

**AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**2024/2025**

School:	Al-Zahra School
Head Teacher:	Mrs Z Rizvi

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This Policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2023), and 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (2018) and in accordance to the Equality Act (2010). This Policy is in accordance with and must be read and applied in conjunction with all of Al-Zahra school policies.

As an Islamic school, we strongly believe in inclusion and equal opportunities. Islam requires mutual respect for fellow human beings. It also embraces every individual and every group with the same equality and warmth. It responds to the expectations and the needs of everyone in the same way. No one is superior to another human being; it frequently emphasises equality and equal opportunities. According to Islamic teachings and values everyone deserves love, care, and respect, and this fact does not change when a person has an impairment. What really matters is his or her heart and conduct. The Holy Quran addresses all humanity in this way: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." (Quran: 49:13).

### **i. Policy Principles**

The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school are committed to Equal Opportunities and Inclusion. We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to all learners who may have experienced previous difficulties. We model Equal Opportunities and inclusion on our Islamic ethos and through our staffing policies, relationships with parents/ carers and the community in order to meet legislative requirements as laid down in the Equality Act 2010.

Equal Opportunities is the responsibility of the whole school community and must be reflected throughout the organisation of the school and be addressed in the taught and hidden curriculum. Al-Zahra school ensures that staff expectations of different gender/ race/religious belief groups are no different. All staff, parents/ carers and all pupils regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, gender and socio-economic background, are welcome and will be encouraged to participate in the life of Al-Zahra school.

The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school recognise their responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act to eliminate discrimination and to promote good race relations. Our Islamic ethos is based on equality, respect/ tolerance and community cohesion and aim to promote these values particularly through Citizenship lessons and Interfaith events.

## ii. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote equal opportunities regardless of race, culture, gender, religion, academic ability, physical ability or class.
- Create an environment free from social, sexual or cultural prejudice for all members of Al-Zahra school community.
- Foster an environment in which members of Al-Zahra school community can be respected as individuals and in which the varied experiences of the community can enrich the life of the school.
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the DfE Every Child Matters guidance.

## 2. Equal Opportunities

### Protected characteristics:

The Equality Act lists several characteristics which must not be used as a reason to treat some people worse than others. These are:

- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

In addition, applicable to staff only:

- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

Al-Zahra school does not condone anyone to be bullied or victimised on the basis that they fall within any of the above categories. The school will support individuals with the help of the Local authority and other specialised organisations. Moreover, special attention will be made to ensure the discipline policy is followed to avoid targeting.

At Al-Zahra school we incorporate a balanced view of the world through a multi-cultural approach and recognise that our pupils are world citizens who will meet a wide variety of cultures throughout their lives.

Gender:

- At Al-Zahra school we seek to promote non-sexiest attitudes for all pupils and staff in the school and allow pupils equal access to opportunities which will equip them for adult life and to achieve challenging expectations. As such we work towards the eradication of sexual stereotyping, and we are committed towards ensuring;

- All classroom tasks equally provided,
- Teaching, learning and assessment provisions are equally provided
- All pupils have an equal to use equipment and resources
- All our displays and teaching aids present a non-sexist attitude
- Genders from other cultures are presented in a non-stereotypical way
- Pupils are educated to prevent transphobia

#### Race:

- At Al-Zahra school we believe that no child or adult should be treated in any way differently, or in a derogatory manner, because of their race and we challenge racism in the context of a caring community. To fulfil this, the following types of behaviour will not be tolerated:
  - Provocative behaviour, i.e. wearing of any racist badges or insignia.
  - The use of verbal abuse or name calling of a racist nature.
  - The encouragement of others to behave in a racist manner.
  - The ridiculing of an individual for cultural differences.
  - The telling of racist jokes or stories.
  - The exclusion of others because of their culture, ethnicity, or race.

#### Religion:

- At Al-Zahra school our religious ethos and certain services within the school timetable are set in accordance with the Shi'a Islamic tradition but we respect the right and freedom of individuals to worship in accordance with other faiths, or no faith, subject always to their respecting the rights and freedoms of our Community as a whole and considerations of safety and welfare.

#### Disability

- At Al-Zahra school we understand the need to recognise and value, good effort and attitudes regardless of academic achievement and allow all pupils access to equipment, resources, and teacher time regardless of their academic achievements. We believe that educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all learners, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment, and background.
- At Al-Zahra school all pupils have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them, and to be fully included in all aspects of school life.
- At Al-Zahra school we recognise that pupils learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability,

emotional state, age, and maturity. As such, we will not treat all learners the same way, but we will respond to learners in ways which account for their varied life experiences and needs.

- At Al-Zahra school, we believe that pupils should not be treated differently from others due to their individual disabilities and needs. A disabled child must have the right to take part in all activities within the school environment as far as their individual disability allows them to do so.
- Our facilities at Al-Zahra school, physical and otherwise, for the disabled needs are limited and due to the absence of such facilities and resources.
- At Al-Zahra school we understand that pupils with special educational needs will require extra help and resources based on their individual assessment.
- The headteacher will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the curriculum, ethos, culture, policies, procedures, and premises are made accessible to everyone.
- The headteacher recognises that reasonable adjustments may need to be made to best support pupils identified as SEND and the school will endeavour to support these pupils within the capacity of their facilities and resources; sometimes at an extra cost.
- If in the professional judgement of the headteacher, and after consultation with the parents and the pupil (where appropriate), it is felt that the school cannot provide adequately for the pupil's physical and educational needs after all reasonable adjustments have been made (where possible) parents will be asked to withdraw the pupil.

### **3. Managing Equality in Practice**

#### Admission:

- Al-Zahra school accepts applications irrespective of their gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, Special needs, sexual orientation, religious belief and will not discriminate on these grounds in the terms on which a place is offered, but subject to the availability of facilities and resources, give fair treatment to every application in an open-minded way.

#### Selection:

- Every application will be considered on its merits within Al-Zahra school criteria for selection on grounds of the pupil's ability and aptitude, and our policy reflects the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school approach towards equal opportunities.

- We at Al-Zahra school respect and celebrate differences and therefore in line with the Equality Act 2010 make reasonable adjustment for those pupils with individual needs, ensuring all pupils feel safe and supported irrespective of their differences in ability or gender.

#### Registration:

- Pupils' names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Pupils will be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures.

#### Uniform:

- Al-Zahra school uniform arrangements each school is consistent with this Policy. Each school's policy on uniform applies equally rigorously to all pupils, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.

#### Interaction:

- All pupils are encouraged to work and play freely with, and have respect for, all other pupils, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs, subject to considerations of safety and welfare.
- Positive attitudes and tolerance is fostered towards all groups in society through the curriculum and ethos of the Al-Zahra school, and pupils will be encouraged to question assumptions and stereotypes.

#### Discrimination:

- All forms of discrimination by any person within Al-Zahra school responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. We do not tolerate bullying of any kind and will challenge derogatory language and behaviour towards others. Al-Zahra school has a strong sense of belonging to a wider family which nurtures well-rounded and compassionate characters with independent minds, individuals who respect differences, diversity and dignity of others.
- Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in Al-Zahra school. Staff made aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes. In all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on strict professional criteria. Parents/ carers are made aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Our inter-faith and inter-cultural excellence has been earned by promoting tolerance and respect for all cultures, faiths and lifestyles. All discriminatory Incidents will be recorded.
- Al-Zahra school exclusion will not discriminate against any pupil, or by subject him or her to any other detriment, on the grounds of his or her gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic or national origin, disability,

sexual orientation, religious belief or special educational needs, as subject to this Policy.

Language:

- Al-Zahra school views linguistic diversity positively. Pupils and staff must feel that their natural language is valued. Al-Zahra school supports pupils whom English is an additional language (EAL), by allowing access to additional education support if required.

Resources:

- Al-Zahra school will provide resources for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of sex, ability, or ethnic origin. Efforts are made to recognise and be aware of the possibility of bias (for example gender or racial), so that this can be eliminated in both the teaching, learning and assessment materials and teaching styles. Materials are carefully selected for all curriculum areas to avoid stereotypes and bias.
- Teacher time, attention and all resources are given equally to all pupils. Current resources and new acquisitions will also be monitored to ensure the promotion of a positive image regarding race, gender, and religion. The library resources are regularly reviewed to ensure they include books that reflect our equality and inclusion policy.
- Our displays reflect a positive image of our British values towards race/religious belief, gender, physical ability, and special need. All pupils are given the chance to contribute to display throughout the school and are valued.

SMSC:

- Al-Zahra schools SMSC policy helps to promote a positive image of all members of society, particularly reference to race, religious belief, gender, physical ability, and special needs. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education helps pupils develop personal qualities, which are valued in a civilised, multi-cultural and diverse society such as ours; for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, and self-respect. At Al-Zahra school we seek to teach these qualities across the curriculum and throughout school life. It is linked closely to our mission and values.
- We have a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities; the diversity of people's diverse backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued; strong and positive relations are being developed in our school, and within our neighborhoods.

Monitoring and Evaluating System:

- Al-Zahra school Monitoring and Evaluating System for regularly observing, assessing, and recording the progress of pupils is used to identify pupils who are not progressing satisfactorily and who may have



additional needs. Whole school monitoring and evaluation procedures will include sampling of work and observations.

**Staffing:**

- Al-Zahra school is an equal opportunities employer. We pride ourselves in providing equal opportunities for all our employees and pupils regardless of disability, religion, culture, gender, ethnic origin, colour, class or age.
- The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to how staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents/ carers, and former staff members.
- Al-Zahra school advertises vacancies and always ensures job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have or associated with a Protected Characteristics but not only, in relation to:
  - Recruitment and selection
  - Promotion, transfer and training opportunities
  - Benefits, terms and conditions of employment
  - Grievance and disciplinary procedures
  - Termination of employment including redundancies
  - Conduct at work
  - Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to admission and assessment of pupils

## **4. Responsibilities**

The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school are committed to Equal Opportunities and Inclusion and expected everyone to comply with this policy and therefore to treat others with dignity at all times without regard to their gender, marital/civil partnership status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief or age except where common decency and consideration dictate. The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school has the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Equal Opportunities Policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination and has appointed a member of trustee overseeing school activities and given responsibility for overseeing the operating of the policy and ensuring its accessibility, availability, maintenance and review.

### **i. Management**

Those working at a management level (Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team) have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the aims and objectives of the Al-Zahra school with

regard to equal opportunities.

Al-Zahra school with the assistance of the staff will break down any barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members or pupils realising their full potential or accessing available benefits.

## **ii. Monitoring and Review**

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively with respect to admission and selection. We also maintain records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. The Head Teacher at Al-Zahra school is also responsible for the ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data monitored and will arrange for the taking of appropriate positive steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination where necessary. The Head Teacher at Al-Zahra school is also responsible for reviewing whether the aims of this Policy are carried out throughout all areas of the schools and taking appropriate action where necessary. This policy is reviewed annually and recommendations for any amendments are reported to the appointed a member of trustee overseeing school activities

## **iii. Reporting and Recording Incidents of Discrimination**

- If you are involved in management, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Head Teacher at Al-Zahra school.
- If you believe that you have received less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to your detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Al-Zahra school formal Complaint's procedure.
- If you want to report a breach of this policy that does not constitute a complaint, contact the Head Teacher at Al-Zahra school.
- We will treat seriously and urgently investigate every complaint and report. The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy. Disciplinary action may be taken against any member of the Al-Zahra school community who is found to have acted in contravention of this policy.
- All reported breaches of this policy will be recorded and this record will be reviewed annually by the appointed a member of trustee overseeing school activities.

## **iv. Publication**

This policy will be available to all involved with Al-Zahra school, and is available

on the website.

- Statements of equality dimensions and opportunity will be printed in all relevant school documentation.
- Staff and pupils will receive training in relevant aspects of equal opportunities to ensure their ability to actively support this policy.
- Al-Zahra school will make all reasonable effort to ensure that meetings are accessible and convenient for all and consider particular needs and requirements, e.g. physical access, child care and