



## **Vita et Pax Preparatory School**

### **Equal Opportunities Policy**

**Policy Originator:** Independent Schools Bursars Association

**Policy reviewed by:** Headteachers

**Last reviewed:** 24/03/2025

**Review period:** Every 3 years with annual minor reviews by originator

Vita et Pax Preparatory School is committed to providing a supportive, inclusive, and respectful educational environment for all pupils, staff, parents, and community members. Our educational approach prioritises the academic, emotional, social, and physical well-being of each pupil, promoting creativity, respect, and confidence. We value diversity and actively promote equal opportunities, seeking to remove barriers to inclusion and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

#### **Policy Aims:**

- Communicate the school's commitment to promoting equality and preventing discrimination.
- Ensure compliance with equality legislation, particularly the Equality Act 2010.
- Foster an inclusive environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.
- Address and eliminate any forms of discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
- Promote mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding across the school community.
- Ensure alignment with the school's Data Protection Policy, particularly regarding personal data collected for equality monitoring purposes.

**Regulatory Framework:** This policy adheres to obligations under:

- Equality Act 2010
- Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018

**This policy considers statutory guidance:**

- Equality Act 2010 Explanatory Notes
- Equality and Human Rights Commission Technical Guidance for Schools in England (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)

**Relevant school policies:**

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities Policy
- Data Protection Policy

**Admissions:** The admissions process is inclusive and non-discriminatory, providing equal opportunity to all prospective pupils irrespective of protected characteristics or special educational needs (SEN). Parents are required to inform the school of any special circumstances or requirements to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made. Admission decisions consider the school's ability to adequately support each pupil's educational and welfare needs.

Means-tested bursaries are available to support pupils facing temporary financial hardship.

**Educational Provision:** The school provides equal access to education, facilities, and services, making necessary adjustments to support the diverse needs of pupils. We will:

- Respect each individual's dignity, ensuring freedom from discrimination.
- Provide targeted support for pupils with English as an additional language or an Education Health Care Plan.
- Act swiftly against discriminatory behaviours, promoting a culture of respect.
- Deliver a comprehensive, inclusive curriculum and extracurricular opportunities.
- Collaborate with families and external agencies to reinforce equality and inclusivity.
- Regularly review our inclusive policies and practices for effectiveness.

**Data Protection in Equality Monitoring:** All personal data collected for the purpose of equality monitoring is managed strictly in line with the school's Data Protection Policy, ensuring confidentiality and compliance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data is used solely to identify and address inequalities and is securely stored, processed, and shared as necessary, respecting the privacy rights of individuals.

**Staff Training and Awareness:** Regular training sessions are provided for all staff, focusing on equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, online safety, and data protection to ensure a robust understanding of responsibilities and compliance requirements.

**Online Safety:** The school actively addresses issues of online discrimination, cyberbullying, and harassment through ongoing educational programmes and comprehensive digital safeguarding tools, including Project NeuralShield.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives:** We celebrate diversity through a variety of educational programmes, events, and activities designed to foster understanding and appreciation of different cultures, identities, and perspectives within our school community.

**Religious Belief:** While the school's ethos is founded on Catholic values, we embrace and actively support the freedom of all individuals to hold their own religious beliefs, promoting fundamental British values such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect.

**Reasonable Adjustments for Disabilities:** We continuously assess and implement necessary reasonable adjustments to ensure full participation and equal opportunity for pupils with disabilities. Consultations with families help us identify suitable adjustments, guided by our Accessibility Plan and SEN and Disability Policy.

**Monitoring and Review:** The Headteacher regularly evaluates the policy's effectiveness and provides updates to the governing body.

**Breaches of Policy:** Any breaches of this policy may result in sanctions as outlined in the Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy. Concerns or complaints regarding equal opportunities should be addressed via the school's formal complaints procedure.