



ST PAUL'S
GIRLS' SCHOOL

Equal Opportunities for Students Policy

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Legal framework

- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards Regulations (2014)
- Equality & Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2015)
- Working Together with Safeguarding Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our [website](#) or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Who this policy applies to

Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of St Paul's Girls' School. The school recognises the benefit of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Students will be taught to value and respect others. The school is committed to being an equal opportunities school and is committed to equal treatment for all students, regardless of protected characteristics¹.

What this policy is for

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

- Communicate the school's commitment to promotion of equal opportunities for its students
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- Promote equal treatment for all members of the school community
- Create and maintain an open, supportive, inclusive anti-discriminatory culture where racism, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised, challenged and addressed as part of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued
- Comply with the school's equality duties contained in the Equality Act 2010
- Remove or overcome barriers for students where they already exist
- Enforce that all discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

All members of the school community are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times. All parents are expected to support the aims of this policy and the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Other relevant school policies

- Admissions policy
- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Expulsion, removal and review policy
- Safeguarding (child protection) policy
- Gender identity policy
- Learning support policy
- Relationships and sex education policy
- Accessibility plan (including disability policy)
- Anti-harassment policy
- Learning Support policy
- Disability policy
- Equal opportunities for staff policy
- Complaints policy

¹ Protected characteristics set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#)

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Introduction

1.1 Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of St Paul's Girls' School. The school recognises the benefit of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. Students will be taught to value and respect others. The school is committed to being an equal opportunities school and is committed to equal treatment for all students, regardless of protected characteristics.

Educational services

2.1 The school affords all students access to educational provision including all benefits, services, and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to **the school's** reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare). The school will not discriminate against a student on the grounds of any protected characteristic by excluding them or subjecting them to any other detriment.

2.2 The school will:

- Treat all members of the school 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 students and ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristics
- Ensure that students with the protected characteristic of Disability under the Equality Act 2010 are receive the necessary educational and welfare support including those with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Ensure those with particular learning needs are supported including those with English as an additional language
- Ensure that gender questioning students are fully supported, treated with dignity and respect and face no discrimination
- Monitor the admission and progress of students from all backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour by students and staff
- Encourage students to work and play freely and have respect for all other students irrespective of any protected characteristic
- Offer all students access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in school
- Ensure that it reviews, monitors, and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive policies and practices
- Use the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE to:
 - Promote tolerance of and respect for one another, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
 - Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
 - Encourage students to question and challenge assumptions and stereotypes to better understand discriminatory behaviours and bias.

2.3 The school recognises that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from differences such as gender identity or disability, regardless of whether or not it was intentional. Child-on-child abuse, harassment and bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) are unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding, Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies.

Admissions

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 says: paragraph 862 allows a single-sex school to refuse to admit pupils of the opposite sex. A school is defined as single-sex if it admits pupils of one sex only. This is so even if it admits a small number of pupils of the opposite sex on an exceptional basis or in relation to particular courses or classes only. Limiting those pupils to particular courses or classes is not discrimination. However, other forms of sex discrimination by the school against its opposite-sex pupils would still be unlawful.

3.2 The school treats every application for admission in a fair, open-minded and equal way in accordance with this policy and the school's Admissions Policy. Although St Paul's is an academically selective school, each application will be considered on its merits in accordance with school's selection criteria based on an applicant's ability, aptitude and suitability for the school, their wider interests, experiences and willingness to engage positively and fully in all aspects of school life. The school accepts applications from, and admits all, prospective students (should they meet the academic selection criteria), irrespective of any protected characteristics.

3.3 Please see the Inclusion policy in relation to the school's approach to staff recruitment and selection.

3.4 Parents must inform the school when submitting the Registration Form of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their child's performance in the admissions process and/or ability to fully participate in the education provided by the school so that it can consider what reasonable adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the child is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children. The school may not be able to offer a place to a child with disabilities if, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the school cannot adequately cater for, or meet, their needs.

3.5 The school offers bursaries (means tested awards) to those who meet the school's admission criteria but would otherwise be unable to attend the school due to financial circumstances. Details of the school's bursary scheme can be found on the school website.

Religious belief

4.1 The school is inclusive and welcomes and respects the rights and freedoms of individuals from all religions and faiths (or with no religion or faith) subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the rights and freedoms of other members of the school community.

4.2 The Governing Board, through the Senior Leadership Team, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Reasonable adjustments for students with disability

5.1 The school has an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability to ensure they do not suffer a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students, including during the admissions process.

5.2 Where the school is required to consider its reasonable adjustments duty, it will consult with parents about what reasonable adjustments, if any, the school is able to make to avoid their child being put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other students. The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a student's disability and the resources available to the school. (Further information on the school's reasonable adjustments duty can be found in the School's Learning Support policy and in the Disability policy.

5.3 The school has an Accessibility Plan in place, and a hard copy can be made available upon request. This sets out the school's plan to increase the extent to which students with a disability can participate in the school's curriculum; improve the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which students with a disability are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services

provided or offered by the school; and improve the delivery of written information to students with a disability, ensuring it is provided in alternative formats that are as readily accessible to them as standard information is to students without a disability.

Monitoring and review

6.1 The Deputy Head (Safeguarding & Inclusion) regularly monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy and reports to the governors annually on the policy's effectiveness in practice.

Breaches of this policy

7.1 Students who are in breach of this policy may be sanctioned in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

7.2 If staff believe that a child has received less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic, or if they feel that this policy has been breached in any way to a child's detriment, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the school's complaints procedure (see Complaints Policy which is available on the School Website).