

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Last reviewed:	September 2026
Next review due:	September 2028
Reviewed by:	Vice Principal Pastoral

1. Why we have a policy

Promoting equal opportunities is, and always has been, fundamental to the aims and ethos at d'Overbroeck's. We welcome students from as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible, and firmly believe that this helps to enrich our community and to prepare our students for life in today's world.

d'Overbroeck's is an academically selective school. At the same time, we believe that the educational experience can only be enriched by young people being exposed to as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible while they are developing.

We value individuality and aim to foster positive attitudes and respect for others by giving students the space to be themselves and to grow and develop in an open and supportive environment, free from discrimination. d'Overbroeck's is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age and disability (together known as the "Protected Characteristics" in the Equality Act, 2010).

2. Admissions

d'Overbroeck's treats every application for admission in a fair, open-minded and equal way based on an applicant's ability and aptitude. We offer a number of bursaries each year to make it possible for as many as possible who meet the school's admissions criteria to join us. We welcome applications from students with special educational needs and disabilities.

More information is given in the Admissions policy.

3. Responsibilities of the school community

Everyone at d'Overbroeck's has an important role to play in monitoring the implementation of the school's policy on equal opportunities.

- All students are expected to comply with this policy and treat others with dignity at all times.
- All parents and guardians are expected to support the aims of this policy and the school's ethos of tolerance and respect.
- Staff at the school have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to promote the aims and objectives of the school with regard to equal opportunities.

4. Promoting equal opportunities within school

Use is made of assemblies, visiting speakers and lessons across the curriculum to:

- promote tolerance of and respect for one another, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010;
- promote positive images and role models to avoid prejudice and raise awareness of related issues;
- foster an open-minded approach and encourage students to recognise the contributions made by different cultures, ensuring that bias is always recognised;
- understand why and how, as a school, we will deal with offensive language and behaviour;
- understand why we will deal with any incidents promptly and in a sensitive manner.

Our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) policy provides more details.

5. Curriculum

The school gives all students access to educational provision including all benefits, services, and facilities, irrespective of any protected characteristic (subject to our reasonable adjustments duty and considerations of safety and welfare).

The school will:

- ensure that students with an Education Health Care Plan receive necessary educational and welfare support;
- encourage students to work and play freely and have respect for all other students irrespective of any protected characteristic;
- offer all students access to all areas of the curriculum and a full range of extra-curricular activities.

Further details about educational provision are contained in the Curriculum policy.

6. Reasonable adjustments for students with a disability

In light of the school's obligation under the Equality Act 2010, we will seek to ensure that students with a disability are not put at a substantial disadvantage, by comparison with students who do not have a disability. We therefore have an ongoing duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability which includes:

- making reasonable adjustments to our policies, criteria and the practical way we do things;
and
- providing additional support or assistance.

We will consult with parents and, where appropriate, the student, the school's Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo) and, with the parents' consent, any appropriate third party, (eg, a medical practitioner or educational psychologist). The school will carefully consider any proposals for auxiliary aids and services in light of a student's disability and the resources available to the school.

The school is not required to remove or alter physical features to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students or prospective students. Neither is the school required to provide auxiliary aids for personal purposes unconnected with its provision of education and services.

The school has an Accessibility Plan that lists school developments aimed to:

- increase the extent to which disabled students (including those with special educational needs) can participate in the school's curriculum;
- improve the delivery of information to disabled students which is readily accessible to students who are not disabled;
- improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled students are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school.

Further information can be found in the school's Disability Inclusion Policy (which includes the Accessibility Plan) and SEND policy.

7. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

In order to ensure that students are able to cope comfortably with the academic and social demands of the course of study for which they are applying, we set a minimum level of competence in English for students whose first language is not English. Candidates are required to take an English language test as part of the application process.

International students whose first language is not English are generally expected to attend EAL classes. There is an additional fee for these in the Sixth Form.

More information is given in the EAL policy.

8. Religious belief

d'Overbroeck's is not associated with, or committed to promoting, any one particular faith or religious belief. We welcome students regardless of religious belief or background and always seek to make every reasonable effort to accommodate students' religious requirements and to allow them to practise their faith as they and their families would wish to.

The governing body, through the senior leadership team, actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

9. Breaches of this policy

We recognise that discrimination may be direct, indirect, or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) is unlawful and unacceptable; our Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies contain clear procedures for dealing with discrimination. The school will challenge any inappropriate and unacceptable discriminatory behaviour including for those with a protected characteristic by any member of the school community.

We hope that members of our d'Overbroeck's school community will not have any cause to complain about the operation of our equal opportunities policies. However, if you believe a student has received less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic, or if you feel that this policy has been breached in any way to a student's detriment you are encouraged to raise the matter through the school's Complaints Procedures, available from the school website or school office.

10. Related policies

All the following policies are available from the [policies page of the school website](#) or on request from the school office:

- Admissions policy
- Aims and ethos
- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour, rules, rewards and sanctions policy
- Complaints procedure for parents
- Complaints procedure for students
- Curriculum policy
- Disability inclusion policy (and Accessibility Plan)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) policy
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children policy
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) policy

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Sources:

Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils, July 2024 (ISBA)