



Equality and Community Cohesion Policy

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	October 2016	Tables updated for 2018-19
1.1	June 2019	Link Governor updated to Massimo Bonaddio, Chair of Learning and Wellbeing Committee
1.2	January 2020	Tables updated for 2019-20
1.3	January 2021	Link Governor updated to Jo Feather (Co-Chair) and Jane Chamberlin (Co-Chair) Added section on 'working to become an anti-racist organisation' Added an additional Objective 4
1.4	January 2022	Update on equalities statistics for students and staff
1.5	April 2023	Clarity of diversity being a core value of Cotham School. Explanation of the school's commitment to achieving greater equity for students. Update to link governor and equalities statistics for students and staff. More explanation

		about what the school means by diversifying and globalising the curriculum. Change to Equalities Objective 2 to include SEND students in reduction to high level sanctions. Change to Equalities Objective 3 to include the diversity of governors.
1.6	March 2024	Updating all equalities statistics for students and staff Reviewing and updating annual equalities objectives Adding Part 4 'Addressing LGBTQ+ prejudice and discrimination' including reference to the DfE's draft consultation guidance 'Gender Questioning Children' Updating Ofsted feedback on inclusivity and equality of opportunity
1.7	March 2025	Updating all equalities statistics for students and staff Reviewing and updating annual equalities objectives More detailed explanation of the school's strategy to address students' use of discriminatory language Update on the school's work to specifically address HBTphobia and develop positive LGBTQ+ representation Inclusion of the 'other' category in staff gender statistics and recognition of the challenges faced by transgender and non-binary members of staff
1.8	June 2026	Updating all equalities statistics for students and staff Reviewing and updating annual equalities objectives Update on the school's work to specifically address misogyny Introducing the work of the Student Council / Student Leadership Group Reviewing and updating the organisations that we are working with (Part 3: Working to become an Anti-Racist organisation)

Approved by Governors: 30 June 2026

Review Date: March 2027

Contents

Contents	3
Policy statement on Equality and Community Cohesion	4
Introduction	4
Staff with responsibility for equality	5
Part 1: Information about the student population	5
Information on students by protected characteristics	5
Part 2: Eliminate discrimination	8
Part 3: Working to become an anti-racist organisation	9
Part 4: Addressing LGBTQ+ prejudice and discrimination	10
Part 5: Advance equality of opportunity	10
Part 6: Foster good relations across all characteristics	12
Part 7: Our equalities objectives	13
<u>Cotham Equalities Objectives for 2026-27</u>	
Part 8: Information about our employees	13
Confidentiality	13
Staff characteristics as of 01/09/25	14
Monitoring and review	15
Links with other policies	15

Policy statement on Equality and Community Cohesion

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Equality Objectives for Cotham School. What is the PSED?

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single, general duty for public bodies, including schools, and which extends to all 'protected characteristics' – race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

There are three main elements within the act and in carrying out our functions, as a school, we must have regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The PSED replaces the previous three sets of separate duties to promote disability, race and gender equality.

All schools must have 'due regard' to the three elements. Therefore, whenever significant decisions are being made, or policies being developed or reviewed, the school will consider carefully the equalities implications.

The school also recognises the difference between equality and equity, and the need to achieve greater equity for all students regardless of their starting point.

How does Cotham School comply with the PSED?

Introduction

Cotham School welcomes diversity and the positive benefits this brings to the life of the school. One of the three core values of Cotham School is diversity. We recognise that the varied backgrounds of students and other people in the school community are an asset to the school.

We wish to make all of the school's opportunities and facilities accessible to every student, and protect everyone in the school from harassment and intimidation. We aim to make sure that no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age; any disability they may have; their ethnicity, colour or national origin; their gender; their gender identity or reassignment; their marital or civil partnership status; being pregnant or having recently had a baby; their religion or beliefs; their sexual identity and orientation.

The governors support and fund the measures outlined in the policy to support the necessary activities and strategies to make this policy a reality. The school's leadership team will review existing policies, strategies and training to ensure that the policy is being implemented throughout the life of the school.

The Learning and Wellbeing Committee is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the policy. The Learning and Wellbeing Committee will provide an annual report to the full governing body on the school's progress with the implementation of the policy.

Our Inclusion Team makes a significant contribution to promoting equal opportunities and directly intervenes to actively promote equal opportunities. The creation of a post that directly teaches and supports EAL learners has contributed significantly to their learning and wellbeing. However, the school is far from complacent and remains focused upon ensuring that its response to the PSED is significant and effective. There have been further appointments in literacy and numeracy to ensure that all students are able to meet expected standards and to close the gap in attainment between different groups of students.

Staff with responsibility for equality

- All staff at Cotham School
- Staff member with overview of equality: **Adrian Dunkley, Assistant Headteacher** (Tel: 0117 9198004 Email: Dunkleya@cotham.bristol.sch.uk)
- School governor with overview of equality: **Isabel Tobias (Governor for Equalities)**

Part 1: Information about the student population

Number of students on roll at the school as of 22 April 2026: 1217

Information on students by protected characteristics

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of “protected characteristics”. Every person has several of the protected characteristics, so the Act protects everyone against unfair treatment.

Disability

The Equality Act defines disability as when a person has a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.’

Student Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision as of 22/4/26:		
	Number of Students	Percentage of School Population
K: School Support	307	25%
E: EHCP	24	2%

Gender as of 22/4/26		
	Number	Percentage
Female	555	46%
Male	662	54%

Ethnicity and Race as of 22/4/26:			
	Total		Total
Any Other Asian Background	57	Pakistani	77
Any Other Black Background	25	Refused	21
Any Other Ethnic Group	31	Traveller of Irish heritage	0
Any Other Mixed Background	59	White British	328
Arab	6	White Irish	3
Bangladeshi	11	White Northern Irish	1
Black Somali	218	White and Asian	19
Black Caribbean	33	White and Black African	26
Chinese	24	White and Black Caribbean	34
Gypsy/Roma	1	White Eastern European	22
Indian (Asian or Asian British)	42	White Other	62
Information not yet obtained	25	White Western European	22
Other Black African	69	Black British	2

Religion and Belief

As a multi-faith school, we present all religions as having equal value and do not seek to promote one religion as more or less valid than the others, and equally those with no religious belief. However, as a multi-faith school, we recognise that people of religion and belief may experience discrimination and harassment.

Gender identity or reassignment

We do not collect data on students who are planning to undergo, who are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment. However, we recognise that people who are proposing to undergo, who are undergoing or who have undergone a process to reassign their gender may experience discrimination and harassment, as may those who identify as transgender or non-binary. We provide support to all students and their families in these circumstances, particularly through the work of our Inclusion and Pastoral teams, and our whole-school work to tackle discrimination in all forms.

Sexual orientation

We do not collect data on the sexual orientation of our students. However, as a school we are aware that there may be a number of equality issues for gay, lesbian and bisexual students and we provide support to all students identifying as LGBTQ+, particularly through the work of our Inclusion and Pastoral teams, and our whole-school work to tackle discrimination in all forms.

Information on other groups of students

Ofsted inspections look at how schools help “all students to make progress, including those whose needs, dispositions, aptitudes or circumstances require additional support.”

In addition to students with protected characteristics, the school has the following numbers of students:

	Total	Percent age of School Populati on
Number of students who speak English as an additional language <i>A student is considered EAL if they were exposed to a language other than English during early development and continue to be exposed to that language in the home or in the community. If a child was exposed to more than one language (which may include English) during early development, then that language is recorded, irrespective of the child's proficiency in English</i>	612	50%
Number of students eligible for free school meals	484	40%
Number of students who are Children in Care	6	0.5%

Part 2: Eliminate discrimination

Cotham School is a large, complex organisation with a mixed, diverse, multi-faith, multi-ethnic student population. Close tracking of all student outcomes takes place in a structured, systematic way and where it reveals underachievement, low attainment or concerns about specific groups or individuals the school intervenes.

Monitoring and evaluation and the analysis of data takes place across the school and is used within the improvement cycle at each key stage. Monitoring takes place three times a year and positive action is taken to rectify any disadvantages that are revealed. Examination results published in August lead to judgements for key areas of improvement and development. At Post-16, following on from examination results, a prioritised action plan is set in motion for the next academic year. We monitor the attainment and progress of all our students, and use gender in the data analysis process. To address underachievement, we look at the performance of each gender and report on the group's achievement: neither boys nor girls are treated as homogeneous groups.

We have an Anti-Bullying policy and deal promptly and effectively with all incidents and complaints of bullying and harassment that may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to disability or special educational need, ethnicity and race, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religion and belief and sexual orientation. We keep a record of all such incidents and notify those affected of what action we have taken. We provide training to all staff in relation to dealing with bullying and harassment incidents.

Tackling bullying or harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity and culture is achieved by ensuring all incidents of this nature are logged and investigated fully. Appropriate sanctions are put in place, as is appropriate education for the students involved, and then parents are involved to ensure they are aware of the nature of such incidents. Reconciliation happens between the parties involved so that the unacceptable nature of such incidents is made clear and incidents are suitably resolved. The school takes an education-first approach if it is the first known incident of a student using discriminatory language. This means that the student will have a long educational chat with a trained member of staff about the impact and consequences of their language, given the opportunity to reflect and also informed that, should another incident of the same type of discrimination occur again then a high level sanction will be issued, what this could be and parents will be informed.

Our staffing policies cover the school's employees (permanent, temporary, casual, part time and those on fixed term contracts), job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not employees but who work at the school. We observe and implement the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in our employment practices.

Our Accessibility Plan increases the extent to which all students can participate in the curriculum, improves the physical environment of the school and increases the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

We have a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy that outlines the provision the school makes for students with special educational needs and disabilities. We endeavour to offer all students access to the National Curriculum, to teaching and to assessment that is appropriate to their aptitude, attainment and any special needs or disability that they might have. The policy was devised in light of the revised SEND Code of Practice (DFE 1994, Revised 2001 and 2014).

The school has an Online Safety policy that takes all online safety issues very seriously. Through assemblies, workshops and lessons, students and staff are made aware of suitable internet conduct. Subsequently, "Acceptable Use" policies are regularly signed and adhered to by all students and staff.

At Post-16, learning support for students is through our academic mentors who support students' access to learning. We maintain strong links with external agencies to ensure the provision of appropriate and effective support for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. To monitor further underachievement of students, we have also created "Upgrade" a system whereby students are supported with independent learning. This is also a way of supporting the access of students to a range of cultural capital.

The school positively encourages students into non-traditional areas of study and work to minimise gender stereotyping.

Close tracking and monitoring of behaviour data shows some reduction over the past few years in high-level sanctions for boys, BAME students and Pupil Premium students.

Part 3: Working to become an anti-racist organisation

Bristol is a city marked by vast socio-economic inequality and despite being considered a prosperous city, with an above average educational system, Bristol has more areas categorised as being in the most deprived 10% in England compared to other cities in the country. Bristol also shoulders a very specific legacy in the context of colonial history including the slave trade as well as the Civil Rights Activism of the 1960s.

When looking at the data across the city of Bristol and indeed across the country, it outlines that BAME students are underperforming compared with their peers and there is a larger percentage of BAME students who are permanently excluded. While there are going to be external factors beyond the school's control that contribute to this disparity, we are committed to tackling any internal factors that may also be contributing to the lower levels of attainment amongst our BAME students.

Combined with this, Bristol is facing wider challenges that expose our young people to greater levels of aggression, violence and disorder, more often than not as a result of growing tensions between different groups in the wake of events such as Brexit. We are proud of our diversity and are passionate about our anti-racist work and our work in tackling all forms of prejudice. We are working towards this in a number of ways:

1. Addressing unconscious bias and how to be anti-racist through regular staff training
2. Creating a Social Justice Library for staff and students
3. The work of the school's Anti-Racist Educators Forum, made up of a cross-section of staff keen to develop their racial literacy and disseminate this learning to colleagues
4. Ongoing work on diversifying and globalising the curriculum to ensure that students are exposed to narratives, history, achievements and perspectives from all over the world, not just the Western world
5. Introducing Restorative Approaches to behaviour
6. Taking a clear position and response to #BLM
7. Working towards achieving the Anti-Racist School Award with Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University
8. The majority of the senior leadership team have completed an 18-month programme on Race, Identity and School Leadership with Integrity Coaching
9. Working with a range of other organisations committed to race equality e.g. TALO, SARI, ZAZI, BAMEed, Integrate, the BAME South West Leaders Network, REN, BCC, Youth Resilience Network UK and Girlhood Reclaimed.

10. Hosting community cultural events for our parents/carers, students, staff and wider community
11. Developing positive community partnerships with local businesses to encourage inclusive community cohesion

Part 4: Addressing LGBTQ+ prejudice and discrimination

The school does not tolerate or accept LGBTQ+ prejudice and discrimination, not limited to homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, or any form of hate against someone's gender or sexuality. All such instances are dealt with swiftly and seriously. The school also has a programme of education through PSHE and the wider SMSC curriculum to teach students about different types of relationships as accepted in British society and in accordance with British values. We celebrate Pride activities throughout the academic year, have a student Pride support group and a diverse staff working party to plan the school's longer term strategic work, including extensive staff professional development, to tackle LGBTQ+ prejudice and discrimination in accordance with our public sector equality duties and our statutory safeguarding duties to address any form of hate and discrimination.

Wherever reasonably possible the school will do its best to accommodate the specific needs and any adaptations of gender questioning or trans-identifying students.

2024/25 the school worked with Loud and Proud Education Ltd to deliver a strategy to address HBTphobia (homophobia, biphobia and transphobia) through staff training and also developing greater LGBTQ+ representation in the curriculum.

This year, the school is working closely with Girlhood Reclaimed. Girlhood Reclaimed have been working with the school to develop a whole-school approach to understanding and addressing misogyny. Girlhood Reclaimed has worked alongside the school through student and staff focus groups, staff training, assemblies, and creative workshops to explore misogyny and gender inequality. This work aims to amplify the voices of women and girls, increase awareness of gender-based inequalities, and promote a more inclusive school environment that does not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual violence.

Part 5: Advance equality of opportunity

The school is committed to advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and has put a range of approaches in place to ensure that this happens.

The school is mindful of the need to achieve greater equity, rather than equality, to ensure that students who arrive at the school with different starting points, academically and/or socially, receive the necessary and sustained support and guidance to overcome any barriers, achieve their potential and to make effective transitions. The school ensures they have the help they need and makes referrals to other support services as appropriate. This is a particular strength of the school, with students identified early via the "Inclusion Forums" made up of a group of key pastoral staff. A range of strategies are then planned to overcome barriers for individual students, including being future-focused and considering extended work experience, early college placements and escorted tasters where appropriate in collaboration with the school's Careers Advisor.

The school regularly reviews transition issues at every key stage with support services and external providers and makes plans for improvements; for example, the Post-16 SEND, Careers and Wellbeing

Lead meets with appropriate Further Education staff during the autumn term to review the success of student transitions and to discuss improvements.

The school monitors and evaluates, frequently and regularly, the attainment and progress of all students and looks at the performance of particular groups who share a protected characteristic to compare their performance with those who do not share it. Interventions are then planned and implemented in order to close any disparities in performance.

The Student Council now includes representatives from four year groups and consists of 32 students in total: Year 11 is represented by 4 House Captains and 12 Prefects, alongside 4 Student Council members from Year 7, 4 from Year 8, and 4 from Year 9 and 4 from Year 10. Students meet to discuss matters relating to their concerns and overall wellbeing within school and their immediate environment. The House System is strong and articulate, making an important contribution to whole-school decision-making alongside students.

We contract a catering team who recognise a culturally diverse cuisine and ensure that all students receive a healthy meal each day. This reflects our commitment to a healthy lifestyle and responsibility to our environment regardless of one's socio-economic background. All meat is halal.

We understand that attendance plays an integral part in a student's achievement at school. Thus, through our Attendance and Punctuality policy, we investigate any discrepancies that may occur and address inequalities appropriately, ensuring that we make reasonable adjustments to our policy and practice where appropriate.

Some practical examples of the school putting equality of opportunity into practice are:

The school operates attendance competitions within year groups and any religious observance days that have been taken by students are discounted in order that all students have the opportunity to gain a prize. Each Year team has a pupil premium Attendance budget which is designed to enable the Year teams to work with our disadvantaged students on barriers to attendance and to incentivise and reward these students for attendance improvements. The school makes 'First Day of Absence' calls to parents whenever a student is absent from school.

A weekly prayer room has been set up at student request.

A student-led group for students identifying as LGBTQ+ and allies, called the Pride Club, is well established and leads the way in raising awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. Students who identify as non-gender, transgender or questioning are supported by the Inclusion team and, where parental agreement has been given, a student will be referred to by their preferred gender and name.

Part 6: Foster good relations across all characteristics

It is worthy of note that in November 2023, Ofsted commented on the school's inclusivity and commitment to promote equality of opportunity for all:

“Cotham School is diverse and inclusive. Pupils enjoy attending. They feel safe in school and learn how to stay safe in the wider community. Pupils know that staff care about them and will help them. The values of ‘respect, achievement and diversity’ underpin all aspects of school life.

There are high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. The school strives to provide the same high-quality education to all pupils, regardless of their starting points or the challenges they face. Pupils behave well. They are polite and friendly. The school supports pupils who need extra help to meet the high expectations that staff have of them. Bullying is rare and is stopped quickly if it does occur. The atmosphere around the school is calm and harmonious. The respectful relationships between staff and pupils create a purposeful environment in lessons. Incidents of poor behaviour are well managed by staff so that learning is not interrupted.

Staff know pupils’ needs. They support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language well. Consequently, these pupils learn the curriculum alongside their peers. All subjects consider a variety of cultures in what they teach.

The school celebrates the diverse community that it serves. Pupils and their families feel welcome and valued. The school actively engages with parents and the wider community. For example, it has recently hosted an event celebrating African-Caribbean culture. The school’s work with community groups and local universities has enhanced pupils’ learning about Black History Month. The school uses its knowledge of the local area to adapt its approach.”

The school adopts a wide range of approaches to foster good relations across all characteristics. Some specific examples are as follows:

The range of topics covered by the Religion, Ethics & Philosophy (REP) curriculum which aims to provide students with the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the principles, philosophies and values in Britain today. REP provides a framework within which students can reflect upon their own beliefs and attitudes.

Our Performing Arts team takes students on dance tours to broaden their experience.

The Physical Education team organises a large number of team events with other schools and uses older students to lead and develop younger students.

The school curriculum plays a significant part in our approach to fostering good relations and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), in particular, focuses upon the promotion of caring and considerate relationships, as well as promoting the British Values of tolerance, individual liberty, mutual respect, democracy and the rule of law.

This work is complemented by that in the taught tutor programme and the work in the Humanities and English curricula. Curriculum teams audit their materials to both ensure balance and appropriateness of content and to promote and celebrate diversity and difference.

Part 7: Our equalities objectives

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to publish specific and measurable equalities objectives. Our equalities objectives are based on our analysis of data and other information.

Our equalities objectives focus on those areas where we have agreed to take action to improve equality and tackle disadvantages.

We will regularly review the progress we are making to meet our equalities objectives.

Cotham Equalities Objectives for 2026-27

Objective 1:

For SEND and Disadvantaged students to achieve an increase in grades 9-4 in English and Mathematics, Attainment 8 and Progress 8 in the 2025/26 exam season compared to the 2024/25 exam season.

Objective 2:

To achieve a reduction in the number of suspensions of SEND students, and students from a minority ethnic background over 2025/26 in comparison to 2024/25.

Objective 3:

To increase the diversity of the school staff body, and the governing body, so as to be representative of the protected characteristics of the school's community.

Objective 4:

To continue creating a culturally inclusive environment through opportunities to celebrate difference and diversity, in our preventative work around racism and our work on developing anti-racist practice, LGBTQ+ prejudice and discrimination.

Objective 5:

To continue to increase the proportion of students reporting that they feel they belong at school and are treated fairly regardless of their background, while reducing attendance and behaviour disparities between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students through targeted inclusion, attendance and restorative practice initiatives.

Part 8: Information about our employees

If we have more than 150 employees we are required to publish information about them. This information aims to provide a profile of our school workforce, as our employment practices and achievements.

Confidentiality

Guarantees of confidentiality are given to all staff who provide monitoring information or who take part in staff surveys. Names and data are anonymised.

Our staff are employed in the following main groups:

- Teaching staff
- Administrative and other related posts

- Support staff

Staff characteristics as of 01/09/25

Ethnicity

Mixed, white and black caribbean	4	White, any other White Background	12
Black or British Black, African	4	White British	135
Black or British Black, Caribbean	5	Asian or Asian British, Bangladeshi	1
Mixed White and Asian	1	Chinese	2
Asian or Asian British, Indian	3	Asian or Asian British, Pakistani	4
Mixed, White and Black African	2	White, Irish	1
Mixed any other Mixed Background	2	Not Obtained	4

Gender

	Total Number of Staff	180
Female	112	
Male	65	
Other	3 non binary	

Disability

2 members of staff have declared themselves as having a disability.

Sexual orientation

We do not collect data on the sexual orientation of our staff. However, as a school we are aware that there may be a number of equality issues for gay, lesbian and bisexual staff.

Gender reassignment

We do not collect data on staff who are planning to undergo, who are undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment. However, we recognise that people who are proposing to undergo,

who are undergoing or who have undergone a process to reassign their gender may experience discrimination and harassment, as may staff not intending to pursue surgery but who identify as transgender or non-binary.

Pregnancy and Maternity

There are presently 6 members of staff on Maternity Leave and 1 member of staff on Paternity/Parental Leave.

Religion and Belief

We do not collect data on staff members' religion and belief. As a multi-faith school, we present all religions as having equal value, and do not seek to promote one religion as more or less valid as the others, and equally those of no religious belief. However, as a multi faith school, we recognise that people of religion and belief may experience discrimination and harassment.

Monitoring and review

- This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by Governors.
- Any incidents occurring during the school year will be evaluated and where necessary appropriate action will be taken to amend the policy accordingly.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy