

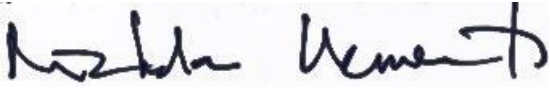


BRONTE SCHOOL & NURSERY



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES GUIDELINES (INCLUDING EYFS)

	Date	Signed
Date reviewed	Sept 2023	 (Mrs Emma Wood, Headmistress & Nursery Director)
Date reviewed	Sept 2023	 (Mrs Marie Pike, Nursery Manager)
Ratified by Proprietor	Sept 2023	 (Mr Nicholas Clements, Proprietor)
Date of next review	SEPT 2024	

GUIDELINES ON EQUALITY of OPPORTUNITY: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LEGISLATION, BRONTE'S AIMS and ETHOS;

These guidelines relate to Bronte School and to Bronte Nursery.

Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide an overview of current legislation concerning equality of opportunity, and to describe how such legislation relates to the ethos and to the educational and pastoral aims of Bronte School and Bronte Nursery.

Compliance in the matters of all legislation is ultimately the responsibility of the Proprietor. The Headmistress of Bronte School and the Director of the Nursery (a single appointment) has delegated responsibility for the leadership and management roles involved in implementation and communication.

These guidelines are formed by 4 sections:

1. The different acts and code of practice relating to equality of opportunity
2. Bronte's ethos and aims, as articulated in the School and Nursery websites and brochures and other areas
3. The legislation in more detail, and how the different areas are applied at the two settings
4. Summary

Compliance is externally checked and validated by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), under the terms and arrangements detailed in the ISI Inspection Framework.

1. Statutes; SEN Code of Practice

The three statutes and acts related to or relevant to equality of opportunity are as follows:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
(race, ethnicity, culture, religion)
- Disability and Equality Act 2010
(nine protected characteristics)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
(gender)

Additionally, there are areas more specifically related to education:

- EYFS Statutory Framework September 2021
- SEN Code of Practice

2. Bronte Ethos and Aims

A statement about Bronte's ethos is given on the two websites:

The School/Nursery has a Christian character and tradition, and welcomes families and staff from any background, ethnicity or religion. All within the School/Nursery community are encouraged to strive to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves.

The first sentence touches upon Bronte's origins and culture, and also upon the areas of equal opportunities examined in these guidelines. The communities of both Bronte School and Bronte Nursery comprise many different religions and ethnicities. Families of Christian and Sikh origins are in the majority, with many other religions and backgrounds also represented, be that in smaller groups or even by an individual.

Over many decades, the experience of those in our community is that Bronte's Christian foundations are accepted and welcomed by those of all faiths. Across the spectrum of belief and culture, there is appreciation of the embracing of spirituality, and of respect for the sacredness of life and humanity.

Bronte's approaches do not seek to treat all as if they were merely one amongst many, but reflect a belief in the intrinsic identity and value of all individuals, whether part of a majority or part of a minority.

The second sentence has a logic and universality about it which can be equally applied in religious and non-religious thought. It is an ancient, widely used precept, and naturally engenders reflection about the rightness and fairness of actions.

It also carries the idea of mutual respect for others' thinking and opinions. This is especially relevant to educational institutions. Bronte School and Bronte Nursery aim to be places of freedom of thought and opinion, where there can be considered reflection and open debate.

All these ideas, with their emphasis on the uniqueness and sacredness of all human beings, relate naturally to the areas of legislation under consideration here. There is a distinction however between the two: the ethos and aims of any institution are subject to law, but by their nature are more foundational than legal requirements, which have a different purpose and scope.

Finally, it is one thing to express ideas and values, and to set them as statements, but inevitably quite another thing always to adhere to them. Recognition that all can fall short of

ideals, together with tolerance of misjudgements and mistakes, also play their part in the overall approach of the School and the Nursery.

3. Summary of the Different Areas of Legislation

General

The areas of legislation identified above share an underlying principle of equality of opportunity, in a range of matters of identity: race and ethnicity, particular characteristics, and gender. There is overlap: in particular the 2010 Equalities Act encompasses both race and gender amongst the protected characteristics.

Each of the three Acts is examined in the paragraphs below. To avoid repetition, two particular aspects of the operations of the School and Nursery are noted here which apply across all the areas of equal opportunities legislation.

Firstly, the provisions of the Acts and the promotion of equality and fairness to all, are applied in the admissions process, for all prospective families. This principle is outlined in the admissions policies for the School and Nursery.

Secondly, the provisions are also applied in all aspects of the management of staff, including the process of recruitment of new staff. This is reflected in documents relating to staff recruitment, as well as in the staff handbook and other publications.

Race Relations (Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)

The Act makes unlawful any form of selection or choice, or any interaction, based on race. It also makes unlawful overt expression of prejudice or bias. It applies to any group, whether a majority or a minority.

The School and the Nursery look always to promote equal and fair relations between people of different races and ethnicities, across the whole community: children, families, staff, and all those with whom the community interacts.

Teachers and practitioners should apply these principles in the classroom or in the nursery room. They should be alert for any signs of difficulty or discomfort based around any child's race or ethnicity, and handle such matters sensitively and professionally. Just as importantly, they should encourage each to take pride in his or her identity, ethnicity and background.

In the School curriculum and, where applicable, in the Nursery curriculum, there should be opportunity for education about different ethnicities, races, religions and nationalities of the world: history, beliefs, culture, societal structure. As a British school, it is felt that educationally there should be an overall emphasis upon study of Britain. Similarly, as a school of Christian character, overall priority is given to the study of Christianity. However, the curriculum should also uphold a philosophy of the educational importance and value of

wide historical, religious cultural and social study, and seek to be as all-encompassing as possible.

Equality (Disability and Equality Act 2010)

The Act identifies “protected characteristics”, and makes unlawful any form of selection or choice, or any prejudice, based on those characteristics. It also makes unlawful overt expression of prejudice or bias. The Act applies to any group, whether a majority or a minority.

Nine characteristics are identified: age, gender, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity.

The School and the Nursery look always to promote equal and fair relations between people of different characteristics, across the whole community: children, families, staff, and all those with whom the community interacts.

Teachers and practitioners should apply these principles in the classroom or nursery room. They should be alert for any signs of difficulty or discomfort based around any child’s characteristics, whether part of a majority or minority group, and handle such matters sensitively and professionally.

Disability (Disability and Equality Act 2010)

The Act makes unlawful any form of selection or choice, or any prejudice, based on disability. It also makes unlawful overt expression of prejudice or bias against disability. It requires educational settings to make “reasonable adjustments” to provide for the needs of anyone, child and staff member, with a disability. The Act broadly defines disability: it should be noted as well that, at least over recent years, the interpretation of what constitutes disability is continually developing under case law.

Bronte’s Learning Support policy details practice at both School and Nursery. In summary, all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that children with any form of disability are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with non-disabled children.

Certain special educational needs are classed as a disability, and the School and Nursery learning support team, and classroom and nursery room staff give careful attention to children with such needs, with detailed planning to ensure appropriate support, without affecting support and learning experiences for others in a class.

Teachers should adjust teaching and learning as appropriate for those children with disabilities. For example, by giving additional time to complete certain activities, modifying teaching materials, and offering alternative activities where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment. Again, provision for the needs of others in a class must not be unreasonably diminished, and teachers should work closely with TAs and with the learning support team in this respect.

Within the restrictions of the school and nursery buildings, the intention is to allow any pupil with disability full access to all relevant areas.

Gender (Sex Discrimination Act 1975)

The Act makes unlawful any form of selection or choice, or bias based on gender. The provisions of the Act apply equally to male and female.

The School and the Nursery are both co-educational settings, and look always to promote equal and fair opportunities for boys and girls. Just as importantly, our policy is to recognise that there may be different developmental characteristics and needs of boys and girls.

For example, sporting opportunities are open equally to all, subject to any particular team restrictions. In the curriculum as a whole, teachers are encouraged both to promote and enable participation by both boys and girls in any subject or activity, at the same time as considering how boys and girls may respond to different types of teaching and to different activities and challenges. The School has different uniforms for boys and girls: encouraging confidence and pride in gender. The overarching aims are both to achieve equal opportunity and to value and respect gender, and gender difference.

There is much research and evidence about differing educational performance of boys and girls and our knowledge is ever evolving. Bronte staff should maintain an awareness of such research and of how best to enhance attainment and maximise potential of both boys and girls.

Teachers and practitioners should apply these principles in the classroom or in the nursery room. They should be alert for any signs of difficulty or discomfort based around any child's gender, and handle such matters sensitively and professionally.

The policies and guidelines outlined in this section do not exclude recognition of the existence of gender dysphoria. Given the age ranges at both settings, it is not anticipated that the matter will arise, but in any such case, the ethos of the School and Nursery remains unchanged, with respect and valuing of all. In the event of such a case potentially arising, parents should discuss the situation fully with the Headmistress.

4. Summary

The traditions, habits and customs of the Bronte community provide a foundational ethos of openness and respect and courtesy to all, irrespective of identity or characteristic. This may arise from the demographics and culture of the locality, or perhaps from the combined past and present endeavours of successive children, families and staff. The settings have a defined ethos which articulates Christian character, and associated embracing of all, as well as the tenet of treating others as one would want to be treated oneself.

This represents a culture of wide scope and vision, which is both subject to legislation and of a nature which reaches beyond legislation.

The guidelines have sought to express these themes, as well as to examine the various acts in more detail, with a summary of their outworking in day-to-day School and Nursery life. It is recognised as well that legislation itself is subject to change and that the areas of the guidelines which cover legislative requirements may accordingly need updating from time to time.