

*I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well. Psalm 130:13-14*

Edwinstree Middle School
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School



Equality & Diversity Scheme

(incorporating Annual Report) and Disability Policy

Date of Issue: **December 2023**
Review: **December 2024**

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1. Vision and Values

As a Christian school, we recognise the unique and wonderful in everyone, and as a community we support each other to flourish, and live life in all its fullness.

All our students are valued as individuals taking account of race, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, background, sexual identity, age and ability. At Edwinstree we celebrate the wonderful in our students celebrating the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity which exists in our school and the wider community. In order to flourish we work hard to ensure that all our students enjoy equal access to a rich, relevant curriculum, high quality learning experiences and enrichment activities.

2. School Context and annual report

The school is one of the few remaining middle schools within Hertfordshire in the small rural town of Buntingford. It is commuting distance from both London and Cambridge. Its student body is predominantly but not exclusively white British. As a Church of England school we are inclusive and have students from 4 of the main religious groups currently. The majority of students live in Buntingford, and the surrounding villages, which contain a mixture of types of housing and include pockets of rural deprivation. Buntingford is an area of high employment, so few students are eligible for free school meals. However, with the expansion of the town and the new building works, the school has seen an increase in PP students stemming from the new social housing, our Year 5 PP is 16%, Year 6 is 25 %, Years 7 is 9% and Year 8 is 14%. The proportion of adults in Buntingford educated to degree level, 18.4% is significantly below the county and national average. A significant minority of students travel to Edwinstree from Stevenage and therefore, live in a more socially and culturally diverse urban environment.

Key information Characteristic

Total Breakdown (number and %)	Total	Breakdown (number & %)	
Number of students 2021/2022	480	Male 263 = 55 %	Female 217 = 45%
Number of Teachers	31	Male 8 = 26%	Female 23 = 74%
Number of Support staff	29	Male 1 = 3%	Female 28 = 97%
Number of Governors	10		
Stability of School population – ASP	39	91.8%	
Students eligible for FSM - ASP	85	17.8%	
Deprived factor - ASP	4	0.8%	
Disabled staff	3	5%	
Disabled students (SEN/LDD)	96	20%	
BME students - ASP	44	9.1%	
Students who speak English as an additional language	17	3.6%	
Attendance 2022 - 2023 – FFT Aspire		91%	

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3. Legal Background

The school is committed to meeting its public sector statutory duties as detailed below. We understand that the duties apply to service delivery and employment and staff management as well as policy development and implementation.

General Duty under the Equality Act 2010: The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Specific Duties of the Act enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) The specific duties require schools to:

- Publish annually information quantitative and qualitative, showing compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- To set every four years one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty.

Protected Characteristics: The Equality Act 2010 protects students from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for school provisions are:

- age (for staff only)
- disability
- ethnicity and race
- gender (sex)
- gender identity and reassignment
- pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership (for staff only)

Disability at Edwinstree

We implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the college to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
- improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students

Community Cohesion

Edwinstree takes its duty seriously to promote community cohesion. It understands community cohesion to mean working towards a society which has a common vision and sense of belonging shared by all; a society in which diversity is appreciated and valued; a society in which all have similar opportunities and in which there are strong and positive relationships. We seek support our students to find their wonderful and to flourish. We believe strongly as a Church of England school that we have a responsibility towards our students to create such a society within and beyond our community. Our students have the right to be a member of a

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community, which is guided by these principles and they are entitled to the opportunity to actively participate in such a community.

4. Roles and responsibilities and publishing information

The Governors, supported by the Headteacher and staff, are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this scheme. The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the action plan is delivered effectively. Every 12 months, as part of the review of this policy, there will be a report on equality and diversity to the Governors' Curriculum & Personnel Committee. All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work.

Key person and responsibility for:

- Single equality scheme Headteacher
- Disability equality (including bullying incidents) Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and SENCO
- SEN/LDD (including bullying incidents) SENCO Headteacher
- Accessibility Business Manager and SENCO
- Gender equality (including bullying incidents) Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher
- Race equality (including racist incidents) Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher
- Equality and diversity in curriculum content Headteacher
- Equality and diversity in student achievement Headteacher and Assistant Head
- Equality and diversity – behaviour and exclusions Assistant Headteacher
- Participation Headteacher
- Impact assessment Headteacher
- Stakeholder consultation Headteacher Policy review Headteacher
- Communication and publishing Headteacher

Edwinstree's Equality Scheme is aligned with the School Improvement Plan. Its implementation is monitored within the college's self-evaluation and other review processes.

The responsibilities of the Governors are to

Review the college's equality and other policies and ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior staff for the communication and implementation of college policies

The Headteacher and senior staff will:

- Behave in accordance with the college's policies, leading by example
- Respond appropriately to the behaviour of students and staff, as a whole, and individuals (praising/challenging as necessary)
- Contribute to managing the implementation of the college's equality scheme

All staff: teaching and support will:

- Raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development
- Maintain awareness of the college's equality policy and procedures
- Implement the equality policy and scheme
- Behave with respect and fairness to all colleagues and students
- Provide a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents

Edwinstree operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice including in teaching and learning, admissions and exclusions and in relation to the recruitment and employment of staff.

5. Engagement

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We have welcomed the participation and involvement of people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities in our annual consultation and self-evaluation activities. We consult and engage both with people affected by our decisions - parents, students, staff – and with people who have special knowledge which can inform the college's approach.

6. Equality Objectives

Our objectives are identified through our analysis of our Key Stage 2 and Year 8 results and information and advice received from a partner upper school and LA advisory staff

Equality Objectives Protected Characteristic

1. Close the gap between the progress made by PP and non PP students in core subjects
2. Close the gap in attendance figures between PP, SEND and non PP or SEND.
3. To support students with issues of gender identity Gender identity

7. Equality Objectives Action Plan

Please refer to the attached School Improvement Plan with the Equality & Diversity section highlighted in red.