

Our legal duty

Under the Equality Act 2010, Willowfield Academy has due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 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

Willowfield Academy is an inclusive Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) specialist school where all pupils have, or are being assessed for, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Disability, including SEMH, Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN), and related needs, is the most significant protected characteristic in our community. Our equality objectives reflect this context and also address all other protected characteristics: age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Our equality principles

At Willowfield Academy, we believe that:

1. All pupils are of equal value.
2. Differences are recognised, respected, and explicitly taught.
3. Positive relationships, belonging and cohesion are actively fostered.
4. Barriers to participation and progress are identified and removed.
5. Protected characteristics are taught through the curriculum, assemblies and pastoral provision.
6. Equality and fairness underpin staff recruitment, retention and development.
7. High expectations apply to all pupils.

Equality objectives (2025–2028)

- 1. To reduce the disproportionate impact of behaviour sanctions, restrictive physical intervention (RPI) and safeguarding incidents on pupils with disabilities (SEMH, SLCN and associated SEND), particularly those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.**

Why this matters

Pupils with SEMH and related Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are at higher risk of exclusion, safeguarding concerns, and discrimination. Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are overrepresented in behaviour and safeguarding data, indicating possible indirect discrimination linked to disability and disadvantage.

Success will be evidenced by :

1. A sustained reduction in suspension rates for pupils with SEND and FSM
2. A reduction in the use of RPI for pupils with SEND and FSM
3. A reduction in discriminatory incidents recorded on CPOMS for pupils with SEND and FSM
4. Pupil voice evidencing that pupils feel safe, respected and included

How will we achieve this

- Maintain a consistent, trauma-informed, attachment-aware and relational culture.
- Embed person-informed practice, emotional regulation routines and safe spaces.
- Deliver regular staff training and professional learning in SEMH, behaviour regulation and inclusive practice.
- Regular quality assurance of PSHE, RE and pastoral provision to explicitly address discrimination and protected characteristics.
- Monitor and analyse CPOMS data to identify patterns and respond proactively.

- 2. To ensure pupils with SEMH and other protected characteristics who are disproportionately exposed to unsafe or negative community influences have equitable access to positive, structured curriculum and community experiences.**

Why this matters

Some pupils with SEMH and related vulnerabilities are more exposed to unsafe community influences. Without equitable access to structured opportunities, they face barriers to inclusion, confidence, participation, and future readiness.

Success will be evidenced by:

1. Increased participation in positive, structured community experiences
2. Pupil voice evidencing increased confidence, belonging and safety awareness

3. A reduction in community-related safeguarding incidents on CPOMS
4. Improved attendance, engagement and well-being indicators for targeted pupils

How will we achieve this

- Deliver a coherent Personal Development curriculum that explicitly teaches protected characteristics, respectful relationships, inclusion and safe decision-making.
- Reinforce inclusion, tolerance and belonging through assemblies and pastoral sessions.
- Provide access to arts, sports, vocational and creative community opportunities.
- Offer consistent relational and therapeutic support (ELSA, counselling, Wellbeing Hub, SEMH interventions).
- Provide regular staff training and professional learning in trauma-informed practice, inclusion and community safety.

3. To reduce attainment gaps for pupils with disabilities (SEMH, SLCN and associated SEND) by removing barriers to learning through adaptive teaching, targeted intervention and inclusive curriculum design.

Why this matters

Disability-related barriers impact engagement, attainment, and progress. Pupils with SEMH and SLCN are at greater risk of underachievement without targeted, equitable support.

Success will be evidenced by:

- Increased numbers of KS4 pupils achieving qualifications in English and Maths.
- At least 75% of disadvantaged pupils meet end-of-year targets in English and Maths.

How will we achieve this

- Maintain adaptive teaching, clear modelling and scaffolding across the curriculum
- Provide targeted academic and pastoral interventions aligned to pupil need.
- Use trauma-informed practice to support regulation and engagement in learning.
- Deliver targeted Maths and English interventions led by subject specialists.
- Monitor progress closely and respond quickly to emerging barriers.
- Strengthen provision through the use of accessible tools and by collaborating with other specialist settings.

4. To improve access to reading, communication and curriculum engagement for pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) as a secondary area of need.

Why this matters

SLCN is the largest secondary area of need at Willowfield Academy. Without targeted support, these pupils encounter significant barriers to participation, achievement, and self-expression.

Success will be evidenced by:

1. An increased number of pupils with SLCN making at least 9 months' reading progress within an academic year
2. Pupil voice evidencing increased confidence and enjoyment in reading
3. Increased engagement in reading-related events and activities

How will we achieve this

- Embed reading as a key priority within the School Development Plan.
- Use Widgit symbols, visual timetables and personalised resources.
- Deliver Phenomenal Phonics and Lexonic LEAP programmes.
- Provide daily reading-for-pleasure opportunities.
- Celebrate reading through events, assemblies and recognition.
- Provide staff training and professional learning in supporting pupils SLCN.

Review and accountability

These equality objectives will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Monitored through governance and leadership oversight
- Informed by data, pupil voice and safeguarding analysis
- Reviewed with the Local Governing Body: Monday 9th February 2026