or lack of motivation on the part of the pupil or an irreparable breakdown of the necessary relationship of trust and confidence between the family and the school may be taken into account. As a term of the parent contract, parents and pupils agree to be bound by the school rules and to support the school in maintaining its ethos and good standards of behaviour.

Clear procedures must be in place to keep parents informed of pupil progress in any of the above areas at the earliest opportunity, and of any targets to be met should transfer be in doubt. Specific guidance and timings for certain key stages are set out in the parent contract.

Transfer between Trust schools, for example as a result of relocation or the need for boarding facilities, may be arranged. Any such transfer will be subject to the availability of a place and the professional judgement of the school in which a place is being sought of the ability of the pupil concerned to benefit from such a place, given the overall nature of the intake. This may necessitate the pupil's involvement in some form of admissions procedure, in addition to a recommendation from the original Head.

There is no entitlement to a transfer from a GDST school to one of the Academies for which it is a sponsor.

The Academic Ethos

The commitment is to non competitive, mixed ability teaching. Maths and Modern Foreign Languages and PE are the only curriculum areas where students are set: Maths and PE are set by ability, Modern Languages by previous experience. Students are not given class positions or rank, but are encouraged to work to their own highest level of achievement. Encouragement is given informally through verbal praise, written feedback on pupil's work, or formally through the Positive Behaviour System detailed in the [Behaviour Policy](#).

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The Curriculum

This is broad and balanced for all students, with timetabling designed to support the widest possible access to the range of subjects available, and to protect minority subjects where possible. All pupils will be able to access the curriculum with equal opportunity and enjoyment. Availability of specific subject choices and maximum/minimum group sizes may be subject to change to maintain educational and economic viability. Where appropriate and practicable, curricular arrangements may be adjusted to reflect students' individual needs. PE, PSHE and RSE are mandatory, although parents have the right to withdraw their daughters from specific PSHE and RSE lessons.

Special Educational Needs

The Trust has established guidelines for its schools on responding to pupils with special educational needs (SEND) which are explained in the Trust's Inclusion Policy. All schools have a written policy setting out their approach to identification/support and highlighting any additional costs to parents. Initial and on-going pupil assessment is intended to enable pupil difficulties or special gifts to be identified and supported. The Head of Neurodiversity and SENCo makes arrangements for students with specific learning difficulties and advises teaching staff how best to cater for their needs. Parents of girls applying to the school are asked to disclose Specific Learning Difficulties which are then taken into account in assessing the girl's performance. To be read in conjunction with the [Neurodiversity \(SEND\) Policy](#).

Religious Observance

Assemblies bring together the whole community to reflect on moral, spiritual and ethical issues, and promote a sense of the existence of God or of a reality that transcends the purely material. At WHS, this is generally achieved within a broadly Christian framework, but takes account of the specific needs of the whole school community. Arrangements can be made for pupils to be excused from attendance, at the written request of parents.

Religious Studies on the curriculum is designed to be accessible to all pupils. However, again, pupils may be excused from all or part of the programme at the written request of parents, and it is not compulsory beyond Year 8.

All students and staff are given equal opportunities for development, the expression of individual points of view and freedom of religious expression. The uniform rules govern wearing religious insignia, however all students must remove all jewellery and insignia for any practical lesson or activity where Health and Safety regulations dictate. Appropriate arrangements are made to reflect the requirements of different religious faiths with regard to acceptable variations to school uniform, catering and authorised absence for religious festivals during term time. Reasonable arrangements may be made to allow for specific acts of religious observance in school.

Disability and access for the disabled

In this policy, 'disability' has the meaning set out in the Equality Act 2010, that is, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Reasonable adjustments are made to address the individual needs of all existing and prospective pupils, parents and staff with disabilities.

Statutory requirements regarding access for the disabled to new buildings are met and the Trust has a published Accessibility Strategy. Parts of the school premises are subject to restrictions such as listed building and other planning restrictions, or cannot readily be modified. The accessibility plan sets out a structured programme to increase access over time to existing facilities, curriculum and provision of information.

Scholarships, bursaries and prizes

Arrangements for the award of scholarships, bursaries and prizes are made with the intention of facilitating increased access for candidates.

Exclusion

Schools are required to follow the Council's procedure for the fixed period or permanent exclusion of pupils.

Pupils will not be excluded from the school on the basis of a protected characteristic (as defined above) or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Where a pupil with a disability is facing exclusion, schools should consider whether or not the pupil's disability has a behavioural component, and reasonable adjustments will be made to take account of the possible effect of this, alongside the impact of the pupil's behaviour on the school community. In some circumstances, it will be appropriate to exclude the pupil.

Other related policies

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

[Behaviour Policy](#)

[Pastoral Policy](#)

[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

[LGBTQ+ Policy](#)

[Access Plan](#)

[Admissions Policy](#)

GDST Gender Identity Policy

Monitoring of policy implementation

Applications and admissions are subject to ethnic and disability monitoring, and such monitoring will be undertaken in respect of academic performance over time. Arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of inclusive practices are set out in the Trust's Inclusion Policy.



Complaints

Any parent who is not satisfied that the above sub sections of the policy have been properly applied may make a complaint in accordance with the Girls' Day School Trust's formal procedure which complies with all statutory requirements and is available from the school. Students are aware of the mechanisms available to them within school to raise matters of concern of an academic or pastoral nature via Peer Counsellors, their Form Tutor, Head of Year or via the School Council.

EMPLOYMENT

Policy Statement

The Council of the Trust is committed to equal opportunities in employment, training and development. The Council's policy aims to ensure that all employees are recruited, trained and promoted on the basis of ability, the requirements of the job and relevant and objective criteria. The policy applies to the Trust's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who work for the Trust ("**Workers**").

The Trust will not unlawfully discriminate against any Worker on the grounds of race, age, gender, marital or civil partner status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief (or lack thereof), disability, or pregnancy and maternity (together the 'protected characteristics'), part-time or fixed term status in any matters relating to employment, training and development. The Trust will also not discriminate against, or treat less favourably, any Worker because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

All Workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other Workers, whether junior or senior to them. The Trust has a separate "Dignity at Work" Policy which deals with this latter issue. The Trust will also take reasonable steps to prevent harassment of its staff by people who are not employees e.g. parents, suppliers & contractors.

This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to the termination of employment, including redundancy.

Recruitment and Promotion

All posts are advertised, either internally or externally as appropriate. Vacancies for Heads and deputy Heads are always advertised nationally, save for in exceptional circumstances to be determined by the Chief Executive of the Trust in consultation with the Chairman.

All Heads and others with responsibility for recruitment are required to adhere to the guidance on fair recruitment procedures provided by the Trust and shall take steps to ensure that knowledge of



vacancies reaches a wide labour market. Where appropriate, use may be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably-qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups.

Recruitment is done on the basis of matching skills, qualifications and experience with a person specification for the post in accordance with recommended best practice for ensuring equality of opportunity in employment.

Male Staff in an all-girls' school

The same expectations and opportunities exist for men and women. Men may accompany students on school visits although they should not be the sole person in charge of a residential activity and a female member of staff must accompany them.

Employment of ex-offenders

Many posts involve substantial opportunity for unsupervised access to children and are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974. Applicants are therefore required to declare any criminal convictions, including those normally regarded as 'spent' under the Act. All candidates offered an appointment to an exempt post are required to obtain an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed, which will include details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings as well as convictions.

In the event that the Disclosure reveals a criminal record or other information of concern, this will be discussed with the candidate before a decision is made whether or not to confirm the offer of employment. In making this decision, the Trust will consider the nature of the offence and whether in the opinion of the Trust this makes the applicant unsuitable for the type of work to be undertaken or unacceptable to other employees, how long ago the offence was committed and the age of the prospective employee at that time, together with any other factors that may be relevant.

Pay and Conditions

The Council's pay policy, pay bands and other employee benefits and policies apply to all employees. Part-time employees benefit on a pro-rata basis from the same pay bands and benefits as full-time employees.

Access to training and development

Training and development opportunities are open to all employees as appropriate, and all employees are entitled to discuss such opportunities in their annual appraisal. In schools, it is the Trust's policy that all Early Career Teachers are provided with an appropriate induction training programme in accordance with national guidelines. A Central Training and Staff Development Programme provides opportunities for all employees to apply for training grants, and to attend central training programmes as appropriate.

Training and development opportunities are available to all staff as appropriate. Specific training needs are discussed at the Annual Review interview. Staff Study Days provide time for training on a rolling programme of topics, including Health and Safety and Child Protection.

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Disability and access for people with disabilities

In this policy disability has the meaning set out in the Equality Act 2010, that is, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The Trust encourages any employee who is disabled or becomes disabled in the course of their employment with the Trust, to tell their line manager or the HR Department about their condition. This will enable the Trust to support its employees as much as possible. The Trust also encourages employees to advise their line manager or the HR Department of any reasonable adjustments to their working conditions or the duties of their job which they consider necessary or which would assist them in the performance of their duties. The line manager or HR Department may wish to consult with the employee and their medical advisor(s) about possible reasonable adjustments. Careful consideration will be given to any such proposals and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of the job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for the Trust to accommodate these suggested adjustments and the Trust will ensure that it provides the employee with information as to the basis of its decision not to make any adjustments.

The Trust will continue to monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other workers in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Where possible and proportionate the Trust will take steps to improve access for disabled workers and service users and the Trust has a published Accessibility Strategy. Some of the Trust's existing premises are subject to listed building and other planning restrictions or cannot readily be modified. However, each school has its own accessibility plan, which sets out a structured programme to increase access to its facilities over time.

Monitoring of policy implementation

To ensure that this policy is operated effectively and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in employment the Trust monitors racial origins, gender, disability, and age of its workforce. The Trust also maintains records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data provide the basis for taking appropriate steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and to implement this policy.

Breaches of the policy

If an employee believes that they have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed in this policy they are encouraged to raise the matter through the Trust's grievance procedure. If an employee believes they may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed at in this policy they are encouraged to raise the matter through the Trust's "Dignity at Work" policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy should be made through the appropriate procedures and may be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the Trust's disciplinary procedure.

If, after investigation, an employee is proven to have harassed another Worker on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability, gender reassignment or age or otherwise act in breach of this policy, she or he will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Trust will take appropriate action with regards to serious breaches of this Policy.

This policy applies equally to Trust Workers' relations with pupils, visitors, clients, customers and suppliers. If, after investigation, an employee is proven to have discriminated against or harassed a pupil, client or supplier the employee will also be subject to disciplinary action.

Review

The Trust will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the equal opportunities statement by monitoring the composition of job applicants.

The Trust is committed to providing relevant training for all employees on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.