

# Leigh Academy Blackheath



## The Equality Act

<b>Approved by:</b> The Senior Leadership Team	<b>Date:</b> 23/02/26
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## 2025-26 LAB The Equality Act - Information for Governors and Academies

### Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all types of unlawful discrimination in a simplified way.

Direct discrimination is treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others. Indirect discrimination happens when something applies to everyone in the same way, but affects some people unfairly: i.e. holding a club in a room only accessible via stairs.

In England and Wales, the Act applies to all maintained and independent schools, including academies, and maintained and non-maintained special schools.

The Act makes it unlawful for the governing body of a school to discriminate against, harass, or victimise a pupil or potential pupil, parents/carers, and staff:

- In relation to admission;
- In the way it provides education for pupils ;
- In the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility, or service; and/or
- By excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

In practice, any person acting on behalf of the governing body is liable for their own discriminatory actions, but the governing body is also liable unless it can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to stop the individual from doing the discriminatory action.

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil by treating them less favourably because of their protected characteristics:

- Sex;
- Race;
- Disability;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy or maternity.

For example, it is unlawful for a school to discriminate against or victimise a pupil by excluding him or her because of or for a reason related to a protected characteristic. The Act does not prohibit schools from excluding students with protected characteristics, but does prohibit exclusion because of their protected characteristics or discrimination during the exclusion process.

Behaviour and exclusion policies that result in a higher proportion of students with a particular protected characteristic being excluded are likely to result in indirect discrimination unless their application can be objectively justified.

Schools and their governing bodies have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the exclusion process for disabled students, and in circumstances where they fail to do so, the exclusion is unlikely to be capable of objective justification.

'A Protected Act' might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information. Even if the allegation was found to be false due to a misunderstanding, that person is protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith, i.e. lying about an incident taking place, as opposed to a misunderstanding.

More information relating to the Act can be found [here](#).

	<p><b>Describe how you ensure the academy is working in accordance with the Equality Act.</b></p>
<p><b>Curriculum</b></p>	<p>We have carefully designed the content of our academic curriculum such that it is sufficiently diverse to advance both equality of opportunity and positive relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic (and thus act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation). Examples include the explicit teaching and celebration of French and Spanish culture in Language Acquisition; the teaching of Blues, Folk, Reggae and Protest music in Performing Arts; Medieval Africa, the Islamic Golden Age, the Holocaust and the Civil Rights movement in History; a study of Africa, China and India in Geography; The Harlem Renaissance and Surrealism in Visual Art; Feminism and Postcolonialism in Language and Literature; and a whole term’s study on Neurodiversity in our unique Lab Learner curriculum. This is to say nothing of our PD curriculum, which explicitly teaches and reteaches students about both equality of opportunity and how to challenge stereotypes and discrimination.</p> <p><a href="#">SMSC and Equalities Act curriculum mapping</a></p> <p>Our teaching and learning framework is divided into 4 areas of focus: Culture, Access, Knowledge and Process.</p> <div> </div> <p>Access underpins all areas of the framework, ensuring the focus for every LAB student is on ‘keeping up’ rather than ‘catching up’ with their learning. Universal adaptive teaching methods, combined with targeted bespoke interventions for individual learners ensures every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.</p> <p>The statutory requirements for PSHE/ RSE/ Citizenship are included at both the planning and delivery phases of the full PD curriculum. Considerations of our communities’ varied religious beliefs are taken into account. Parents and carers are given the option to ‘opt out’ of certain topics across the PD curriculum, as well as the RE curriculum. The process for this includes an informative discussion around the curriculum and its benefits for building wider understanding and greater cultural acceptance through learning at a family/ academy meeting.</p>

	<p>As an IB World School, authorised to deliver the MYP (Yr 7-9), CP &amp; DP (Yr12-13) programmes, our culture, curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning are firmly rooted in IB Philosophy. The IB philosophy is rooted in the conviction that education can build a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. At its core, the IB seeks to develop "internally minded" students who recognise their common humanity, directly aligning with the Equality Act's mandate to eliminate discrimination and foster equality of opportunity. By prioritising inclusion and diversity within its learner profile, the IB goes beyond mere tolerance; it actively dismantles barriers to learning for those with protected characteristics, ensuring that every student, regardless of disability, race, or belief, has the agency to thrive. This synergy creates a classroom environment where the duty to advance equality is not just a compliance measure, but a lived pedagogical value that celebrates the unique identity of every global citizen.</p> <p>LAB achieved a 'Leading' grading for our last Challenge Partners Review in March 2025, as well as an area of excellence for our 'Values Driven KS3 Provision', which is deeply rooted in the IB MYP programme.</p> <p>Our commitment to developing internationally minded global citizens of the future is seen in our high EBAC entry at KS4, and our continued commitment to languages at KS5 through the delivery of both the DP and CP programmes. EBAC entry at KS4 over the last 3 years has been 86.5%, 91.5% and 88.1%.</p>
<p><b>Behaviour/ exclusions</b></p>	<p>The stated aim of our behaviour policy is inclusive; it seeks to help create "a better and more peaceful world through integrity and respect [and to] promote an inclusive and well-disciplined community through a simple system of rewards and consequences, such that all can feel safe and happy, whilst learning without disruption." All students are held to the same high expectations, and where appropriate, celebrated for living our values, irrespective of protected characteristics (the only exception being reasonable adjustments made for those with SEND, the express aim of which is to prevent said students being put at substantial disadvantage to their peers [in accordance with the Equality Act]). Our rewards and sanctions are equitable: issued based on behaviour rather than the individual. Moreover, our policy makes explicit the expectation that, where sanctions are issued, they are done so in a respectful manner; and that students who feel that they may have been treated unfairly are empowered to communicate with members of staff to this end. Furthermore, teachers at LAB are expected to "build positive relationships with <i>all</i> students [and] show genuine interest and care". Finally, we review each suspension carefully and ensure reasonable adjustments have been made where a student with SEND is vulnerable to suspension or exclusion; we also analyse suspension data on a modular basis to monitor for indirect discrimination. In addition to the above, at each governor's meeting, we share the issuing of conduct points (rewards and sanctions) by protected characteristic, and the actions we have taken as a result, to ensure no group is unfairly disadvantaged.</p> <p>The Academy maintains robust monitoring systems to track the distribution of behaviour points, with a specific focus on students sharing protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Our strategic interventions are data-driven; where over-representation of specific cohorts is identified, we implement targeted actions to ensure equity and eliminate any</p>

	<p>potential for indirect discrimination. This proactive approach ensures we fulfil our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The <i>Inspire</i> and <i>Ignite</i> programs offer evidence-based, intensive interventions for our most complex learners. These programs are designed to address Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). By providing these students with bespoke tools for behavioural change, we ensure that disability-related needs are met with specialised support rather than punitive measures.</p> <p>Central to our behaviour strategy is a commitment to restorative practice. All staff undergo regular professional development to ensure this approach is applied consistently and fairly. This culture minimises exclusionary practices and fosters an environment where every student, regardless of background, is treated with dignity and respect.</p> <p>We ensure clarity of expectations through a multi-layered approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum Integration: KS3 behaviour lessons and modular assemblies embed the ‘LAB Learner’ curriculum.</li> <li>● Accessibility: Specific measures are taken to ensure that behaviour expectations and consequences are accessible to all learners, including those with EHC plans or EAL requirements.</li> <li>● Reasonable Adjustments: In line with our legal obligations, reasonable adjustments are systematically applied to behaviour policies to ensure that students with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.</li> <li>● Student Voice: We utilise surveys and focus groups to capture diverse perspectives, allowing leadership to address misconceptions and refine our strategy based on the lived experiences of our student body.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Acts of worship</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Collective Worship Policy</a></p> <p>Consideration is taken to ensure a broad range of religious festivals are celebrated across the academy through assemblies and as part of the PD curriculum. Careful attention is paid to those celebrations that align with the diverse religions represented within our academy and local communities.</p> <p>Whilst we do not have a designated prayer room on site, a private quiet space is made available for any member of the academy community who wishes to use it.</p> <p>For those who observe their own religious festivals during term time, absences are authorised without discrimination.</p> <p>The restaurant menu reflects the variety of faiths within our community with Halal meat and vegan/ vegetarian options available at every sitting. Throughout the year, a range of cultural festivals are celebrated through the availability of special menus, which include a wide variety of cultural dishes from around the world.</p>

<p><b>Uniform</b></p>	<p>Our uniform policy champions equality of opportunity for all students. There is no notable disparity between the price of uniform for boys and girls; there is a reasonable degree of autonomy for both genders (we do not stipulate that boys must wear skirts, or that girls must wear trousers for example) and flexibility as needed for those who cannot reasonably expect to wear certain materials (those have skin conditions, for example). We review our uniform policy regularly and make amendments as appropriate to ensure this remains inclusive.</p>
<p><b>Examinations</b></p>	<p>All our examinations are carried out under JCQ guidelines, to which all appropriate equality legislation applies. Access arrangements are made for certain students, including those defined as having a disability under the Equality Act, to ensure that there is fair access to exams for all. A specific <a href="#">Equalities Policy for Exams</a> is in place</p>
<p><b>Admissions</b></p>	<p>The academy admissions arrangements have been created in compliance with the 2021 Schools Admission Code, and are reviewed and approved annually by the board of governors. The arrangements have not changed since the academy's inception, when they were approved by the independent admissions adjudicator and Department for Education as part of the academy's funding agreement. They must be reviewed in full every 7 years, including a public consultation process, which is scheduled to take place this summer (2024).</p> <p><b>Excerpt from the 2021 Admissions code:</b>  Appendix 1 – Relevant Legislation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This appendix sets out the primary legislation and regulations most relevant to admissions decisions. Admission authorities, Schools Adjudicators, appeal panels, local authorities and maintained schools must comply with the relevant law as well as acting in accordance with the provisions of this Code. This Code and the School Admission Appeals Code (the Codes) are applied to Academies through their Funding Agreements. The information here aims to signpost the relevant law; it does not aim to provide definitive guidance on interpreting the law: that is for the courts.</li> </ol> <p><b>Equality Act 2010</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. This Act consolidates the law prohibiting discrimination, harassment and victimisation and expands the list of protected characteristics. All schools must have due regard to their obligations under the Act and review their policies and practices to make sure these meet the requirements of the Act, even if they believe that they are already operating in a nondiscriminatory way.</li> <li>3. An admission authority must not discriminate on the grounds of disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation, against a person in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.</li> <li>4. An admission authority must not harass a person who has applied for admission as a pupil, in relation to their disability; race; or sex.</li> <li>5. An admission authority must not victimise a person in relation to a protected act either done, or believed to have been done, by that person (e.g. bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010) in the arrangements and decisions it makes as to who is offered admission as a pupil.</li> <li>6. This Act contains limited exceptions to the prohibition of discrimination on</li> </ol>

	<p>grounds of religion or belief and sex. Schools designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character are exempt from some aspects of the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and this means they can make a decision about whether or not to admit a child as a pupil on the basis of religion or belief. Single-sex schools are lawfully permitted to discriminate on the grounds of sex in their admission arrangements.</p> <p>7. Admission authorities are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in relation to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>8. The protected characteristics for these purposes are: disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.</p>
<p><b>School scheduling (i.e. parents evenings, trips, etc.)</b></p>	<p>On our website, we publish all events for each academic year in advance of August so that parents and carers have equal and ample opportunity to reschedule work or personal commitments as required in order to attend. We send multiple reminders and provide targeted support to the parents and carers of students for whom attendance would be challenging. We do not allow parking onsite but do make exceptions on the grounds of disability. Trips are made available to all (with the exception of those at post-16 to universities with particularly challenging admission requirements); we fund at least part of the cost for those students from disadvantaged backgrounds and, historically, we have tracked attendance to ensure students with SEND and their disadvantaged peers have attended at least as many trips as their peers.</p>
<p><b>Staff recruitment / promotion</b></p>	<p>We ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process complete the LAT safer recruitment training. We promote recruitment of the highest quality candidates and equal opportunities for all. We are proud to have a staff body that, in terms of a number of protected characteristics, is broadly representative of our student body.</p>
<p><b>Staff access to training / information</b></p>	<p>All staff have access to high-quality training, both in person and virtually. This includes access to multiple platforms such as National College, Thrive, TES and the Chartered College of Teaching. All of these platforms are used to set targeted online training to meet the needs of all staff's professional development. Although the majority of our staff are teaching staff, our weekly CPD and other training days include different pathways for support staff. Additional training is offered in a considered manner to ensure equal opportunities, for example, NPQ programmes. This is the same in regard to opportunities for staff to deliver training, particularly with our LAB Teach Meets, which allow for the sharing of best practice from a range of staff. We are compliant with our statutory training duties, for example, Health and Safety, NOS, Medical, Safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty.</p> <p>We note the importance of training our staff on the Equality Act and deliver this through training that focuses on wellbeing, SEND provision and psychological safety.</p>