



**Woolgrove School**

# **Equality Policy**



*“Equal opportunities lie at the heart of all that we do at Woolgrove School. We are committed to ensuring that every member of the school community, whatever their position, race, gender, disability or religion is given the same chance as any other to access the services and support of the school.”*

July 2023

Review Date: July 2026

Lisa Hall

# 1: Vision and Values

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## Our equality vision and the values that underpin school life

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Woolgrove School is a happy, welcoming school where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered. We are committed to the development of the whole person within a supportive, secure and creative environment. A broad, balanced and personalised curriculum provides equal opportunity for all pupils to maximise their potential regardless of age, sex, race, colour, religion or disability. We endeavour to promote positive relationships with parents, carers, governors and members of the wider community.

At Woolgrove School we aim to promise equality and tackle any form of discrimination and actively promote harmonious relations in all areas of school life. We seek to remove any barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement. We take seriously our contribution towards community cohesion.

We believe that a child is not born with the concept of treating people unequally, such behaviour is acquired and one of the aims of the school is to create an ethos where all feel valued equally. Linguistic and cultural diversity should be seen as a strength and an opportunity to enrich the curriculum. All parents/carers should be made to feel equally welcomed and encouraged to become involved in their child's education.

Woolgrove seeks to create a happy, secure and stimulating environment in which all can experience success and realise their unique potential.

### **Aims:**

- To raise people's self-esteem, so that they are able to make the most of their **A**bilities and talents.
- To foster a sense of curiosity and love of learning, so that all will develop a determination to *achieve* and **S**ucceed.
- To work in **P**artnership with parents, other schools and the wider community, to promote a more inclusive education system and a sense of *citizenship*.
- To promote *I*ndependence and encourage intellectual, emotional, spiritual and healthy growth, so that everyone can become lifelong learners.
- To work together in an atmosphere of trust and mutual **R**espect, so that all feel equally safe and valued.
- To provide a challenging and **E**nriching curriculum which addresses individual needs.

## **ASPIRE**

See also the "Hertfordshire Outcome Bees" (2018): Be happy, be resilient, be healthy, be safe, be ambitious and be independent.

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/hertfordshire-safeguarding-children-partnership/professionals-and-volunteers/hertfordshires-6-outcome-bees.aspx>

## **Vision:**

**Woolgrove School** seeks to respond positively to the challenge of change and build on its reputation for successful innovation in the field of special education by:

- Being a self-evaluating school as a means of constantly improving the quality of education and raising pupils' achievements.
- Continuing to ensure CPD is given a high profile in order to develop staff expertise and raise standards.
- Providing an appropriate education for a growing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and speech and language disorders.
- Maintaining the identity of Woolgrove as a school for pupils with a learning need while at the same time evolving to meet the ever changing needs of our pupils.
- Working in partnership with other mainstream/special schools and services within the Local Authority to develop the Outreach Service and meaningful integration projects to promote inclusion and benefit all pupils.
- Working in partnership with other mainstream and special schools, both within the Local Authority and Eastern Region, in order to raise standards.
- Ensuring all pupils receive their entitlement to extra curricular activities.

## 2: School Context

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### The characteristics of our school

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A brief description of our school and its community setting:

Woolgrove School, Special Needs Academy, is an innovative and highly regarded special school, which was opened in 1976 as a purpose built Primary School for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. It is situated in spacious grounds on the edge of Letchworth Garden City. The school serves the northern area of Hertfordshire and the majority of our pupils come from Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock, Royston, Stevenage and the surrounding villages. The school has expanded over the years and now has 125 pupils in 12 classes and caters for pupils who have a primary need in the areas of significant learning disabilities (LD) which impact significantly on attainment and progress. This will often present alongside autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). In April 2012 Woolgrove became the first special school in Hertfordshire to convert to a single academy trust.

Since the early 1980s Woolgrove has operated an Outreach Service, which offers practical help to local schools in meeting the needs of pupils who have learning difficulties. Woolgrove is the lead Outreach provider for Delivering Specialist Provision Locally (DSPL) 1 (North Herts) and works in partnership with Greenside Special School to jointly provide Outreach to mainstream primary and secondary schools in DSPL 2 (Stevenage). The school has a Resource Centre and runs training courses on all aspects of special needs. There is close liaison with the Valley School in Stevenage to which the majority of pupils transfer as well as other local special schools.

Woolgrove offers exceptional opportunities for continuing professional development and it is through the expertise and commitment of our staff that pupils are given the opportunity to grow in self esteem and confidence.

If you would like more information about the school, please visit our website at [www.woolgrove.herts.sch.uk](http://www.woolgrove.herts.sch.uk)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Breakdown (number and %)</b>
Number of pupils	125	25.6% Female 74.4% Male
Number of staff	76	86.84% Female 13.16% Male
Number of governors	10	60% Female 40% Male
Religious character	ND	Broadly Christian Ethos
Pupils eligible for FSM	35	20% Female 80% Male
Disabled staff	0	
Disabled pupils (SEN/LDD)	125	All pupils have an EHCP or Statement of SEN
BME pupils	45	20% Female 80% Male
BME staff	4	3.96% Female 1.32% Male
Pupils who speak English as an additional language	16	12.8%
Average attendance rate	93.10%	For academic year 2018/19
Significant partnerships, extended provision, etc.		Woolgrove forms part of the local extended school consortium.

		Outreach lead provider for DSPL 1 / joint for DSPL 2.
Awards, accreditations, specialist status		Letchworth Partnership Special Schools Forum Baldock Sports Partnership 2019 aspiring autism accreditation from the National Autistic Society

## Current situation

Children need to be helped to understand that while everyone is different, all are equally important. This means that everyone has an equal right to be included in a full range of activities, and not to live in fear of being hurt, bullied or insulted.

Through assemblies, direct teaching, formal and informal discussions, as well as by example, the following behaviour is encouraged:

Being kind to everyone  
Not hurting anyone  
Not calling people names

Children may need help in thinking about not rejecting people or treating them differently because they:

- Are older or younger
- Have different hair colour or skin tones
- Are bigger or smaller
- Have different physical abilities
- Are male or female
- Are richer or poorer
- Have different learning abilities
- Have a different family set up

Instead these differences are acknowledged and valued.

Staff give similar opportunities to girls and boys. For instance, girls can choose to play football – boys netball, if they prefer to do so.

Discrimination in any form can occur occasionally and intermittently, or it may be something which some people experience all the time. Racial incidents are recorded and discussed with the children concerned, and if there is any repetition, with the parents. In the history of the school, racial incidents have been extremely rare.

## The standard procedures and processes of our school – disability

Our accessibility plan is in place and reviewed regularly. All pupils are assessed on entry to Woolgrove and their progress carefully monitored.

## The standard procedures and processes of our school – gender

We carefully monitor and track pupil progress and all pupils, regardless of their gender, are given the opportunity to take part in all areas of the curriculum.

Where there is a noticeable difference between attainment and progress between boys and girls appropriate steps are put into place to address this.

### **The standard procedures and processes of our school – race**

Any racial incidents are recorded and taken seriously and addressed appropriately. We have a teacher within school responsible for EAL and BEM. All pupils receive individual support. We provide a culturally diverse curriculum that prepares children for life in a diverse society which is representative of the rich diversity found in Britain.

### **The standard procedures and processes of our school – community cohesion**

We believe that it is important to develop community cohesion in many ways – through the children, the school community, the local community, the UK community and the global community.

By community cohesion we mean working towards a society in which:

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities;
- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued;
- Similar life opportunities are available to all; and
- Strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

The curriculum at Woolgrove includes the opportunity to learn about different faiths and cultures. We develop pupils' social skills through the use of assemblies, PHSE and the SEAL materials. Developing pupils' awareness of others and the world around them is ongoing in all aspects of the curriculum using a cross-curricular approach. We celebrate the diverse heritage of our pupils through the use of displays and look at both the similarities and differences between our culture and other people's.

Planning is personalised and differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils, taking into account preferred learning styles, EAL, special educational needs and other relevant factors. We have a Family Support Worker who works closely with parents/carers and extended schools services. Staff and governors at Woolgrove are strongly committed to building positive relationships with pupils, the school community and the wider community. We are flexible in our approach to ensure inclusion of hard-to-reach parents at school events. For example, we have altered the times of our parents' evenings and celebration afternoons to allow more parents/carers to attend. Staff have arranged or provided transport for some parents to enable them to come to meetings at school, Christmas performances or parents' evenings. Where necessary staff have held home visits to discuss school issues or offer virtual meetings and personalised telephone calls.

The Outreach department works with over one hundred mainstream primary and secondary schools in North Hertfordshire and a range of multi-professional agencies to support the inclusion of pupils through training, resources and in-reach. From April 2017 Woolgrove School has worked in partnership with

Greenside School to provide Outreach to the DSPL 2 area (Stevenage and surrounding villages).

### 3: Aims

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The aims and duties that underpin our scheme

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This policy is drawn up in consideration of the Equality Act 2010 which protects individuals from discrimination and harassment based upon “protected characteristics”. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex, and
- Sexual orientation

Equality of opportunity at Woolgrove School means providing equality and excellence for all in order to promote the highest possible standards. Equality of opportunity applies to all members of the school community: pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and community members.

The core values and ethos of the Equality Policy are:

1. To prepare pupils for life in a diverse society and world.
2. To meet the diverse of the pupils.
3. To ensure that an inclusive ethos is established and maintained.
4. To make Woolgrove School a place where everybody, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin or citizenship, feels welcomed and valued.
5. To respect and value linguistic, cultural and religious diversity in the community.
6. To develop each pupil’s sense of personal and cultural identity and to encourage pupils to be confident, open to change, receptive and respectful towards other identities.
7. To acknowledge the existence of prejudice, and be proactive in tackling and eliminating discrimination.
8. To ensure that issues related to equality and prejudice are recognised across all areas of school activity.
9. To ensure that equality is an integral part of all planning and decision making within the school.

To view the full Equality Act 2010 visit the website address below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

## 4: Roles and Responsibilities

**Commitment to implementation: Commitment to action:** Woolgrove School is committed to:

- being proactive in promoting good relationships and equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and the wider community;
- encouraging, supporting and enabling all pupils and staff to reach their potential and make a positive contribution;
- working in partnership with families and the wider community to establish, promote and disseminate inclusive practice and tackle discrimination ensuring that our **Equality Policy** is followed.

### The Governing Body

It is the Governing Body's responsibility to work with the head teacher to:

- ensure that the school complies with equality legislation;
- meet requirements to publish equality schemes;
- ensure that the school's policy and its procedures and strategies are carried out and monitored with appropriate impact assessments informing future plans;
- scrutinise the recording and reporting procedures at least annually;
- monitor attendance and take appropriate action where necessary;
- have equal opportunities in staff recruitment and professional development and membership of the Governing Body;
- provide information in appropriate, accessible formats;
- be involved in dealing with serious breaches of the policy;
- be pro-active in recruiting high quality applicants from under represented groups.

### The Headteacher

It is the headteacher's responsibility to:

- Implement the policy and its strategies and procedures;
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate and relevant continuous professional development;
- Actively challenge and take appropriate action in many cases of discriminatory practice;
- Deal with any reported incidents of harassment or bullying in line with LA guidance;
- Ensure that all visitors and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the school's equality policy;
- Produce a report on progress for governors annually.

### All Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:



- Be vigilant in all areas of the school for any type of harassment and bullying;
- Deal effectively with all incidents from overt name calling to the more subtle forms of victimisation caused by perceived differences;
- Identify and challenge bias and stereotyping within the curriculum and in the school's culture;
- Promote equality and good relations and not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation;
- Promote an inclusive curriculum and whole school ethos which reflects our diverse society;
- Keep up to date with equality legislation, development and issues by attending relevant training and accessing information from appropriate sources.

### Monitor and Review

This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage particular sections of the community. This policy will be given to all staff through normal management meeting mechanisms and the Senior Leadership Team will ensure that it is known and understood by staff. This policy will also be published on the school website.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Anti Bullying Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BEM) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

### Breaches of the Policy

All breaches of the policy will be rigorously followed up using the appropriate procedures and reported to the Governing Body and LA as required.

# 5: Stakeholder Consultation

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## Policy Planning and Review

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Whilst we have a duty to develop and publish equality schemes in relation to both gender and diversity, we at Woolgrove School are considering all aspects of diversity and equality in this comprehensive policy to be extended by the School Development Plan in relation to access, gender and race equality covering a three year period.

## Policy Planning and Development

- in the planning and development stage of policy making, we will ensure we have consulted and taken into account stakeholder views;
- all improvement plans will be designed with an element of impact assessment built in to monitor the success of each activity;
- there will be a systematic review of the impact of all policies and procedures on equality and diversity to address any areas of inequality, e.g. achievement and attainment to ensure progress for all especially in relation to any identified disadvantaged groups; attendance and exclusion data will be reviewed to ensure no over-representation of any one group.
- our target setting processes ensure appropriate, challenging targets are set in relation to identifiable groups as well as individual pupils/cohorts.

## Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Each pupil's progress is monitored and tracked. The resulting data is analysed in respect of gender, race, ability or additional needs, pupil premium and looked after status;
- In addition to monitoring to rule out any potential disadvantage, quality assurance procedures ensure the school meets its duty to positively promote diversity e.g. work and planning scrutinies record evidence of differentiation and texts/resources are reviewed to ensure appropriateness and inclusivity;
- The information collected is used to inform further school planning, target setting and decision making.