
Belfast Royal Academy

per vias sapientiae



Equality, Diversity and
Inclusion Policy
September 2025

Title	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Summary	This policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.
Purpose	To ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of this policy and its application in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all pupils and staff.
Operational Date	September 2025
Next Review Date	August 2028
Author	Vice Principal (Pastoral)

To be posted on School website	Yes
Date and version posted	September 2025

Related Documents

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Addressing Bullying Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- Pastoral Calendar/Assembly Themes
- School Development Plan

Rationale and Aims

Belfast Royal Academy has developed this policy as a statement of its commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within our school community. It seeks to ensure that all members of the school are valued equally, regardless of religion or belief, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation or transgender identity. Whilst socio-economic status is not a specified group under the equality legislation, the barriers and inequalities experienced by equality groups can also be exacerbated by poverty and social exclusion. As a result, prejudicial bullying of any sort is unacceptable and recorded in accordance with the Addressing Bullying Policy in school. Posters to highlight the 'Protected Characteristics' are displayed throughout school and referenced at various assemblies – see Appendix 1.

The Academy recognises the wider value of education, beyond solely the achievement of qualifications, allowing individuals to develop an understanding and experience of the value and range of diverse cultures, identities and backgrounds. We recognise that the school is enriched by the diversity that each individual brings and are committed to creating a safe, welcoming environment for all, where each learner can flourish, knowing that differences are respected.

The School seeks to:

- create a caring, supportive environment in which there is trust, fairness, respect and safety.
- give all pupils the opportunity to develop to their full potential in abilities, interests and aptitudes.
- create an environment in which the individual importance of all pupils is recognised.
- engender an atmosphere in which all pupils feel that their achievements are recognised and that their presence is valued.
- ensure that all pupils are prepared for the adult world by offering a well-designed curriculum that promotes diversity and provides critical skills that challenge prejudice and negative stereotypes.
- ensure that all pupils understand that they have an important role to play in what is becoming an increasingly complex multi-racial society.
- ensure that all students receive Personal Development and Citizenship through Learning for Life and Work, in which they learn about themselves and their responsibilities to others.
- ensure that the school is free from prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination.
- foster tolerance, understanding and mutual respect.

Belfast Royal Academy seeks to support pupils as they journey through life. We acknowledge that we cannot separate academic study from personal and emotional development. We understand that pupils will need support along the way and aim to provide whatever is possible to ensure that they have access to meaningful learning.

The premise remains the same - every child matters and matters equally - but the approach to meeting the needs of each pupil is taken on a case by case basis, ensuring the support is specific to the individual and in consultation with parents, staff, members of the Board of Governors and other relevant external agencies.

Equality Objectives

Once every three years, in addition to its Equality and Diversity Policy, the Academy will publish 3 equality objectives (or priorities) aimed at promoting equality of opportunity, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between pupils, informed by statistical information and linked to the School Development Plan.

The objectives for the next 3 academic years are outlined below.

1. Cultivating a Respectful and Understanding Environment for All Protected Characteristics:

This priority focuses on actively fostering a school culture where every student and staff member feels valued, respected, and safe, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. This means going beyond simply acknowledging these characteristics and embedding understanding and empathy into daily school life.

'Celebrating Differences' will be a monthly theme in our Pastoral Calendar.

2. Proactive Promotion of Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:

This priority is about ensuring that all students, irrespective of their protected characteristics, have equitable access to opportunities and achieve their full potential. This means identifying and addressing any systemic barriers that might disadvantage certain groups.

'Aspirations' will be a monthly theme in our Pastoral Calendar.

3. Embedding Inclusive Practices Through Ongoing Learning and Engagement:

This priority emphasizes that inclusion, diversity, and equality aren't static goals but require continuous learning, reflection, and engagement from the entire school community. This involves providing regular training and professional development for staff on inclusive practices, actively involving students and parents in shaping the policy and its implementation, and regularly reviewing and adapting the policy based on feedback and evolving best practices.

'Community' will be a monthly theme in our Pastoral Calendar.

Religion or belief

Belfast Royal Academy recognises that we educate pupils with various religious beliefs and none. This is particularly important given our location, developed through the delivery of Religious Studies, in line with statutory guidelines.

Our responsibility is to:

- Provide pupils with extensive opportunities to explore, question and appreciate their own faith, in order that they can develop spiritually.
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of a variety of faith and belief systems in order that pupils can live and work in a culture of mutual respect and tolerance within our increasingly diverse community in school, city, and nation.
- Show our commitment to the promotion of the spiritual and moral development of each student, in conjunction with the pursuit of academic excellence.
- Create an environment where individuals are valued and their dignity is respected. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that each young person's view is valued. This development of respect for self, environment and others is a high priority in the teaching of Religious Education at Belfast Royal Academy.

The school practices collective worship of a broadly Christian nature, but seeks through the annual themes for pastoral care to make assemblies and other school related activities as diverse and inclusive as possible.

The school may participate in ceremonies and festivals celebrating other faiths. However, parents can choose to remove their children from collective worship, or ask that their children does not participate in any of these activities, for any reason. Discrimination on the basis of a religion or of a particular belief is not tolerated in this school and is dealt with in accordance with the Action Plan for Positive Behaviour as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy and/or the Addressing Bullying Policy.

Disability

Belfast Royal Academy will not discriminate against a pupil or a member of staff because of their disability as stated in Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended). The school will seek to take positive steps ensure that pupils with a disability can access and participate in the education and other activities they provide.

The School will make reasonable adjustments in order to remove the barriers a pupil with a disability will face to allow the pupil to access and participate in education in the same way as other pupils. This means that, unless they have a justification for not doing so, the school will make reasonable adjustments so that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to other non-disabled pupils.

Belfast Royal Academy aims to be fully accessible. Lifts have been installed in the Crombie, Bruce, Jackson, Darbyshire and Jackson Buildings and an external ramped access has been constructed to cover the Louis Lord and Pollin Buildings. All buildings in the school site are now accessible to people with physical disabilities.

Toilets with disabled access are available in the Crombie, Jackson and the Technology Buildings. Changing facilities in both the Sports Hall and Swimming Pool have been converted to cater for wheelchair access, and a specially adapted chair allows access to the swimming pool for pupils with mobility difficulties.

Discrimination on the basis of a disability is not tolerated in this school and it dealt with in accordance with the Action Plan for Positive Behaviour as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy and/or the Addressing Bullying Policy.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The Special Education Needs Policy in Belfast Royal Academy reflects our inclusive approach. The Learning Support Co-ordinator (working closely with the Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Learning Support Co-ordinator, Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants) is involved in the strategic development of inclusive practice within the school. The Learning Support Department aims to ensure that Academy pupils can access appropriate educational provision. The culture, practice, management and development of resources in our school are designed to ensure all pupils' needs are met.

Race

Pupils are encouraged to enjoy the multi culturally diverse nature of our school and have opportunities to celebrate the world as it is and as we would like it to be. On such foundations pupils will develop positive attitudes to the pluralistic society.

Through a well-balanced, culturally inclusive curriculum we will help pupils challenge prejudice and stereotypes and provide opportunities for social and cultural development. Parents, staff and pupils will be made aware of the school's commitment to mutual respect through pupil notes, assemblies and through the curricular and extra-curricular life of the School.

Discrimination on the basis of race is not tolerated in this school and is dealt with in accordance with the Action Plan for Positive Behaviour as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy and/or the Addressing Bullying Policy. Racist symbols, badges or insignia on clothing or bags are forbidden in school and pupils are not permitted to use their own language to deliberately exclude other pupils.

Social background

Whilst socio-economic status is not a specified ground under the equality legislation, the barriers and inequalities experienced by equality groups can also be exacerbated by poverty and social exclusion.

With over 50 feeder Primary Schools, Belfast Royal Academy educates pupils from across Belfast and further afield. Irrespective of social-economic background, pupils are educated together and are given the same opportunities.

The Governors' Fund seeks to provide funding for parents who require additional support for their son/daughter's participation in various extra-curricular activities and/or trips.

Sexual orientation and Gender Identity

Staff, pupils and parents have a shared responsibility to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and with dignity, regardless their gender identity or their sexual orientation.

Staff will seek to:

- foster self-esteem in LGBTQ+ pupils.
- demonstrate by example the school's ethos of inclusivity and ensure that language and action reflects this.
- be alert of any signs of distress and other possible indications of prejudice based bullying and respond swiftly according to the Addressing Bullying Policy.
- raise awareness of the transgender community through Assemblies and the taught curriculum, such as through the delivery of the Personal Development strand of Learning for Life and Work, as well as RSE.

The Academy recognises the role that a school can play in supporting a transgender young person and commits to following the best practice guidance as set out in the Education Authorities *"Guidance for Schools on Supporting Transgender Young People."* The Vice Principal (Pastoral), will act as the 'Designated Teacher' and as the point of contact for any pupil who is questioning their gender identity or identifies as transgender.

During parental meetings with pupils who are questioning their gender, practical arrangements will be suggested e.g. use of Unisex toilets, separate changing rooms, use of pronouns etc. before a final decision is reached, in conjunction with a medical or counsellor letter.

Gender Identity Services for Northern Ireland

There are two specific healthcare services for trans people in Northern Ireland, both based in the Belfast Trust area. However, young people of all ages can access these services but require a **referral to be made usually be from a GP or mental health professional.**

Knowing Our Identity

(Child & Adolescent Service Gender Identity Development Service)

Beechcroft,

Foster Green Site, 110 Saintfield Road, Belfast,

BTS 6HD.

02890 638 000

Brackenburn Clinic

(Adult Gender Identity Service) Centre for Psychotherapy,

Shimna House,

Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road,

Belfast, BT8 8BH.

02890 638 854

brackenburnclinic@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Protected Characteristics

