



Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils

(Whole School Including EYFS)

First Issued:	October 2009	Next Review:	Spring Term 2026
Last Reviewed:	Spring Term 2024	Version:	3.0
Responsible:	Director of Operations, Deputy Head Academic		

Introduction

1. Promoting equal opportunities is fundamental to the aims and ethos of Orley Farm School. We welcome applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. We concentrate on educating the individual, to provide a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere where each individual feels valued and can flourish.
2. Orley Farm School is committed to equitable treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity or identity.
3. We are an academically selective school and we believe that the educational experience can only be enriched if children are exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible whilst they are developing.
4. We also welcome applications from pupils with special needs and disabilities, and refer parents to our policy covering Special Education Needs (SEN), learning difficulties, and disability.
5. Bursaries are offered in order to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admission criteria to attend the school. Details of our provision for bursaries can be found on our website or obtained from the Director of Finance's Office.
6. Equal Opportunities practices should be evident in:
 - a. the formal curriculum (the programme of lessons);
 - b. the informal curriculum (extra-curricular activities); and
 - c. the 'hidden' curriculum (the ethos of the school, the quality of personal relationships etc).

Equal opportunities issues should be seen as inter-related and as applying to all aspects of our school life. This should be kept in mind when reading the points outlined below, which cover the main areas.

Religion

We acknowledge that members of the school come from diverse backgrounds: some have no religious faith, others are committed to a greater or lesser extent to a variety of religions. We seek to promote an ethos of tolerance based on understanding of and respect for the beliefs and practices of others.

With regard to the teaching of RE/TPR we consider that the role of the teacher is that of educator and not that of evangelist. We do not seek to make pupils religious, but to teach them about religion.

The Governing Body, 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.

Culture, Class and Race

We acknowledge that members of the school come from diverse cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds and we endeavour to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect in order to help to promote a school and a society in which there is social, religious and racial harmony.

We recognise the inequalities of opportunity which exist within society for individuals and groups and are determined to take positive action to enable every individual to raise his/her self-esteem, expectations and performance so as to have wider choices in life.

We understand the need to be different without being excluded.

We value the history, experience and contribution of our multicultural community and seek to express this in the curriculum and life of our school: all members should feel that their language or dialect is valued and that bilingualism is regarded as advantageous. We try to counter negative, patronising and stereotyped views: a prime cause of prejudice is ignorance and misunderstanding.

We will not tolerate racist behaviour in any form.

We actively seek the involvement of our pupils' parents and inform them of our commitment to developing mutual respect.

Gender

As a school, we accept that there are gender inequalities in our society which impose limits, particularly on girls' expectations and behaviour, so we constantly examine our curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality.

We encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid sex stereotypes presented by, for example, the media. We try to ensure that our resources include non-sexist books which value the achievements of women as well as men.

We are committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. All pupils experience subjects previously considered to be suitable for a single sex e.g. cricket, netball, cooking, woodwork etc.

We try to ensure:

- that teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes,
- that all pupils have opportunities for working with pupils of both sexes,
- that we break down traditional sex stereotypes (for example, by not asking boys to move furniture while girls tidy up),
- that pupils have opportunities for examining their own pre-conceived ideas of gender roles,
- that pupils are encouraged to pursue less conventional subjects and interests (for example, girls to read more non-fiction and boys more fiction; girls to develop mechanical interests, boys creative skills), and
- that, wherever possible, classes have equal numbers of boys and girls.

We do not differentiate between the sexes in respect of our school uniform.

We acknowledge the importance of effective links with first and upper schools in monitoring and furthering the progress of this policy.

Sexuality

As a school, we make no assumptions about the sexuality of any of our members.

In our curricula, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. Whilst heterosexual relationships are the most common in our society, we acknowledge that a small but significant number of our pupils will develop a homosexual or bisexual orientation. Discussion of homosexuality is therefore included (albeit briefly) in the RSE programme. In addition, pupils' questions are answered, as they arise, as honestly, factually and non-judgementally as possible.

Sexuality might be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual. Whilst our Gender Identity might be male, female, non-binary, gender fluid, trans.

Derogatory name-calling (of any sort) is unacceptable.

Special Educational Needs

We welcome pupils with special needs. We undertake to assess and meet the needs of all our pupils as far as we are able. We aim to create a happy and educationally exciting environment in which all pupils can prosper.

We try to avoid stereotyped assumptions about the behaviour of boys and girls as these can often influence identification and assessment procedures.

Because pupils develop at different rates for different activities, we adopt an inclusive, differentiated, child centred approach to learning, which is based on each pupil's needs.

We try to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are facilitated in participating in the school's curriculum to the fullest possible extent.

Pupils with special educational needs constitute a very diverse group: they include pupils with physical, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties, those with impaired sight or hearing. We acknowledge that especially able pupils have special needs too.

We seek assistance from a wide range of agencies where appropriate: for example, speech therapists, occupational therapists, medical practitioners, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers. (See also Special Educational Needs policy).

Recruitment and Selection

The school's staff development and recruitment and selection policies are based on good equal opportunities practice.

The School aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

Code of Conduct

- a. The Headmaster, the Senior Management Team, Pastoral Staff and the Medical Staff play an active role in monitoring the implementation of Orley Farm school's policy on equal opportunities. Use is made of assemblies, PSHE, RE/TPR, Drama, English and other lessons to:
 - I. Promote tolerance of and respect for each other, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
 - II. Promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues.
 - III. Foster an open-minded approach and encourage pupils to recognise the contributions made by different cultures. Bias should be recognised.
 - IV. Understand why and how we will deal with offensive language and behaviour.
 - V. Understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.
- b. Harassment in all its forms is unlawful and unacceptable; our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies contain clear procedures for dealing with unlawful discrimination. All our staff receive anti-discrimination training. Teaching and Medical staff attend regular INSET sessions on the subject.
- c. A successful equal opportunities policy requires strong and positive support from parents and guardians, and full acceptance of the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.

Monitoring

- a. Orley Farm School monitors its equal opportunities policy regularly and reports to the Governors in order to ensure its effectiveness. As part of that process, we invite all parents of candidates for our entrance exams, together with all parents who accept places at the school for their child to complete an anonymous ethnic monitoring form. (The form uses the same ethnic categories as the Government uses in the national census.) When the completed forms arrive at the school, they are separated from any other material that might identify the individual child. The data is logged onto a computer spreadsheet by year of both entrance examination and entry. The individual forms are then shredded.
- b. Under no circumstances would we link our ethnic monitoring data with our pupil records.
- c. We hope that all parents will feel able to participate in the ethnic monitoring scheme.

English as an Additional Language

To ensure that all students at Orley Farm School can effectively engage with the academic and social aspects of our community, we encourage a strong proficiency in English. However, we are aware that some students who speak English as an Additional Language may require additional support and this will be taken into consideration when being assessed.

Requests for Variation in the School Uniform

Although Orley Farm School has Christian roots, we do not select for entry on the basis of religious belief, and we welcome pupils of all faiths and offer the opportunity for pupils to practice their own faiths. However, parents should be aware that all pupils at Orley Farm School are required to wear a uniform. The Headmaster will consider written requests from parents for variations in the uniform on religious grounds that are consistent with the school's ethos and its policy on health and safety. The Headmaster may take expert advice, and will normally arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the implications of such a request.

Complaints

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about the operation of our Equal Opportunities Policy, however, a copy of the school's Complaints Procedure is available on the school website and can be sent to you on request.