



TARBIYYAH SECONDARY SCHOOL

مدرسة التربية الثانوية الإسلامية

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Equality, diversity and non-discrimination

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026 – 2027

Policy name	Equal Opportunities Policy 2026–2027
Applies to	All pupils, staff, parents, trustees, visitors, contractors and others using school facilities
Approved by	Haneef Sandhar
Position	Headteacher
Updated by	S. Ahmed, Deputy Headteacher
Agreed with	The Chair of Trustees
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1. Introduction and Commitment

Tarbiyyah Secondary School for Boys is committed both to eliminating unlawful discrimination and to promoting equality for pupils, staff, parents and others using the school's facilities.

We are committed to giving every pupil the opportunity to achieve the highest standards by taking account of their varied experiences and needs, offering a broad and balanced curriculum, and holding high expectations of all.

This commitment is not an administrative obligation bolted on to our ethos. Islam teaches that every person is owed dignity and just treatment, that people are not to be judged by lineage, wealth or appearance, and that the measure of a person is taqwā and character. Our RECIPE values apply to every pupil without exception. A school that treated some of its boys as worth less than others would be failing them and failing its own principles.

2. Legal Framework

Source	Relevance
Equality Act 2010	The single statute now governing discrimination law. It defines the protected characteristics, prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, harassment and victimisation, requires reasonable adjustments for disabled people, and sets out the duties on schools as responsible bodies and on employers.
Equality Act 2010, Schedule 10	Requires the school to prepare and implement an accessibility plan.

Source	Relevance
Equality Act 2010, Schedule 11	Sets out the exceptions applying to single-sex schools and to schools with a religious character. See section 4.
The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014	Requires the school to have regard to the Equality Act, to encourage respect for other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics, and to preclude the promotion of partisan political views.
Human Rights Act 1998	In particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to education.
Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)	Governs provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
Keeping Children Safe in Education	Includes the additional safeguarding barriers faced by children with particular protected characteristics. The 2026 edition applies.
Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance	The DfE's revised guidance comes into force on 1 September 2026 and replaces the 2019 guidance. Every school must have an up-to-date written policy in place by then. See section 13.
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	Received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026, with staged commencement. It changes the regulation of independent educational institutions.

The Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act does not apply to independent schools. We nonetheless adopt its principles — eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations — as the standard we hold ourselves to.

3. The Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects nine characteristics. The school does not unlawfully discriminate against anyone — pupil, parent, member of staff or visitor — on any of these grounds.

Characteristic	Meaning	Applies to pupils?
Age	A person's age or age group.	No — applies to staff and employment only
Disability	A physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities.	Yes
Gender reassignment	Proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process of reassigning sex.	Yes
Marriage and civil partnership	Being married or in a civil partnership.	No — applies to staff and employment only
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy, and the period after giving birth.	Yes

Characteristic	Meaning	Applies to pupils?
Race	Colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.	Yes
Religion or belief	Any religion, any religious or philosophical belief, and a lack of religion or belief.	Yes, subject to section 4
Sex	Being male or female.	Yes, subject to section 4
Sexual orientation	Orientation towards persons of the same sex, the opposite sex, or either sex.	Yes

4. Lawful Exceptions: A Single-Sex School with an Islamic Ethos

Tarbiyyah Secondary School admits boys only, and teaches a curriculum shaped by an Islamic ethos. Both of these are lawful, and both rest on specific exceptions in the Equality Act 2010. It is better to state them plainly than to leave the policy looking as though the school has overlooked them.

The exceptions we rely on

Single-sex admission. Schedule 11 of the Equality Act permits a single-sex school to admit pupils of one sex only. Admitting boys only is therefore not unlawful sex discrimination.

Religious character. Schedule 11 also permits an independent school whose entry in the register of independent schools records a religious ethos — as Tarbiyyah's records an Islamic ethos — to give preference in admissions on grounds of religion or belief, and to act in accordance with that ethos in the respects the Act specifies.

Curriculum content. The discrimination provisions do not apply to the content of the curriculum. What is taught is a matter for the school; how it is delivered, and how pupils are treated while it is taught, remain fully subject to the Act.

Everything else applies in full. These exceptions are narrow. They do not permit discrimination in how pupils are taught, assessed, disciplined, rewarded or supported, and they do not permit harassment of any pupil, parent or member of staff on any ground.

5. Aims and Objectives

- The school does not unlawfully discriminate against anyone, whether pupil, parent, member of staff or visitor, on the grounds of any protected characteristic.
- The school promotes the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education it provides.
- The school seeks to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities it provides.
- The school works to identify and remove indirect discrimination that may form a barrier to learning for some groups, by regularly assessing the impact of its policies, practices and guidelines.
- The school ensures that recruitment, employment, promotion and development opportunities are open to all.
- The school challenges personal prejudice and stereotyped views whenever they occur, recognising that both are often caused by misconception and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences the school promotes respect for all.

- The school values each pupil's worth, and celebrates the individuality of its pupils and the diversity of the community it serves.
- The school and its staff are proactive in tackling prejudice and unlawful discrimination rather than waiting for it to be reported.

6. What Unlawful Conduct Looks Like

Staff are expected to recognise the following. Ignorance of what constitutes discrimination is not a defence against an allegation.

Conduct	What it means, with a school example
Direct discrimination	Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. For example, refusing a boy a place on a trip because of his ethnicity.
Indirect discrimination	Applying a rule that applies to everyone but which puts people sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, and which cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, a hair rule that is impossible for boys with a particular hair type to meet.
Discrimination arising from disability	Treating a pupil unfavourably because of something arising from his disability, without justification. For example, sanctioning a boy with ADHD for calling out, in the same way as any other pupil and without adjustment.
Failure to make reasonable adjustments	Not taking reasonable steps to avoid a disabled person being put at a substantial disadvantage. See the Disability Equality and Accessibility Policy.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This includes so-called banter.
Victimisation	Treating someone badly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination. No pupil, parent or member of staff will be disadvantaged for raising a concern under this policy.

7. Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum

- Every pupil has an equal entitlement to the school's curriculum, and to all other areas of school life, regardless of any protected characteristic or of language background.
- Pupils have equal access to the curriculum regardless of academic ability. This section should be read alongside the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.
- Staff actively work to break down stereotyping in subject choices. This is particularly important when advising pupils on Key Stage 4 options.
- The school monitors any careers advice or work experience placements provided by outside agencies, to ensure equal opportunities.
- All forms of subject support, guidance, amenities, facilities and extra-curricular activities are equally available to all pupils.
- Teachers assess the materials and resources they use, and take action where needed to ensure they reflect concepts, themes and information that eliminate prejudice, racism and discrimination. Teachers ensure that pupils feel their language and culture are acknowledged and valued.
- The school actively fosters an ethos in which every pupil feels secure and valued.

8. Equal Opportunities and Our Behaviour Standards

A behaviour system applied without thought can discriminate just as effectively as one designed to. Behavioural expectations and disciplinary sanctions are free of bias on any protected characteristic ground, and this section sets out what that requires in practice.

Applying the Consequence System fairly

- Behavioural expectations and sanctions under the C1–C5 Consequence System are applied without bias on any protected characteristic ground.
- Sanction data — C1 to C5, removals from lesson, isolations and suspensions — is analysed by ethnicity, by SEND and disability status, and by any other relevant characteristic at least half-termly by the Deputy Headteacher. Where a group is disproportionately represented, the school investigates why and acts, rather than recording the figure and moving on.
- Where a pupil's behaviour may arise from a disability, the adjustments in the Disability Equality and Accessibility Policy apply before any escalation beyond C2.
- Staff take account of the possibility that a pupil's response to instruction is affected by language, by a communication need, or by a cultural difference in what eye contact or directness conveys — none of which is defiance.

Uniform, hair and appearance

- Uniform and hair standards apply to all pupils, and adjustments are made where a disability or health condition requires it, as set out in the Disability Equality and Accessibility Policy.
- The school considers whether any appearance standard places pupils of a particular ethnicity at a disadvantage, and is prepared to adjust it where it does.
- The school's hair standard regulates the cut — fades, tapers, shaved patterns and colouring — and not the length to which a boy's hair naturally grows. Natural hair texture and protective styles are not matters of discipline.

Searching, rewards and support

- Where a pupil is searched, staff take account of religious and cultural sensitivities as well as of any disability, and a search of the person is conducted by a member of staff of the same sex with another adult present.
- The Merit System and the Excellence Awards are reviewed to ensure that every pupil can realistically achieve recognition, including pupils whose attendance is affected by disability or long-term health conditions.
- Prejudice-related incidents, including racist incidents, are recorded, reported to the Headteacher, and monitored for patterns. Recording is not an admission that the school has a problem; not recording is how a problem goes unnoticed.

9. Race and Ethnicity

The school will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial and ethnic groups.

The school does not tolerate any form of racism or racist behaviour. Where a racist incident occurs it is dealt with under the Behaviour Policy and this policy, recorded, and reported to the Headteacher.

- The school endeavours to be welcoming to all minority groups. The celebration and understanding of cultural diversity are promoted through the topics pupils study and are reflected in displays, resources and events.
- Cultural diversity and respect for others are reflected across the whole curriculum. The curriculum enhances pupils' understanding of British and world society and history, including the contributions of minority ethnic groups.
- The school gives pupils the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and to reject racial discrimination.

10. Sex and Single-Sex Education

Tarbiyyah Secondary School educates boys. That does not remove the school's obligations in relation to sex; it changes what they require of us.

- The school examines its curriculum, procedures and materials for sex bias, and for the transmission of rigid stereotypes about what men and boys are, and about what women and girls are.
- Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the stereotypes presented by the media, and resources are chosen that value the achievements of both women and men.
- The curriculum avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions and does not present any field of study or work as closed to a pupil because of sex.
- Pupils have opportunities to examine their own preconceived ideas about the roles of men and women.
- The school actively addresses misogyny. Boys educated apart from girls still form views about girls and women, and the school treats the formation of those views as part of its educational responsibility, not as something outside its remit.
- Female staff, parents and visitors are treated with the same respect as male staff, parents and visitors, and any conduct falling short of that is dealt with under the Behaviour Policy or the Staff Code of Conduct as appropriate.
- The school ensures female staff have equal access to appointment, promotion, training and development.

11. Disability

The school is committed to meeting the needs of pupils with disabilities as it is to meeting the needs of all within the school, and endeavours to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure disabled pupils are not placed at a disadvantage compared with pupils who are not disabled.
- The Act permits, and in some circumstances requires, more favourable treatment of disabled people. Treating a disabled pupil more favourably in order to remove a disadvantage is not unfairness to others; it is what the law requires.
- The school provides an environment that allows disabled pupils full access to all areas of learning and to associated services, including educational visits and other off-site activities.
- Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate — for example by allowing additional time, modifying materials, or offering alternative activities where a pupil is unable to manipulate particular tools or equipment.

This section should be read alongside the Disability Equality and Accessibility Policy and the school's Accessibility Plan, which set out the school's duties and adjustments in full.

12. Religion and Belief

Tarbiyyah Secondary School is an Islamic school and its ethos, curriculum and daily life reflect that. Within that context:

- The school respects the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, parents and visitors, and complies with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice, including those of people of no faith.
- Staff are not required to hold a particular belief in order to be treated fairly in their employment, save where an occupational requirement lawfully applies to a particular post and has been properly identified in advance.
- Pupils and families of other faiths or none, where admitted, are treated with the same respect as any other member of the school community.
- The school teaches pupils to engage with those who believe differently with courtesy and evidence, and does not permit contempt or mockery of any person on grounds of belief.

13. Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment

- The school makes no assumption about the sexual orientation of any member of its community.
- Derogatory name-calling of any kind is unacceptable and is dealt with under the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- No pupil, parent or member of staff will be harassed, bullied or treated less favourably on grounds of sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This obligation applies to the school in full.
- Relationships and Sex Education is taught in accordance with the school's Islamic ethos and in accordance with the school's separate RSE policy, within the framework set by statute and the revised DfE guidance in force from 1 September 2026.

14. Age

The school puts procedures in place to ensure that no-one is denied a job, an equal chance of training or promotion, or suffers harassment or victimisation, because of their age. Age is a protected characteristic in relation to staff and to the school's employment practices; it does not apply to the treatment of pupils.

15. Recruitment and Employment

- Recruitment and selection procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage, directly or indirectly.
- No job applicant or employee is discriminated against on any protected characteristic ground, or disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justified.
- Employees are given an equal opportunity to progress within the school.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled applicants at every stage of recruitment, and for disabled employees in post.
- Appointment panels give due regard to this policy, and those sitting on them understand what discrimination in recruitment looks like.

This section should be read alongside the Safer Recruitment Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

Who	Responsibility
The Trustees	Set out the school's commitment to equal opportunities and ensure all members of the school community are treated fairly and equally. Ensure no-one is unlawfully discriminated against while in the school. Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and require the Headteacher to report annually on it.
Headteacher	Ensures this policy is implemented and that all staff are aware of it and apply it fairly. Ensures appointment panels give due regard to it. Promotes equal opportunity in curriculum development and in access to training. Promotes respect for other people throughout school life, including in assemblies and displays. Treats every incident of unfair treatment with due concern.
Deputy Headteacher	Analyses behaviour, attendance, merit and outcome data by protected characteristic at least half-termly and acts on disproportionality. Ensures the Consequence System is applied consistently with this policy.
Teachers	Recognise their own prejudices and ensure all pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Select resources that give positive images and challenge stereotyped images of minority groups. Have regard to this policy when designing schemes of work, both in the topics chosen and in how sensitive issues are approached. Challenge any incident of prejudice or discrimination and report it to the Headteacher.
Support and office staff	Apply this policy at the gate, at the office, in the corridors and at break and lunch, where a great deal of a school's culture is actually set.
Pupils	Are made aware of this policy, treat one another with respect, and bring any incident of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a teacher or the Headteacher.
Parents	Are made aware of this policy through the school's published materials, and bring any incident of prejudice or discrimination to the attention of a teacher or the Headteacher.
Visitors and contractors	Are required to adhere to this policy while on the school site.

17. Reporting an Incident and Making a Complaint

Any pupil, parent, member of staff or visitor who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment or victimisation should report it.

Stage	Route
Stage 1	Report it to any member of staff, to the pupil's form tutor, or directly to the Headteacher. Incidents involving pupils are recorded and dealt with under the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy.
Stage 2	Where the matter is not resolved, make a formal complaint under the school's Complaints Policy and Procedure. Staff may also use the Whistleblowing Policy where that is the appropriate route.
External	A parent or pupil may bring a disability discrimination claim to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability), and a claim on other protected characteristic grounds to the County Court. An employee may bring a claim to the Employment Tribunal. Time limits are short — generally six months for a schools claim and three months for an employment claim — so advice should be taken promptly.

No-one will be treated less favourably as a result of raising a concern in good faith under this policy.

18. Monitoring, Equality Objectives and Review

The Trustees are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. They will:

- monitor the progress of pupils from minority groups, comparing it with the progress made by other pupils in the school;
- monitor the staff appointment process so that no applicant is discriminated against;
- monitor the school's behaviour data, including the number of suspensions and exclusions, to make sure pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated;
- require the Headteacher to report annually on the effectiveness of this policy;
- take seriously any complaint from a pupil, parent, member of staff or visitor regarding equal opportunity.

Equality objectives

The school sets specific and measurable equality objectives, reviews progress against them annually, and publishes them alongside this policy.

Objective	Action	Measure and review date
Close any disproportionality in C3–C5 sanctions by ethnicity and SEND status	Half-termly analysis by the Deputy Headteacher; adjustments reviewed with the SENDCo	No unexplained disproportionality — reviewed each half term; July 2027
Apply the revised hair standard and the uniform adjustment process consistently	Staff briefing; adjustment requests recorded and shared	No pupil sanctioned for natural hair texture — reviewed termly; December 2026
Every pupil with SEND or a disability has recorded adjustments shared with all staff	SENDCo maintains the record and shares it with cover staff	Record complete for all identified pupils — December 2026

Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if considered necessary or if legislation changes.

A. Appendix A — Where Equality and Diversity Is Taught

Equality and the protected characteristics are covered primarily through the PSHE and Islamic Studies programmes. Please refer to the school's curriculum overviews for further detail.

PSHE

Year group	Coverage
Year 7	Term 1: British Values — the four strands explored. Term 2: Equality and Diversity.
Year 8	Term 1: Rights and responsibilities. Term 2: Valuing difference.
Year 9	Term 1: Relationships. Term 2: Apprenticeships. Term 3: Community contribution; first aid.
Year 10	Term 1: Rights and responsibilities. Term 2: Careers. Term 3: Work experience.
Year 11	Term 1: Applying for further education. Term 2: Revision and examination preparation. Term 3: Study leave and examinations.

Equality and diversity within the History curriculum at Key Stage 3

Years 7, 8 and 9:

- The past of most of our pupils' heritage is represented in the curriculum through the study of Britain, Asia, Africa and North America.
- Pupils are helped to understand why some topics from the past remain highly emotive and sensitive for particular groups of people.
- Topics begin and end at the right point so that pupils understand people as fully human, and not only through the categories that those in power assigned to them.
- The visual material placed in front of pupils — in textbooks, presentations and displays — reflects the past as diverse as it was, and respects people's dignity.
- Pupils understand that a school curriculum is itself constructed and selected, and is therefore an interpretation of a very diverse past.

B. Appendix B — Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy and the C1–C5 Consequence System
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Disability Equality and Accessibility Policy, and the Accessibility Plan
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Admissions Policy

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- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
 - Curriculum Policy and the RSE Policy
 - SMSC and British Values in the Curriculum
 - No Platform for Extremism Policy
 - Safer Recruitment Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Complaints Policy and Procedure
 - Student & Parent Handbook 2026–27

Approved by: Haneef Sandhar, Headteacher

Updated by: S. Ahmed, Deputy Headteacher · August 2026

Next review due: August 2027

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