



**Malden Oaks**  
School & Tuition service

Making the **MOST** of every day

# Malden Oaks' Equality Policy

## A celebration of identity through equity

<b>Responsibility</b>	Ayse Meliz
<b>Approved by</b>	SLT
<b>Last reviewed</b>	Spring 2023
<b>Review Due</b>	Spring 2024

## Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Guiding principles	4
3. Legislation and guidance	4
4. Roles and responsibilities	5
5. Eliminating discrimination	5
6. Advancing equality of opportunity	6
7. Fostering good relations	7
8. Monitoring arrangements	8
9. Links with other policies	8
10. Equality objectives	9

## 1. Aims

As a school, we are aware of our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

At Malden Oaks, our duty to our students goes further than our legal obligations. We strive to create a truly inclusive environment that is as welcoming of diversity as it is inclusive of additional need.

As a staff, we understand the importance of our students being seen and respected for the individuals there are. Equality, for our students, is simply not enough. For equality to truly work, there must be a common starting point for all concerned. For our students, this is simply not the case.

Students who come to Malden Oaks have inevitably experienced a chaotic journey through education and will often not have had the security of feeling a sense of belonging or worse, have experienced a sense of rejection. As a result of this, academically, our students arrive at many different levels. This is true too of their social and emotional development and with this in mind, what is important to Malden Oaks is to go about providing equity whilst celebrating the many and varied identities of our students, be this their cultural identity, the identity they feel belonging to a group with a particular diagnosis or their sexual identity.

By definition, equity focuses on *fairness* rather than *sameness*. This means that at Malden Oaks, we will give our students the opportunities that they personally need in order to make progress. As we would make reasonable adjustments for learning needs, this same logic is applied to various other situations.

It is useful to hold in mind that students attending Malden Oaks have been referred to us because of their SEMH needs. This means that we have no control over the cultural background of our students nor do we work with any students who have no protective characteristics.

This policy will outline our ethos and approach to diversity and inclusion, together with the specific objectives we are working towards.

## 2. Guiding Principles

Our approach to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is based on the following 7 key principles:

**1. All students are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.

**2. We recognize, respect and value differences and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

**3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We actively promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other, as well as between individuals.

**4. We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life. This is particularly important for our students and is prioritised through our 4 As ethos; attachment.

**5. We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development.

**6. We have the highest expectations of all our students.** We expect that all students can make good progress and achieve their highest potential.

**7. We work to raise standards for all students, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for our most vulnerable groups of students raises standards across the whole school.

## 3. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements under the following legislation:

- 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 to demonstrate how they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and to publish equality objectives

This document is also based on Department for Education guidance: [The Equality Act](#)

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### **The Management Committee will:**

- Ensure that the equality information and objectives as set out in this statement are published and communicated throughout the school, including to staff, students and parents
- Ensure that the published equality information is updated at least every year, and that the objectives are reviewed and updated at least every 4 years
- Delegate responsibility for monitoring the achievement of the objectives on a daily basis to the headteacher

### **The Management Committee Link Member for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) will:**

- Meet with the EDI Lead regularly, together with other relevant staff members, to discuss as appropriate any issues and how these are being addressed
- Ensure they're familiar with all relevant legislation and the contents of this document
- Attend appropriate equality and diversity training
- Report back to the full Management Committee regarding any issues

### **The headteacher will:**

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students
- Monitor success in achieving the objectives and report back to Management Committee Members

### **The EDI Lead will:**

- Support the headteacher in promoting knowledge and understanding of the equality objectives among staff and students, identifying any staff training needs, and deliver training as necessary
- Meet with the equality link Management Committee Member every regularly to raise and discuss any issues

All school staff are expected to have regard to this document and to work to achieve the objectives as set out in Section 10.

## 5. Eliminating discrimination

Malden Oaks actively does the following in its work towards eliminating discrimination:

- The school is aware of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and complies with non-discrimination provisions, understanding the importance of this for the welfare of its community
- Where relevant, our policies include reference to the importance of avoiding discrimination and other prohibited conduct and the need for inclusivity.
- Staff and Management Committee Members are reminded of their responsibilities under the Equality Act as and when relevant.
- New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and there are opportunities for further training throughout the year.
- The school has a designated member of staff for monitoring equality issues, and a Management Committee Link Member for EDI. They regularly liaise regarding any issues and make senior leaders and Management Committee Members aware of these as appropriate.

## 6. Advancing equality of opportunity

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 that are connected to a particular characteristic they have**

By the nature of being at Malden Oaks, our students are disadvantaged by their SEMH needs. Malden Oaks provision is designed to reduce and remove the barriers to students participating fully in school life, with a curriculum rich in opportunity and cultural capital. We have also taken significant steps to eradicate the stigma associated with attending Malden Oaks; we discourage external professionals from referring to us as a 'PRU' and seek to encourage schools who make referrals to us to do so whilst explaining that our environment might be more appropriate and not as a threat, punishment or last resort.

- **Taking steps to meet the particular needs of people who have a particular characteristic**

It is important to us and for our students that they are seen for who they are, their identity respected and that they feel free to express themselves in any way they choose. We pride ourselves on providing inclusive settings. Example of this, include- but are not limited to, our sites having individual, gender neutral toilets, students being free to express themselves through their choice of clothes, hairstyles and looks- signing up to The Halo Code is part of this; and students having access to a curriculum that is truly accessible to them, in every regard.

- **Encouraging people who have a particular characteristic to participate fully in any activities**

This is profoundly embedded in the Malden Oaks ethos. Our practice is inclusive regardless of gender, ability, cultural background, additional need or individual circumstance. We ensure that all of Malden Oaks school life is not only accessible to our students but that they also feel entitled to take up space in every environment.

Students are taught to accept and celebrate the protected characteristics of their peers and across all sites, there is an accepting, inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

The cohort at Malden Oaks can be transient and given our relatively small number, it can be hard to use data to track trends and seek out areas of particular success or need for improvement. Given the nature of our school, we also have no guarantees that we will have students with the same characteristics year after year and we do not have a high number of students belonging to the global majority.

What is important is that we apply our inclusive approach to all students, regardless of their characteristics, to ensure that everyone is able to make progress academically as well as socially and emotionally. It is important that in addition to their SEMH needs, any other protected characteristics are considered when we plan how to support progress. It is important that with every decision made for each student, they are considered individually and their personal circumstances held in mind. It is important our personalised approach is applied to everything to do with our students to ensure that regardless of where they have come from or how they have come to Malden Oaks, their gender identity or cultural differences aside, the student has equal and fair access to every opportunity .

## 7. Fostering good relations

Positive relationships between students and students and staff is essential to the smooth, harmonious running of all of the different parts of Malden Oaks.

Given their particular needs, students can often need support to make and sustain friendships and communicate and interact with others appropriately. Through our inclusive approach, staff modelling and Emotion Coaching, all students are supported to be accepting and welcoming of others, regardless of their identity and this is detailed further in the Relationships & Communication policy. We consider behaviour a communication of need and so if a student was to 'behave badly' towards an individual or a group of individuals based on their identity, we would see this as a clear indication that the student needs support to understand how to be more accepting and welcoming.

At Malden Oaks, we promote tolerance, friendship and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RE, citizenship and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures and authors of different backgrounds whilst in Art they may look at artists from around the world.

Students at Malden Oaks are taught either individually or in very small groups. Furthermore, as students are referred to Malden Oaks based on their SEMH need, it is entirely plausible that despite their cultural community having a presence in the local community, there may not be one in the school. We encourage and implement initiatives to deal with tensions between different students when these relate to part of a student's identity based on what is most appropriate; given the student's setting and ability. All students are encouraged to participate fully in all learning opportunities and activities provided, such as Duke of Edinburgh, outdoor learning and group lunchtimes. Every opportunity is sought to promote knowledge and understanding of different cultures and this may sometimes involve parents/ carers.

We have developed links with people and groups who have specialist knowledge about particular characteristics, which helps inform and develop our approach and our EDI Lead is currently taking part in Achieving for Children's Racial Justice Working Party and working collaboratively with the Local Authority to look at possible links between race and exclusion.



## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

Equality information, found in the following sections of this document;

- Eliminating discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

will be reviewed and updated annually by the EDI Lead before being approved by the Management Committee.

This entire document and the Equality Plan will be updated and reviewed at least every 4 years by the EDI Lead before being approved by the Management Committee.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This document links to the following policies:

- Accessibility plan
- Risk assessment
- Relationships & Communication
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Relationships & Sexual Education
- Exam Equality Policy

# 10. Equality objectives

Our [full equality plan](#) can also be found on our website. These are the current objectives we are working towards, broken down under the PSED Aims:

Equality Objective	Why	How	When	Who
<b>Eliminating discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010</b>				
Set up a working party to support students following current affairs that may be pertinent to our community. This is often likely to link to students' identities.	To support local schools in ensuring that students are not treated unfairly because of their race, heritage or ethnicity.	Work with Kathryn Kayshap and her team to evaluate the problem and plan and deliver relevant and necessary training to colleagues in mainstream settings	Summer 23	AMz
<b>Fostering good relations across all characteristics – between people who do share a protected characteristic and people who do not</b>				
Set up a working party to support students following current affairs that may be pertinent to our community. This is often likely to link to students' identities.	If a community, cultural or otherwise, that a student identifies as being part of, is harmed or comes under attack in the media, it is likely they will have emotions around this that they may need support to process.	AMz to lead a group of interested teachers in being able to provide a rapid response to instances where this comes	February 2023	AMz
Review the curriculum to ensure that it is culturally rich and diverse, inclusive of need and accessible.	Our curriculum is designed to be accessible to a wide range of needs but needs to culturally represent our students as well as serve to give students from all backgrounds, better understanding of those from backgrounds different to their own. A	Head of Student Services to liaise with Heads of School and Head of Teaching & Learning Service so this becomes an integral part of ongoing curriculum review rather than a tokenistic one off event.	July 2023	AMz AR SB SV MH NS LB

	diverse curriculum supports students in celebrating difference.			
<b>Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</b>				
To draw on the National Education Union's Anti Racism Charter to ensure we Challenge racial inequalities and oppressive racial norms and assumptions.	So that through an emphasis on equity, not equality, our students who are part of the global majority understand the difficulties faced by those are not.	Create a working group with participants from each School so that we can ensure all parts of our provision, and not just our curriculum, are culturally drivers.	September 2023	AMz
Research and complete one of the following Racial Justice accreditations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Educating for Equality</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Fig Tree International</a></li> <li>- <a href="#">Leeds Beckett</a></li> </ul>	So that all stakeholders, internal and external, are aware that racial justice is a top priority for Malden Oaks.	Follow programme as per accreditation	July 24	AMz