

Daffodil Grammar School for Girls

Equality Policy

School Address: 163 Commercial Road, London, E1 2DA

Proprietor: ASM Anisuzzaman

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Montford

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Eman Ahamed

1. Nature, authority and purpose of this policy

This policy establishes how Daffodil Grammar School for Girls understands, applies and evidences equality in practice. It is not a general statement of values, nor is it a summary of legal duties. It is a working governance document that governs how decisions are made, how pupils and staff are treated, and how the school ensures that it does not act unlawfully or unfairly.

The policy applies to every aspect of the school's operation. It governs admissions, teaching, curriculum access, behaviour and discipline, exclusions, attendance, safeguarding, pastoral care, staffing, access to facilities, communication with families, and the broader culture of the school. It applies equally to pupils, prospective pupils, parents, staff, contractors and visitors.

The school recognises that equality is often misunderstood. It is not achieved simply by stating that all individuals are treated with respect. Nor is it achieved by treating everyone identically regardless of circumstance. Equality requires the school to understand the effect of its actions, policies and systems on different individuals, and to act where necessary to ensure that no one is placed at an unlawful or unjustifiable disadvantage.

This policy therefore exists to ensure that equality is embedded in the daily operation of the school and is capable of being demonstrated through evidence, decision-making and outcomes.

2. Legal and regulatory framework

This policy is grounded in the Equality Act 2010, which provides the legal framework prohibiting discrimination, harassment and victimisation in education. The Act applies directly to independent schools and governs admissions, education, access to services, exclusions and employment.

The school also operates within the Independent School Standards Regulations 2014. These require that schools actively promote the welfare of pupils and encourage respect for others, with particular regard to protected characteristics. Current government guidance makes clear that schools must demonstrate this in practice and not rely on general statements of respect.

The safeguarding framework in Keeping Children Safe in Education reinforces that equality is not separate from safeguarding. A pupil who is disadvantaged, excluded, misunderstood or subject to prejudice may be at increased risk. Equality failures can therefore become safeguarding failures if not addressed.

The school also recognises its duties under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 to maintain and implement an accessibility plan. This duty requires the school to plan actively to improve access to education, facilities and information for disabled pupils.

3. The school's identity and lawful characteristics

Daffodil Grammar School for Girls is a single-sex school for girls. It admits girls only. This is a lawful position under equality law and forms part of the school's identity.

The school also operates with an Islamic ethos. This ethos shapes the values, expectations and culture of the school. It emphasises dignity, fairness, modesty, respect and responsibility.

The school is clear that its identity does not remove its legal obligations. It may maintain its lawful character as a girls' school and as a school with a defined ethos. However, it must ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and lawfully, and that its ethos is not used to justify discrimination or exclusion.

The school therefore holds two principles together. It maintains its identity, and it complies fully with equality law.

4. The school's understanding of equality

The school understands equality as fairness in substance. It requires more than uniformity. It requires the school to consider how its decisions affect individuals and whether those decisions produce disadvantage.

A rigid approach that treats all pupils identically can produce inequality where pupils face different barriers. A pupil with a disability, for example, may not be able to access learning without adjustment. A pupil with SEND may require a different approach to teaching. A pupil experiencing difficulty may require structured support.

At the same time, equality does not require the removal of expectations. The school maintains clear expectations for behaviour, attendance and conduct. Equality requires that these expectations are applied lawfully and proportionately, not that they are abandoned.

The school therefore adopts a balanced approach. It avoids both rigid uniformity and uncontrolled flexibility. It aims to make decisions that are fair, lawful and grounded in the actual circumstances of each case.

5. Protected characteristics and discrimination

The school recognises the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. These include disability, race, religion or belief, sex and others defined in law.

The school must ensure that individuals are not treated less favourably because of these characteristics. It must also ensure that policies and practices do not disadvantage particular groups unless there is a lawful justification.

Discrimination may occur in different ways. It may be direct, where a person is treated less favourably. It may be indirect, where a rule disadvantages a group. It may take the form of harassment, where behaviour creates a degrading environment. It may involve victimisation, where someone is treated unfairly for raising a concern.

The school recognises that discrimination is not always obvious. It may arise through assumptions, language, exclusion or failure to act. Staff must therefore be alert to both overt and subtle forms of inequality.

6. Equality in decision-making

All decisions taken within Daffodil Grammar School for Girls, whether at classroom, pastoral, leadership or proprietor level, must be grounded in lawful, relevant and evidence-based reasoning. Equality is not an abstract principle that sits separately from decision-making; it is embedded within the reasoning process itself. Every significant decision affecting a pupil or member of staff must be capable of withstanding scrutiny under equality law.

In practice, this requires staff to move beyond instinctive or routine responses and instead engage in deliberate and structured thinking. Where a decision has the potential to affect an individual differently from others, staff must consider whether that difference arises from a protected characteristic or from circumstances closely connected to it, such as disability, communication need or cultural background.

For example, when considering a sanction for behaviour, staff must not simply ask whether a rule has been broken. They must also consider whether the behaviour is linked to a recognised need such as SEND or a medical condition, whether the pupil understood the expectation, whether the sanction would place the pupil at a disproportionate disadvantage, and whether a reasonable adjustment should be considered. This does not remove accountability, but it ensures that accountability is applied lawfully.

Similarly, in decisions relating to curriculum access, staff must consider whether the method of delivery unintentionally excludes a pupil. A teaching approach that works for most pupils may still be inaccessible to a pupil with specific needs. Equality requires that such barriers are recognised and addressed where reasonable.

Leaders within the school are expected to model this approach. Decisions taken at senior level must demonstrate clear reasoning, awareness of equality implications, and the ability to justify outcomes if challenged. Records of decisions, particularly in areas such as admissions, exclusions, safeguarding and SEND, must reflect that equality considerations have been actively considered.

7. Equality in admissions

Admissions to Daffodil Grammar School for Girls are conducted in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy and the legal framework governing independent schools. The school's status as a single-sex institution means that it lawfully admits girls only. This is a permitted exception under equality legislation and forms part of the school's identity.

Beyond this lawful distinction, admissions must be conducted in a manner that is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory. The school will not refuse admission on the basis of a protected characteristic, nor will it apply criteria that indirectly disadvantage particular groups without lawful justification.

Where an applicant presents with SEND, a disability, or a medical or pastoral need, the school will undertake a careful and structured assessment. This assessment will not be based on assumptions or generalisations. Instead, it will consider the specific nature of the need, the adjustments that may be required, the support that can reasonably be provided, and whether the school is able to meet those needs within its existing provision.

The school recognises that refusal of admission in such cases is a high-risk decision from an equality perspective. Any decision not to offer a place must therefore be supported by clear evidence that the school cannot meet the pupil's needs without placing disproportionate strain on its resources or compromising the education of others. Such decisions must be documented carefully.

The school also recognises that fairness in admissions includes clarity of communication. Parents must be given accurate information about the school's ethos, expectations and provision so that they can make informed decisions. Misleading or incomplete information may itself give rise to unfairness.

8. Equality in education and curriculum access

The provision of education lies at the core of the school's equality duties. It is not sufficient that pupils are admitted; they must also be able to access, engage with and benefit from the education provided.

Equality in education requires active attention to how teaching is delivered. Staff must recognise that pupils do not all learn in the same way, and that barriers to learning may arise from a range of factors including SEND, disability, language, prior educational experience or emotional need.

Teachers are expected to exercise professional judgement in adapting their teaching so that pupils can access the curriculum. This does not require the creation of entirely separate programmes for each pupil, but it does require thoughtful adaptation of explanation, pacing, structure and support. A failure to adapt where it is reasonable to do so may result in unlawful disadvantage.

The school also recognises that equality extends beyond the classroom. Participation in school life includes access to enrichment activities, educational visits, leadership opportunities and informal aspects of school culture. Where barriers to participation arise, the school will consider whether reasonable steps can be taken to address them.

The curriculum itself plays a role in promoting equality. Pupils must be prepared for life in a diverse society and must understand the importance of respect, fairness and lawful behaviour. This is delivered in a manner consistent with the school's ethos but must still meet regulatory expectations.

9. Equality in behaviour and discipline

The school maintains a clear and structured Behaviour Policy which applies to all pupils. However, equality requires that behaviour management is not applied in a purely mechanical way.

In practice, this means that when a pupil breaches a rule, staff must consider not only the fact of the breach but also the context in which it occurred. Where behaviour is linked to SEND, disability, trauma, communication difficulty or other relevant factors, this must be taken into account when determining an appropriate response.

This does not mean that pupils are exempt from expectations. Rather, it means that the school must ensure that its response is proportionate, lawful and fair. A sanction that is appropriate for one pupil may not be appropriate for another if the underlying circumstances differ significantly.

The school is particularly alert to the risk of indirect discrimination in behaviour systems. Rules that appear neutral may have a disproportionate impact on certain groups. Leaders must therefore monitor patterns in behaviour data to ensure that no group is being unfairly targeted or disadvantaged.

Discriminatory behaviour, including racist, religious or disability-related harassment, will be treated as serious. Such incidents may engage both the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.

10. Equality and safeguarding

Equality is a fundamental component of safeguarding. A pupil who is marginalised, misunderstood or excluded may be at greater risk of harm, both within and beyond the school environment.

Staff must therefore be alert to the ways in which equality issues intersect with safeguarding. This includes recognising that pupils with SEND may find it more difficult to communicate concerns, that pupils experiencing discrimination may be reluctant to report it, and that bias or assumption can affect how disclosures are received and interpreted.

Safeguarding decisions must be based on evidence and professional curiosity. Staff must not dismiss concerns because they do not fit expected patterns or because assumptions are made about a pupil's background or behaviour.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that safeguarding systems take account of equality issues and that staff are trained to recognise and respond appropriately to these risks.

11. Disability and reasonable adjustments

The school recognises its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. This duty is anticipatory and ongoing. It requires the school to consider in advance how disabled pupils may be disadvantaged and to take reasonable steps to address those disadvantages.

Reasonable adjustments may take many forms. They may involve changes to teaching methods, adjustments to routines, provision of support, or modifications to the way information is delivered. The appropriate adjustment will depend on the individual circumstances.

The school will consider each case individually, taking into account the nature of the disadvantage, the effectiveness of the proposed adjustment, and the practical implications for the school. Decisions must be documented and capable of justification.

The school recognises that failure to make reasonable adjustments is one of the most common areas of non-compliance in equality law. It therefore treats this duty as a priority.

12. Accessibility planning

The school maintains a written Accessibility Plan as required by law. This plan is not a static document but a working framework that guides how the school improves access over time.

The plan addresses three areas: access to the curriculum, access to the physical environment, and access to information. Each of these areas requires ongoing review and development.

The proprietor has responsibility for ensuring that the plan is implemented and reviewed. The plan must be available for inspection and must reflect the actual condition and operation of the school.

13. Equality in staffing

The school is committed to fair treatment of staff in all aspects of employment. This includes recruitment, induction, professional development, promotion and day-to-day management.

Decisions relating to staff must be based on merit, suitability and lawful criteria. The school will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the workplace.

The school also recognises that staff play a critical role in delivering equality in practice. Staff must therefore understand their responsibilities and be supported through training and leadership.

14. Complaints and concerns

The school recognises that equality concerns may arise and must be addressed promptly and fairly. Individuals must feel able to raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

Concerns may be raised informally in the first instance. Where this is not appropriate or does not resolve the issue, the Complaints Policy provides a formal mechanism.

The school will investigate concerns thoroughly and respond in a transparent manner. Outcomes will be based on evidence and aligned with the law and school policy.

15. Monitoring and review

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the proprietor and headteacher. Monitoring is not limited to reviewing complaints but includes examining patterns in behaviour, admissions, safeguarding and SEND.

The school recognises that absence of complaints does not necessarily indicate absence of issues. Leaders must therefore take an active approach to monitoring.

The policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains current and effective.

16. Adoption

This policy is formally adopted by the proprietor of Daffodil Grammar School for Girls and is effective immediately. It will be communicated to staff and made available to parents upon request.