THE PERSE SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

Policy on Equal Treatment

The Perse School

April 2026

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	POLICY STATEMENT	4
3	FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION	5
4	EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES	7
5	SCHOOL UNIFORM	9
7	PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS, DIETARY, LANGUAGE OR CULTURAL NEEDS	9
8	AWARENESS	10
9	RISK ASSESSMENT	10
10	WORKING TOGETHER	10
11	RECORD KEEPING	10
12	RESPONSIBILITIES, MONITORING AND REVIEW	10
13	ENFORCEMENT	10
14	VERSION CONTROL	11

This policy applies to the Perse School ("the School") which comprises the Perse Pelican Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School including the EYFS setting ("the Perse Pelican School"), the Perse Preparatory School ("the Perse Prep School") and the Perse Upper School ("the Upper School").

This Policy is available on the School's website or on application to the Head.

The Policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format it required.

1 Introduction

1.1 **The School Community:** The School is an independent day school for pupils aged 3-18 years and is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. It has a Christian, non-denominational ethos, and tradition. The school community pluralistic and diverse in its constitution and is made up of children, parents, legal guardians, teachers and other employees and governors.

1.2 **Admissions:** Candidates for admission as pupils are required to satisfy the academic and character requirements current at the time of admission and entry to the School. The School accepts applications from, and admits pupils irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or special educational needs (**SEN**) and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered. The School will treat every application in a fair, open-minded way. The School's *Admissions Policy* reflects the School's approach towards equal treatment and is consistent with this Policy. Every application will be considered on its merits within the School's criteria for selection on grounds of the pupil's ability and aptitude, but this will not be done as a way of excluding pupils with a disability or SEN subject to section 4 below.

1.3 **Education:** The School is mainstream and English-speaking. The School will provide appropriate support for children with SEN or for whom English is not their first language. The School's Special Educational Needs (SEN (or SEND) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) policy includes details about the welfare and educational provision for pupils with SEN. See also paragraph 3.9.2 below.

1.4 **Related Policies:** This Equal Treatment Policy is in accordance with and must be read and applied in conjunction with all of the School's policies, including the *School's policy of relationships and sex education, risk assessment for pupil welfare, Inclusion, Equality and Diversity (IE&D) Policy, School Uniform Policy as well as the Terms and conditions relating to the contract for educational services between the School and the parents.* All policies are available on the School's website or Perse Portal and can also be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. The School also has separate Accessibility Plans for The Perse Pelican School, The Perse Prep School, and the Upper School. The Plans are available on request from the Director of Operations.

1.5 **Guidance and Advice:** This Equal Treatment Policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

1.5.1 Technical guidance for schools in England | EHRC Technical guidance for schools in England (Equality and Human Rights Commission, September 2025);

1.5.2 Equality Act 2010: explanatory notes (2010);

1.5.3 Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (DfE, May 2014, updated June 2018);

1.5.4 SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (DfE and Department for Health, June 2014, updated September 2024);

1.5.5 Preventing hair discrimination in schools (Equality and Human Rights Commission, October 2022);

1.5.6 Gender separation in mixed schools (DfE, June 2018);

1.5.7 Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (HM Government, December 2023, updated June 2025);

1.5.8 Keeping children safe in education 2025 (DfE, September 2025);

1.5.9 Relationships education, relationships, and sex education (RSE) and health education guidance (DfE, September 2021).

2 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 **Application:** This policy applies to all pupils of the School and their parents or legal guardians.

2.2 **Equal Treatment:** The School recognises the benefits of having a diverse school community, with individuals who value one another, and the different contributions everyone can make. As set out in the *IE&D Policy*, all members of the community will be taught to value and respect others and other cultures. The School is committed to promoting inclusion in order that every individual feels a sense of belonging at the School. The School is committed to being an equal opportunities education provider and will promote equal treatment for all members of the school community. It is committed to fostering mutual tolerance and positive behaviours, practices, and attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the School. In the provision of equal opportunities, the School recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law and opposes discrimination on the basis of:

- sex;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- gender reassignment;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief);
- sexual orientation;
- (in the case of adult members of the School Community) marital or civil partnership status; and
- age.

These are called the **Protected Characteristics**. The School also opposes all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that a person has a special educational need (**SEN**) or learning difficulty, a different cultural or linguistic background, or because English is an additional language (EAL), or academic or sporting ability.

The School aims to ensure that all policies and practices conform with the principle of equal opportunities. The School will tackle inappropriate attitudes and practices through staff leading by example, through the PSHE, relationships education / the School's relationships and sex education policy and programmes, through assemblies, through the supportive school culture and through the School's policies.

Inappropriate attitudes and practices will be challenged. Children will be encouraged to value and respect appropriately all those they encounter at or through the School.

2.3 **Approach:** The principles of equal treatment and the principles of the *IE&D Policy* guide the School's approach both to the admission of pupils and to the establishment of its expectations of pupils during their time at the School. The principles are also employed to guide the School's approach to the provision of access to facilities, services, opportunities, and responsibilities.

3 FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

3.1 **Types:** Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

3.2 **Direct discrimination:** Direct discrimination occurs where:

1. someone is treated less favourably because of one or more Protected Characteristics. For example, rejecting an applicant because they would not "fit in" because of their race, beliefs or sexual orientation is direct discrimination;

2. someone is treated less favourably because of their association with another person who has a Protected Characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity). For example, if a pupil is harassed or victimised because a sibling is disabled, this would be direct discrimination against that pupil. (Discrimination by association).

3. someone is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic. For example, treating a pupil less favourably because they are believed to be (but may not actually be) homosexual. (Perception discrimination).

3.3 **Indirect discrimination:** occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion, or practice, applied to a group of people, which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of a Protected Characteristic, and it cannot be objectively justified. An example might be a minimum height requirement for a job. This is likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If this criterion cannot be objectively justified because it is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, then it will be indirectly discriminatory on the ground of sex.

3.4 **Discrimination arising from disability:** Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the treatment cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. For example, where a pupil with cerebral palsy who is a wheelchair user is told they will be unable to attend a school trip because there is no wheelchair access available and other options are not investigated.

3.5 **Harassment:**

1. This policy covers the following forms of harassment:

3.5.1.1 Harassment related to a Protected Characteristic: Harassment may occur where someone engages in unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a Protected Characteristic.

3.5.1.2 Sexual harassment: Harassment may also occur where a person engages in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment for that person. It is also harassment to treat someone less favourably because they have either rejected, or submitted to, sexual harassment.

2. The School will not tolerate harassment for any reason. Further information relating to

the following types of harassment can be found in the relevant school policies below:

3.5.2.1 Harassment relating to a Protected Characteristic by a pupil is likely to be contrary to the School's *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Behaviour & Discipline Policy*.

3.5.2.2 Harassment relating to a Protected Characteristic by a member of staff is likely to be contrary to the School's *Code of Conduct for Staff*.

3.5.2.3 Sexual harassment relating to pupils and the School's response will be dealt with in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

3.5.2.4 Sexual harassment relating to staff will be dealt with in the *Harassment and Bullying Policy*.

3.6 **Victimisation:** may occur where person is treated less favourably than otherwise may be the case, because of some action (referred to as a 'protected act') that they have taken, they may take, or they are believed to have taken in connections with the Equality Act 2010. Protected acts are, broadly, any actions taken by a person in good faith in connection with the Equality Act, such as making or supporting an allegation of discrimination or harassment.

3.7 It is also unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Equality Act 2010 by their parent or sibling.

3.8 It is important that no one is afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear and retaliation. Further information may be found in the School's *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Behaviour & Discipline Policy*.

3.9 **Disability and Special Needs:** The School is inclusive and welcomes pupils with disabilities and SEN. The School maintains and promotes a positive culture towards inclusion of disabled people and those with SEN in all its activities and will not treat pupils and their parents or legal guardians less favourably on these grounds without proper justification. At present, the School's facilities, physical and otherwise, for the disabled and those with SEN are reflective of the current cohort's needs but all that is reasonable will be done to ensure that the School's curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures, and premises are made accessible to everyone.

3.9.1 **Disability:** Subject to the above constraints, the School welcomes applications for school places from people who have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Every application will be processed and considered fairly. The School will make reasonable adjustments to its systems and procedures in order to accommodate disabilities of which it has been made aware as set out in the School's Policy on Disability which is available on the school website or on request from the Bursar.

3.9.2 **SEND:** The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years is adhered to in the School. The Head of Learning Support (Pelican & Prep) and Head of Learning Support (Upper) are available for consultation as appropriate. Children with special needs may have an Individual Education Plan (including Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plans) which will be reviewed and monitored carefully. Please see the Special Educational Needs (SEN (or SEND) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) policy for further details of the procedures offered by the School to assist these children.

3.9.3 **Reasonable Adjustments:** The School has an on-going duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils in respect of the education and associated services provided to ensure that such pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with other pupils. In making "reasonable adjustments", the School is required to provide auxiliary

aids and services for disabled pupils. The School will carefully consider any proposals made by parents and will not unreasonably refuse any requests for such aids or services.

3.9.4 **Informing the School:** In accordance with the School's terms and conditions, parents of pupils must notify the Head in writing if they are aware or suspect that the pupil (or prospective pupil) has a disability or if the pupil (or prospective pupil) has a learning difficulty. The registration form enables prospective parents to give details of their child's disability when applying for a place at the School. Parents must provide copies of all written reports and other relevant information upon request. Providing the School with such information will enable the School to support the pupil as much as possible. Confidential information of this kind will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis. The School will have due regard to any request by a parent or pupil (who has sufficient understanding of the nature and effect of the request) to treat the nature or existence of the person's disability as confidential.

3.9.5 **Admission of children with a disability or special educational need:** applications for a place at the School will be considered on the basis that reasonable adjustments have been made by the School in order to cater for the child's disability or other arrangements for a child's special educational need where this does not fall within the definition of "disability". The School will not offer a place if, after all reasonable adjustments or other arrangements have been made, the School will not be able provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs. The School shall inform parents of their decision and given details of the reasonable adjustment or other arrangements] they are going to make or give reasons why an offer of a place has not been made.

3.9.6 **Existing pupils:** where the School becomes aware of a disability of an existing pupil or the special educational need of an existing pupil where this does not fall within the definition of "disability", the School will do all that is reasonable to assist the pupil whilst at the School, which may include making reasonable adjustments or other arrangements. If in the professional judgement of the Head, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), the School cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments or other arrangements have been made, parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil, without being charged fees in lieu of notice and with the acceptance deposit returned. The School will do what is reasonable to help parents to find an alternative placement which will provide their child with the necessary environment and level of teaching and support.

3.9.7 **Access:** The School will monitor the physical features of its premises to consider whether disabled users of the premises are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other users. Where possible and proportionate, the School will take steps to improve access for disabled users of the premises. The School has an Accessibility Plan, which is kept under review and revised, as necessary. The Plan is available on request from the Director of Operations.

4 EDUCATION AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

Equal access: The School will provide all pupils equal access to all benefits, services, facilities, classes and subjects, irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or SEN, subject to considerations of safety and welfare, paragraph 4.1 below and paragraph 3.9 above. Provision may be organised by sex or otherwise differentiated where permitted by the Equality Act 2010, for example, where this is necessary for reasons of safety, fairness, the physical nature of the activity, or to meet particular needs of pupils, but the School will ensure that all pupils have equivalent opportunities to participate.

4.1 **Positive action:** The School may provide pupils of a particular minority or protected group, or pupils with a disability or SEN, access to additional education or training to meet the special needs of the pupils in that group, for example, special language training for groups whose first language is not English.

4.2 **Exclusions:** The School will not discriminate against any pupil by excluding them from the School, or by subjecting them to any other detriment, on the grounds of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, or SEN, subject to paragraph 9 of this Policy.

4.3 **Teaching and School materials:** Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example, sexual or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the School's teaching and learning materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all areas of the curriculum so as to avoid stereotypes and bias.

4.4 **Pupil interaction:** All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or SEN, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. Positive attitudes are fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the School, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions, stereotypes and negative behaviours and practices. The School's PSHE and relationships education and / or relationships and sex education curriculum encourage respect for other people, with particular regard to the Protected Characteristics.

4.5 **Bullying:** Bullying is always unacceptable and will not be dismissed as being normal or as "banter", "just having a laugh", "boys will be boys" or simply "part of growing up". The School will not tolerate bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based bullying, and discriminatory-based bullying) for any reason. Examples of bullying include:

- bullying relating to race, religion, belief, or culture,
- bullying related to SEN, learning difficulties or disabilities,
- bullying related to appearance or health conditions,
- bullying relating to sexual orientation,
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances,
- sexist or sexual bullying or bullying related to gender reassignment.

The School's *Anti-bullying Policy* contains more details about the School's anti-bullying practices.

5 SCHOOL UNIFORM

5.1 **The School Uniform Policy is consistent with this policy**: The same School Uniform Policy applies equally to all pupils, irrespective of their sex, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief or SEN, subject to considerations of safety and welfare. However, the School will consider reasonable requests to alter the School Uniform, for example, for genuine religious requirements and reasonable adjustments for disabled children. The pupil or their parents should refer the matter to the **Upper School Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head (Pupil development and welfare)** Prep Head and Pelican Head.

5.2 **Symbols of faith:** Certain hairstyles, items of jewellery (such as the Kara bangle worn by Sikhs), and items of headwear, (such as the turban and headscarves) may be worn by pupils when doing so is genuinely based on manifesting religious or racial beliefs or identity. This is subject to considerations of safety and welfare and the School's existing School Uniform Policy principles (in regard to, for example, the school colours). Where there is uncertainty as to whether an item may be worn under this section, the issue must be referred by the pupil or their parents to the Head, whose decision will be final, subject to the Complaints procedure.

5.3 **Disabled pupils:** reasonable adjustments may be required to the School uniform for disabled pupils who require them. The pupil or their parents should refer the matter to the Head to ensure all reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the pupil.

6 RELIGIOUS BELIEF

6.1 **Religion:** The School respects the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with their faith. In accordance with the *IE&D Policy*, the rights and freedoms of the whole school community will be respected, regardless of belief, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

7 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS, DIETARY, LANGUAGE OR CULTURAL NEEDS

7.1 **Catering:** The Perse can provide for most special dietary requirements whether related to allergens, special medical diets, intolerance, or for religious or cultural reasons. The School ascertains the pupil's allergies at the earliest point and arrangements are made to provide support (including ensuring that dishes have appropriate signage). Individual care plans are created for pupils with food allergies. Allergen Champions are identified within the catering teams and pupils may ask the catering team if they have a specific allergy and are unsure about a particular dish.

7.2 **Religious and cultural needs:** The Upper Room is a multi-faith room to allow pupils and staff of any belief to carry out their religious observances during break and lunch time. Pupils at the Prep School use the Snug for midday prayers. The School will grant requests of absence wherever possible on grounds of belief. The majority of school assemblies are non-denominational and cater for pupils of any or no religion. Parents may write to the Head if they wish to withdraw their child from religious assemblies/events. The School, through the pastoral structure, will make every effort to support individual pupils with particular cultural needs (religious, ethnic, creative, etc.) provided that the same are consistent with the law and the inclusive ethos and tradition of the School.

7.3 **Language:** The School attempts to use inclusive language whenever possible. The School will also make reasonable adjustments to ensure that parents and pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) will be able to access school material. Pupils for whom English is not a first language receive support, as appropriate, from the Learning Support Department.

8 **AWARENESS** of this policy among employees will be raised and maintained by means of discussion at staff meetings and will form part of the School's education programme for pupils (in PHSE lessons and assemblies). Children will be valued for their diversity and differences and, in turn, encouraged to value and respect others.

9 **RISK ASSESSMENT:** Where a concern about a pupil's welfare is identified, the risks to that pupil's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified.

The format of risk assessment may vary and may be included as part of the School's overall response to a welfare issue, including the use of individual pupil welfare plans (such as behaviour, healthcare, and education plans, as appropriate). Regardless of the form used, the School's approach to promoting pupil welfare will be systematic and pupil focussed.

10 **WORKING TOGETHER:** The School is committed to working with parents and other agencies for the good of each child.

11 RECORD KEEPING

11.1 All records created under this policy are managed in accordance with the School's *Records Management Policy* and *Records Retention Schedule.*

11.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data. The School's approach to data protection compliance is set out in the School's data protection policies and procedures. In addition, staff must ensure that they follow the School's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the School's *Data Protection Policy* and *Information Security and Sharing Data Guidance*.

12 RESPONSIBILITIES, MONITORING AND REVIEW

12.1 **Responsibilities:** The **Board of Governors** has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the School's Equal Treatment Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The Board of Governors has delegated to the Bursar day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance, and review.

12.2 **Review: Error! Reference source not found.**The policy owners are responsible for evaluating whether the aims of this Policy are carried out throughout all areas of the School and taking appropriate action where necessary. This policy is reviewed annually by the policy owners.

13 **ENFORCEMENT**: All complaints will be taken seriously and promptly investigated. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the school community who is found to have acted in contravention of this Policy.

14 VERSION CONTROL

Date of adoption of this policy	15 April 2026
Date of last review of this policy	March 2026
Date for next review of this policy	March 2027
Policy owner (SLT)	Upper School Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head (Pupil development and welfare) / Prep School Head / Pelican School Head
Authorised by	Jonthan Scott On behalf of the Board of Governors
Circulation	Governors / all staff / parents / pupils on request Published on the School's website and PersePortal and available from the School Office on request
Status	Complies with the **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (SI2014/3283), Equality Act (2010),** the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025)**, **Education and Skills Act 2008, Data Protection Act 2018, and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and Children and Families Act 2014.**