

Title and Description	Equality Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy
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Date of adoption	December 2020
Approved by	Trust Board
To be reviewed by	Trust Board
Responsibility	Chief Operating Officer
Review period	Annually
Date of next review	October 2027

Version	Date of review	Author	Notes on revision
2	October 2025	Michele Osborne	Previous annual review.
3	September 2026	Wendy Pattison	Full compliance refresh: PSED duties clarified; protected characteristics corrected for students; responsibilities and assurance simplified; reasonable adjustments strengthened; gender-questioning wording aligned with KCSIE 2026 and current Equality Act position; annual publication requirements made explicit; outdated and unnecessary wording removed.

AI Summary

Framwellgate School Durham's Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy outlines the school's commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and safe environment for all students and staff. Rooted in the values of excellence, compassion, and respect, the policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and promote good relations across all protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

The policy ensures that diversity is celebrated and embedded throughout the curriculum, pastoral care, staffing, and community engagement. It supports positive action, inclusive recruitment, and tailored provision for vulnerable groups, including SEND, EAL, and students from minority backgrounds. Staff are expected to challenge bias and uphold equality, while students are encouraged to speak out against discrimination.

The policy sets out clear responsibilities for the Trust Board, Local Governing Body, school leaders, staff and students. Monitoring considers relevant equality evidence including outcomes, participation, discriminatory incidents, reasonable adjustments and stakeholder voice. The school publishes information demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty annually and publishes specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy

Values and Ethos

Like all good schools, we're driven by our values above all else. We define these as:

Excellence - Everyone in our community will know and experience success

The most for those that need the most - We will meet the needs of all our learners

Known and valued - Everyone here will be celebrated for who they are and what they do

Collective endeavour - We will achieve success together

Joy - Everyone will know and create joy

These five values determine all that we do, and every part of the school flows from them. They set the direction and act as a compass to ensure we continue to grow and develop as a school in the way that we feel best supports all our students.

Introduction

This policy explains how the school and Trust meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and how equality is embedded in decision-making, education, safeguarding, employment and governance.

- We will eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- We will advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- We will foster good relations, tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, staff and others where the law requires them.
- We will publish information demonstrating PSED compliance every year and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
- Equality considerations will inform decisions when they are made; they will not be treated as a retrospective compliance exercise.

1. Purpose and scope

Framwellgate School Durham is committed to an inclusive, respectful and safe environment in which students and staff are treated fairly, barriers to participation are identified and addressed, and diversity is respected. This policy applies to students, prospective students, staff, applicants, parents and carers, visitors, contractors and others affected by the Trust's and school's functions, to the extent that the Equality Act 2010 applies to them.

The policy should be read alongside safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying, SEND, accessibility, admissions, complaints, whistleblowing, recruitment and employment policies, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.

2. Legal framework

The principal legal framework is:

- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149.
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND framework, where relevant to disability and reasonable adjustments.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, where equality issues overlap with safeguarding.

The Trust Board remains accountable for ensuring that the Trust and school comply with their equality duties. Delegating operational activity or assurance does not remove that accountability.

3. Public Sector Equality Duty

When exercising their functions, the Trust and school will have due regard to the need to:

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not; and
3. foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

What “due regard” means in practice

Equality must be considered consciously, proportionately and at the time decisions are being developed and taken. Decision-makers should have enough relevant evidence to understand likely impacts, consider disadvantages or barriers, and identify reasonable mitigations where needed. The duty is continuing and applies to policy development, implementation and review.

4. Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 contains nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

For students and prospective students under the schools provisions of the Act, the protected characteristics are:

- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Age and marriage and civil partnership are not protected characteristics under the schools provisions relating to students, although they may be relevant to the Trust and school in other functions, particularly as an employer or service provider.

5. Sex, gender reassignment and children questioning their gender

The school will treat all students with dignity and respect and will not tolerate bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Sex and gender reassignment are separate protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Following the Supreme Court judgment in *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16, references to sex, woman and man in the Equality Act 2010 are understood by reference to biological sex. The protected characteristic of gender reassignment remains protected under the Act. Where a child is questioning their gender or a request relating to social transition is raised, the school will follow KCSIE 2026 and applicable law. Decisions will be made carefully and on the individual facts, with the child's safeguarding and welfare at the centre, appropriate involvement of parents or carers, and consideration of the rights, safety, privacy and dignity of all students.

6. Disability and reasonable adjustments

The Trust and school will not discriminate unlawfully because of disability and will comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments. This includes considering reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and procedures and, where required, providing auxiliary aids and services so that disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

The school will anticipate barriers where reasonably possible and will work with students, parents or carers, staff and relevant professionals. Physical accessibility is also addressed through the school's Accessibility Plan and SEND arrangements.

7. How we put equality into practice

Education and curriculum

- Provide a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum that prepares students for life in modern Britain and develops respect for difference.

- Challenge prejudice, discriminatory language and stereotypes, including within curriculum content and resources.
- Ensure students can participate in learning, enrichment, careers education and wider school life without unlawful discrimination, making reasonable adjustments where required.

Behaviour, safeguarding and pastoral support

- Respond promptly to discriminatory bullying, harassment, victimisation and hate-related incidents through the appropriate behaviour and safeguarding procedures.
- Record and review incidents so that patterns, repeat concerns and disproportionate impacts can be identified and acted upon.
- Provide appropriate support to students who experience discrimination and address the behaviour of those responsible.

Employment

- Apply fair and lawful recruitment, selection, promotion, pay, development and employment practices.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and applicants where required.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities under this policy and receive appropriate training.

Community and relationships

- Promote respectful relationships and good relations between groups.
- Engage students, parents and carers and other stakeholders where their views are relevant to equality impacts or priorities.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Trust Board

- Retains overall accountability for compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and PSED across the Trust.
- Approves the policy and one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.
- Ensures equality information demonstrating PSED compliance is published at least annually.
- Receives assurance on significant equality risks, objectives, trends and actions through the agreed governance route.
- Has due regard to equality when making strategic decisions.

Local Governing Body

- Provides local scrutiny and assurance within the responsibilities delegated to it by the Trust Board.
- Reviews relevant local evidence, including significant disparities, discriminatory incidents and progress against agreed actions, and escalates material risks or exceptions through the agreed assurance route.
- Does not duplicate detailed operational management or Trust-level oversight.

Headteacher and senior leaders

- Implement this policy and ensure equality duties are reflected in school policies, decisions and day-to-day practice.
- Ensure relevant equality evidence is analysed, action is taken where significant disparities or risks are identified, and appropriate assurance is provided to governors and Trustees.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and that complaints or incidents are handled under the appropriate procedures.

All staff

- Promote equality, challenge discriminatory behaviour and report concerns promptly.
- Consider equality and reasonable adjustments in their own decisions and practice.
- Follow safeguarding, behaviour, whistleblowing and other relevant procedures.

Students

- Are expected to treat others with respect and follow the school's behaviour expectations.
- Are encouraged to report discriminatory behaviour or concerns to a trusted member of staff.

9. Equality information and objectives

Statutory publication requirements

The academy must publish information showing how it complies with the PSED and update that information at least annually. It must also publish one or more equality objectives that are clearly defined, specific and measurable, and update them at least every four years.

The school's current equality information and equality objectives will be published on the school or Trust website and clearly signposted. The published information should be proportionate, meaningful and sufficient to show how the PSED is being met. Personal data or information that could identify individuals will not be published where this would be inappropriate or unlawful.

Equality objectives will be informed by evidence and will focus on the most significant equality issues identified by the school. Progress will be reviewed at least annually and reported through the agreed governance assurance route.

10. Monitoring and assurance

Monitoring will focus on evidence that helps the school understand whether students and staff with protected characteristics are experiencing disadvantage, barriers or unequal outcomes. The evidence considered will be proportionate and may include:

- attendance and persistent absence
- suspensions, exclusions and behaviour sanctions
- attainment, progress and participation
- bullying, harassment, hate-related and discriminatory incidents
- SEND access and reasonable adjustments
- complaints and concerns with an equality dimension
- recruitment, workforce and staff experience where relevant and lawful
- student, parent/carer and staff voice

Data will be interpreted carefully. Small numbers will not be published where this could identify individuals or create an unnecessary privacy risk. Where evidence identifies a significant disparity or concern, leaders will consider the causes, determine appropriate action and monitor impact.

11. Concerns, complaints and breaches

Concerns about discrimination should be raised promptly with the school so that they can be addressed. Student behaviour will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures where appropriate. Complaints will be considered under the Complaints Policy. Staff concerns may also be raised through relevant employment procedures or the Whistleblowing Policy. No person will be victimised for raising a concern or doing a protected act under the Equality Act 2010.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, statutory guidance, case law or the Trust's governance arrangements. The annual policy review is separate from the legal requirement to publish PSED compliance information annually and equality objectives at least every four years.

Equality and Diversity Policy - Appendix 1

Annual Equality Information (template for annual collection and publication of data)

Framwellgate School Durham publishes the following equality information to demonstrate how it is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. The school has due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. This information is reviewed and updated annually. Information will not be published where doing so could identify an individual.

1. Our school population

Information	2026-27
Total number of students	[]
Female students	[]
Male students	[]
Students with SEND	[]
Students with an EHCP	[]
Students eligible for Free School Meals	[]
Pupil Premium students	[]
Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL)	[]
Students from ethnic minority backgrounds	[]
Looked-after and previously looked-after children	[]
Service children	[]

2. Protected characteristics - student information

Protected characteristic	Information/evidence considered
Disability	[Number/proportion where appropriate; reasonable adjustments; accessibility evidence]
Gender reassignment	[Relevant evidence, where appropriate, without identifying individual students]
Pregnancy and maternity	[Provision/adjustments where applicable; do not publish identifiable information]
Race / ethnicity	[Headline population data and any significant disparities identified]
Religion or belief	[Relevant provision, adjustments or evidence where applicable]
Sex	[Female/male population and any significant disparities identified]
Sexual orientation	[Relevant pupil voice, curriculum, safeguarding or bullying evidence; no individual-level data]

The school does not collect or publish sensitive personal data simply for the purpose of this appendix. Where numerical data is not appropriate, other evidence such as pupil voice, safeguarding, behaviour, curriculum and provision is considered.

3. Staff equality information

Information	2026-27
Total workforce	[]
Female staff	[]
Male staff	[]
Staff declaring a disability	[] / suppress if identifiable

Ethnic minority staff	[] / suppress if identifiable
Female members of SLT	[]
Male members of SLT	[]
Female middle leaders	[]
Male middle leaders	[]
Part-time staff	[]

The Trust operates equality, safer recruitment and employment procedures in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments are considered and made for disabled employees and applicants where required. Workforce information is reviewed to identify significant equality issues or disparities requiring action.

4. Equality in outcomes and participation

Area reviewed	2026-27 position / significant equality issues identified
Attendance and persistent absence	[]
Attainment and progress	[]
Suspensions and permanent exclusions	[]
Behaviour and discriminatory incidents	[]
Bullying, including prejudice-based and identity-based bullying	[]
Participation in enrichment, trips and wider school life	[]
SEND access and reasonable adjustments	[]
Pupil voice - belonging, safety and inclusion	[]
Complaints relating to equality/discrimination	[]

Data is analysed proportionately to identify significant differences between relevant groups. Where a disparity is identified, the school considers its causes and whether action is required. Small cohorts are treated carefully and information is not published where individuals could be identified.

5. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Evidence	2026-27
Recorded discriminatory/prejudice-related incidents	[]
Bullying incidents involving a protected characteristic	[]
Equality-related complaints	[]
Staff equality/safeguarding training undertaken	[Brief details]
Significant actions taken during the year	[Brief details]

The school records, responds to and monitors discriminatory and prejudice-related behaviour. Relevant patterns and trends are reviewed and appropriate action is taken through safeguarding, behaviour, pastoral and curriculum arrangements.

6. Advancing equality of opportunity

Area	2026-27 evidence/action
Reasonable adjustments and accessibility	[]
Action to address identified gaps in attendance, achievement or participation	[]
Support for pupils experiencing disadvantage or barriers to participation	[]
Curriculum and wider-school accessibility	[]

7. Fostering good relations

Area	2026-27 evidence/action
Curriculum and personal development	[]
Pupil voice and engagement	[]
Work to challenge prejudice and stereotypes	[]
Community/family engagement	[]

8. Progress against Equality Objectives 2026-2030

Equality objective	2026-27 evidence/progress	RAG
1. Outcomes and participation - identify and reduce significant gaps in attendance, achievement, participation and school experience.	[]	[]
2. Belonging, safety and respect - ensure pupils feel known, valued and safe and reduce discriminatory, prejudicial and identity-based bullying or harassment.	[]	[]
3. Access and reasonable adjustments - ensure disabled pupils and pupils with identified needs can access the curriculum, wider school life and environment as fully as possible.	[]	[]

Overall equality priorities arising from the 2026-27 review

1. []
2. []
3. []

These priorities will inform school improvement planning and implementation of the Trust's Equality Objectives. Progress will be monitored through the agreed governance assurance arrangements.