Equality Policy

Last Review: October 2026
Next Review: By end of Summer Term 2028
Committee: Inclusion

1. Introduction

The JCoSS community comprises a wide range of people, with varied backgrounds, lifestyles and cultures, both within and beyond the Jewish community. It is a diversity which enriches our lives and the educational process.

This policy sets out the School's commitment to equality of opportunity for everyone in our community, with particular regard to learning and attainment, so that every student and member of staff is supported to achieve their full potential. Specifically, this policy aims to:

- Promote equal opportunities for all students, staff and Governors;
- Counter educational disadvantage linked to any protected characteristic, including race, sex, sexual orientation, disability or socio-economic background;
- Develop understanding of, and respect for, individuals and groups across all protected characteristics, as part of preparing students for life in modern Britain.

Every member of our community is of equal value, and equally entitled to be safe, respected and supported in fulfilling their potential. If any member of our community experiences discrimination or harassment, whether inside or outside school, all staff and students have a duty to challenge such behaviour.

Any breach, or potential breach, of this policy will be investigated and addressed under the relevant School policy — the Behaviour for Learning Policy for students, and the Disciplinary or Grievance Policy for staff.

This policy should be read alongside:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) — statutory safeguarding guidance, including its provisions on gender-questioning children
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) statutory Code of Practice
- The School's Behaviour for Learning Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy

Central to our ethos is the phrase ‘elu v’elu divrei elokim chaim’ – *these, and these, are the words of the living God*. In practice, this means that every member of our community is equally valued, their beliefs and choices are equally valid, and their happiness, safety and security are equally important.

If any members of our community experience discrimination or harassment, whether inside or outside school, it is the duty of everyone in school to challenge such prejudiced behaviour.

The agreed aims of the school cannot be carried out without a commitment to equal opportunities. The purpose of this document is to make that commitment explicit, in relation to all aspects of school life.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure the equality information and objectives in this policy are published and communicated to staff, students and parents;
- Ensure published equality information is reviewed and updated at least annually;
- Delegate day-to-day monitoring of progress against the equality objectives to the Headteacher;

- Monitor the balance of gender and ethnicity at all levels of the School, including within its own membership.

The Headteacher will:

- Promote understanding of the equality objectives among staff, students and parents;
- Identify staff training needs in relation to equality and ensure relevant training is delivered;
- Report to the Governing Body on progress against the equality objectives.

All staff are expected to:

- Have regard to this policy in their day-to-day practice and work actively towards its objectives;
- Challenge discriminatory attitudes, language or behaviour wherever they encounter them.

3. The Public Sector Equality Duty

JCoSS aims to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The PSED extends the equality duty across all protected characteristics, not only race, sex and disability.

Protected Characteristics

The School recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, in particular the nine protected characteristics set out in the Act, shown in bold below. The School additionally has regard to several further characteristics, reflecting its own community and values.

Disability and health	Sex/gender, including gender reassignment
Ethnicity	Religion or belief
Marriage and civil partnership	Socio-economic status
Physical appearance and other personal characteristics	Age
Neurodiversity	Sexual orientation and gender identity
Pregnancy/maternity, paternity and adoption	Race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin

4. Equality Objectives

Alongside the PSED, the School has a legal duty to prepare and publish specific, measurable equality objectives.

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic
- Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities

In fulfilling this aspect of the duty, the school will:

- Analyse attainment data each academic year showing how students with different characteristics are performing to determine strengths and areas for improvement, and implement actions in response;
- Make evidence available to the Governing Body identifying improvements for specific groups as necessary;
- Respond to issues raised by stakeholders regarding particular protected characteristics, identifying any issues which could affect our own students and act accordingly.

5. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the following legislation and guidance:

- The Equality Act 2010, which introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty and protects people from discrimination;
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011, which require schools to publish information demonstrating compliance with the PSED and to publish equality objectives;
- Department for Education guidance, The Equality Act 2010 and schools;
- The EHRC statutory Code of Practice on services, public functions and associations;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) — current statutory guidance, including its provisions on gender-questioning children.

The School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, in relation to single-sex toilet and changing facilities.

6. Aims

- To provide equal access to the curriculum for every student, regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or belief, so that all can experience success;
- To encourage every student to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience to fulfil their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, in line with the School's ethos and vision;
- To provide a working atmosphere in which good relationships between staff and students support effective and enjoyable learning;
- To eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and good relations across all areas of School activity, in line with the PSED;
- To ensure equal access to educational opportunities for all students, including through the SEND Code of Practice and inclusion principles, so that every student can reach attainment levels appropriate to their ability;
- To ensure that all members of our community — staff, students, parents, carers, contractors and visitors — are free from harassment or bullying, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour;
- To create and retain a workforce valued for its diverse contributions, perspectives, backgrounds, experience and skills, and to provide staff with opportunities to develop a rewarding and fulfilling career;

As a school, we aim to achieve an environment in which:

Every student:

- is respected, and respects others, based on an inherent respect for difference as well as an informed understanding of it;
- has access to a full curriculum;
- is supported to achieve their full potential;
- is not subject to unfair discrimination on any of the grounds set out above.

Every member of staff and Governor:

- is respected, and respects others;
- is enabled to work and develop without discrimination on any of the grounds set out above.

Every parent, carer and visitor to the School:

- is respected, and respects others;
- is treated with courtesy, and is not subject to unfair discrimination on any of the grounds set out above.

7. Curriculum Guidelines

- When planning and developing the curriculum, the SLT and Heads of Department will assess the impact on equality, including evaluation of the School's equality objectives and any applicable attainment targets;
- Genuine equality of opportunity must be inherent in the education the School offers; curriculum opportunities must be open to all;
- Students will be encouraged to value their own cultural heritage and that of others, and to find common ground while living and learning together in a community;
- Staff will accept responsibility for establishing a climate for reasoned debate, addressing widely held misconceptions, and avoiding the risk of students reaching consensus views of doubtful validity from limited experience;
- Teaching styles and practices will be reviewed regularly;
- Each student's progress will be monitored. Where students belong to particular groups — whether by attainment, ethnicity or another protected characteristic — data will be analysed by group so that attainment and progress can be tracked and used to inform planning;
- The School will challenge gender stereotyping that constrains the development of students' abilities and aspirations, and will include the study of multicultural issues across the curriculum;
- The School will clearly demonstrate the unacceptability of attitudes, incidents, taunts or remarks that give offence, intimidate, devalue another's views, or undermine self-esteem, including those relating to gender identity and sexuality;
- The School promotes tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through Jewish Education, Kvutzah and other curriculum areas — for example, introducing literature from a range of cultures within English teaching;
- The School holds assemblies addressing relevant issues, encouraging students to take a lead and inviting external speakers to contribute.

8. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. In practice, this means:

- Where something the School does places a disabled student at a disadvantage compared with other students, the School must take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- The School will provide an auxiliary aid or service for a disabled student where it is reasonable to do so, and where it would reduce a substantial disadvantage faced by that student compared with non-disabled peers.

Following Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance, the School may — though is not required to — take proportionate action to address disadvantage faced by particular groups of students. This is distinct from positive discrimination, where preferential treatment is given regardless of evidenced need; any targeted support must be a proportionate response to a specific, evidenced disadvantage.

- In accordance with the School's SEND provision, staff will have access to training and guidance to support students with disabilities effectively;

- Students with disabilities will have access, through the curriculum and wider School life, to the full range of activities and careers guidance, with reasonable adjustments made as required.

All staff recruitment, appointment and retention will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in this policy. The School's CPD programme will continue to address equality issues, and all staff will be familiar with the School's SEND Policy.

9. Tackling Discrimination

Race

- Opportunities for recognition and achievement — artistic, creative, physical and intellectual — are open to all staff and students regardless of race;
- Behaviour that disadvantages another person on the basis of race or ethnic origin is discrimination;
- Distinction, exclusion, preference or stereotyping based on colour, nationality or ethnic origin are forms of discrimination and will not be tolerated.

Age

The School values the contribution of staff and students to School life regardless of age, while remaining sensitive to the fact that particular age groups may have specific needs.

Personal Characteristics

Distinction, exclusion, preference or stereotyping based on body shape, natural hair, or other personal characteristics are forms of discrimination and are unacceptable.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

- Distinction, exclusion, preference or stereotyping based on sexual orientation or gender identity are forms of discrimination and are unacceptable;
- Staff will work to understand the origins and nature of racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and ageism, and to recognise and address their own prejudices;
- The School values the fact that many students are bilingual and encourages the use of community languages;
- The School will develop positive links with the homes and communities from which our students come;
- Preventing and addressing discriminatory behaviour, abuse, bullying and intimidation — on or off the premises — is everyone's responsibility. The School will support anyone affected by such incidents.

10. Roles in Practice

Governors and Staff

- Staff will treat each other and all students with respect, and will address any incidents of discrimination in line with this policy and the Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- Staff will review the ideas and images used in books and other resources, challenging bias, stereotyping or negative images, and presenting positive images to students;
- The School will promote an inclusive curriculum reflecting the multicultural nature of our society and wider community;
- School policies on displays, notices, meals and uniform will reflect our diverse population, where applicable;
- Staff will be encouraged to attend training on equality issues;
- Staff who believe they have been subjected to discriminatory behaviour should speak to their Head of Faculty, a member of the SLT, or raise a grievance under the Staff Grievance Procedure. Where the concern relates to the Headteacher, staff should contact the Chair of Governors via the Clerk to Governors.

Students

- All students are expected to treat each other and staff with respect;
- All students are valued for themselves, and can expect their culture and language to be treated positively and with respect;
- Students will have the opportunity, in the classroom, to discuss and understand racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ageism and other forms of prejudice;
- Students can contribute to the development of this and other School policies through the Student Kol;
- A student who experiences racist or discriminatory bullying (including homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying) should report it to their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or pastoral lead as appropriate. All complaints will be listened to and investigated confidentially; if a student feels their complaint has not been properly addressed, they may raise it with a member of the SLT;
- Students who experience discriminatory behaviour, abuse, bullying or intimidation will be supported by the School and their teachers. Anyone responsible for such behaviour will be dealt with under the relevant School policy, which may include exclusion in serious cases.

Parents, Carers and Visitors

- Parents and carers have much to contribute to our equality work, and their views are welcomed at all times; we ask that all parents and carers support this policy;
- The School will discuss with parents/carers any incidents of discriminatory abuse or bullying in which their child has been involved;
- Parents/carers who become aware of incidents of racism, sexism, or homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying should contact their child's Form Tutor;
- Visitors and contract staff who become aware of any such incidents should report them to the Deputy Headteacher or another member of the senior team, and should abide by the code of conduct set out in this policy.

11. Monitoring and Data

The Inclusion committee of the Governing Body will work with senior and middle leadership to:

- Monitor, evaluate and review educational provision and practice across the curriculum, with particular regard to student progress and attainment in respect of equal opportunities, taking appropriate action where needed;
- Run regular pupil-voice surveys to ensure direct feedback is gathered from students;
- Publish relevant data on the School website evidencing progress against the School's published equality objectives, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Information will be collected on students' performance and progress across all areas of School activity, including by protected characteristic where appropriate, to identify and address trends that could adversely affect attainment. This includes data on:

- Admissions and transfer procedures, in accordance with our Admissions Policy;
- Assessment, and subsequent groupings by ability or attainment;
- Curriculum, teaching and learning, including language and cultural needs;
- Student behaviour, discipline and reward;
- Exclusions, both fixed-term and permanent;
- Incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents;
- Staff recruitment and career development;
- Membership of the Governing Body;
- Parental involvement and engagement with the wider community;

- Support, advice and guidance given by teaching staff.

12. Implementation

- Detailed procedures will be developed and published to ensure that the commitments in this policy are put into practice;
- The School will operate this policy alongside the Staff Equal Opportunities Policy in respect of all staff appointments and promotions, monitoring gender and ethnicity balance;
- All subject teaching and pastoral programmes will take account of the objectives and guidelines in this policy.

13. Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be monitored by designated staff and Governors to ensure its effectiveness, through the School's self-review processes;
- The School will seek evidence that the policy is understood and applied by staff, students and parents;
- The policy's effectiveness will be judged by its impact on raising attainment for all students and on specific goals, such as strengthening equality representation at senior level;
- This policy will continue to be discussed with students, parents/carers, staff and Governors, and will be reviewed at least annually, ensuring the ongoing involvement and commitment of the whole School community.

14. Issues Relating to Gender Identity

JCoSS aims to anticipate and respond to the needs of trans and non-binary students and staff, providing a professional and consistent approach so that all feel welcome, safe, valued and supported. This will include the following practical provisions:

a) Education and Staff Training

Issues of gender, sex, identity, equality, sexual orientation and other related topics will form part of the curriculum and will be addressed by various subjects as appropriate to the age and stage of students. This is likely to include lessons in PSHCE (Kvutzah), Science, English and Jewish Education but will not be restricted to these subjects. These issues will also form part of the programme of staff training, so that all staff are aware of the potential presentation and needs of students and colleagues, and appropriate strategies including vocabulary.

b) Single-Sex Facilities and Activities

In line with the Equality Act 2010 (as interpreted by the Supreme Court in For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers [2025] UKSC 16), the EHRC's statutory Code of Practice, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, JCoSS provides single-sex toilet facilities and single-sex changing and shower facilities for all pupils, allocated on the basis of biological sex, as required by the School Premises (England) Regulations 2012 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The School does not operate gender-neutral toilet or changing facilities. Pupils must not be allowed to use toilet, changing or shower facilities designated for the opposite biological sex, including where this is requested in connection with a pupil's gender identity or any degree of social transition — KCSIE is explicit that this must not be compromised.

Where a gender-questioning pupil does not wish to use the facilities designated for their biological sex, the School will consider whether an alternative facility can be provided — for example, a self-contained individual toilet (the single staff/visitor toilet next to Student Services), or access to changing facilities at a different time — without compromising the single-sex provision available to other pupils. Any such arrangement will not compromise the safety, comfort, privacy or dignity of the pupil or of any other pupil, will be recorded, communicated appropriately to relevant staff, and reviewed regularly, in line with KCSIE.

The Equality Act 2010 permits single-sex sport where the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average girl would place her at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy, or vice versa. Where a sport needs to be organised on a single-sex basis for reasons of safety, that separation will be applied with no exceptions, in line with KCSIE. Sport may also be organised on a single-sex basis for reasons of fairness. Where there is no safety concern and a pupil makes a request relating to how they participate in PE or sport, the School will consider the request on its individual merits — taking into account the pupil's best interests, the impact on other pupils, and the School's duty to provide a safe and fair environment for all pupils to participate.

Dress codes remain gender-neutral in style (for example, kippot are optional and skirts or trousers may be worn by any student), which is a separate matter from the allocation of single-sex facilities described above.

c) Pastoral Support

JCoSS aims to support the health and wellbeing of trans and non-binary students, and in particular through any process of social transition. Pastoral staff will discuss the needs of trans and non-binary students with them and their family in order to agree any actions and individual strategies, interventions or reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, always in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the School's Safeguarding Policy.

d) Language

Where a student's circumstances involve a change in the name or pronouns used about them, staff will be guided by the School's safeguarding obligations first and foremost, and will follow the process set out in Appendix B. Any old or original names or pronouns used in error should be addressed with respect and reflection, rather than sanctions.

e) Confidentiality and Records

JCoSS respects the confidentiality of all students and will not reveal sensitive personal information without the prior agreement of the individual except to protect their vital interests or to meet the School's safeguarding and record-keeping obligations under Keeping Children Safe in Education. Please refer to Appendix C for more detail regarding record keeping.

Appendices

Appendix A – Sample Practices and Guidance to Embed Our Equality Ethos

Racist, sexist, homophobic, supremacist, and other offensive comments and incidents, however small, including graffiti, must never go unchallenged or ignored. They will be dealt with quickly.

- Complaints by students of racist, sexist, homophobic or supremacist behaviour will be taken seriously and acted on.
- All incidents of racist, sexist, homophobic or supremacist behaviour must be reported through the usual channels.
- We encourage the parents of all students to meet staff and to visit school. In the absence of interpreters, we are glad to accept the help of students or family members.
- Our dress code is gender neutral and designed to allow alternatives. Kippot are optional; skirts or trousers may be worn by any student.
- Bilingualism is a positive asset and is seen and used as such.
- Displays in the school reflect the diversity of the world community, as well as that of our local community.
- The curriculum, as delivered through faculties, will acknowledge, value and, where appropriate, use the diversity of students' backgrounds.
- In selecting materials for use in lessons, we use positive racial, gender and cultural images. Wherever possible we avoid negative images, unless the purpose is to educate to the contrary.
- PSHCE programmes include opportunities to explore the cultural backgrounds and practices of students.
- Jewish Education reflects the religious and cultural diversity of the world community.
- In assemblies we use positive role models and acknowledge festivals from a variety of cultures, and encourage the inviting of visitors from a wide range of backgrounds.

Appendix B – Receiving Notification of a Student's Intention to Socially Transition

(Not rewritten this round — see the alert above. This appendix still reflects the pre-final-text framework.)

B.1 Prior to notification:

It is important that gender-questioning students are seen as potentially vulnerable and as such are supported by trusted staff (as advised in KCSIE) well in advance of any formal decision, notification or request to socially transition.

Such support should be led by the following principles:

- If a member of staff believes or hears that a student might be exploring ideas around gender identity or social transitioning, they should inform a relevant pastoral leader so that appropriate monitoring and ongoing supportive conversations can be implemented;
- Once staff are aware, they should not proactively initiate action towards a child's social transition;
- If no change is explicitly requested, teachers can listen respectfully about a child's feelings without automatically alerting parents, but cannot promise confidentiality;
- Staff will make clear to the child that these conversations will not be interpreted as a ‘formal notification’;
- The student must be made aware of the School's obligations once they make a formal notification. This includes a duty to inform and consult with parents if this hasn't already happened, unless this would

incur a significant risk of harm. Open and honest dialogue between home, school and the child is always recommended unless there are clear safeguarding reasons to the contrary;

- Requests to 'informally' change the way a student wishes to be addressed regarding their gender identity (for example, changes to name or pronouns) are not possible. Such news may be upsetting to the young person, so care must be taken to discuss it with them sensitively.

B.2 Upon being formally notified:

Staff should clarify any specific requests (for example, around pronoun or name changes). Unless significant safeguarding risks are identified (expected to be rare), parents are to be informed and consulted. The School can point parents to external support (such as support groups or medical organisations) if they request more information. Such external sources include:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) — www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- The family's GP
- Keshet – for LGBTQ equality in Jewish life — www.keshetonline.org
- NSPCC
- Young Minds — www.youngminds.org

A period of 'watchful waiting' is to be adopted before agreeing a request to socially transition, to ensure that the decision is a sustained and properly considered one.

Prior to finally agreeing or declining any request to socially transition, the following factors must be considered:

- The views of parents: the views of parents should carry great weight and be properly considered. In the vast majority of cases, parental consent/agreement would be required;
- The age of the child: younger children may be less able to articulate their thoughts and feelings and will have a less mature understanding of this complex issue;
- The seriousness of the request and the child's own wider context. The Cass Review (commissioned by NHS England) notes that gender expression is likely determined by a variable mix of factors such as biological predisposition, early childhood experiences, sexuality and expectations of puberty, including:
  - Whether the child has been influenced by peers or social media;
  - Whether the child feels pressured because they do not align with gender stereotypes associated with their sex;
  - Whether SEN is a possible factor, and whether further input from Learning Support or the PSRP should be sought;
  - Whether sexual orientation is a factor — for example, research suggests that a young lesbian might feel pressure to identify as a transgender male. This is acknowledged as a highly complex issue with no pressure to reach a definitive conclusion;
- The short- and long-term impacts on the child, including how a young person might socially manage such a decision, and the implications of 'changing one's mind' later in life;
- Any possible impacts on other students, including friendships or other social dynamics that may need managing or supporting, bearing in mind the School's obligation to address bullying.

Appendix C – Gender Identity and Record Keeping

(Not rewritten this round — see the alert above.)

If JCoSS is made aware of a student's intention to socially transition, and the School agrees to support this, the School will agree with them the date from which their details are changed on records, as far as is possible. A change of name by deed poll is not required to make a change to school records, which should reflect the student's current name and affirmed gender. Any material that needs to be kept related to the

person's trans status would be stored confidentially. No records are changed without the permission of the student concerned.

A Gender Recognition Certificate can only be issued to someone aged 18 or over, so the following guidance may only be required very rarely within JCoSS. When a trans person receives a Gender Recognition Certificate, they have the right to request that all references to their former name and gender are removed and replaced with their current name and gender. However, schools are required to hold accurate records of students' birth sex, regardless of a transition, for safety reasons and as part of GDPR and the Data Protection Act. Currently, the gender recorded has to remain the one registered at the time of the Unique Pupil Number assignment, unless the birth certificate or legal gender is changed by way of a Gender Recognition Certificate, because DfE analysis for the School is based on the individual's biological sex.

In relation to formal examinations, the Joint Council for Qualifications requires that centres enter candidates under names that can be verified against suitable identification, such as a birth certificate, passport or driver's licence, and may need to check whether the name a candidate is using within the centre is their legal name rather than a ‘known as’ name. Where there is a mismatch between a student's legal and preferred names, school staff, including exam invigilators, are proactive in ensuring that appropriate steps are taken to maintain a student's confidentiality and dignity.