



BENSHAM MANOR *School*

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Staff Guidance

Last reviewed: September 2026



1. Our Commitment

At Bensham Manor School, we are committed to creating a school community where every individual feels safe, respected, valued and included. We celebrate diversity and recognise that a sense of belonging enables both staff and pupils to thrive.

Creating an inclusive environment is everyone's responsibility. It is a continual learning journey, and we recognise that language, understanding and best practice evolve over time. We encourage all members of our community to remain open to learning, reflecting and improving together.

Our aim is not to judge people for mistakes but to support one another in developing greater awareness, understanding and confidence. We believe that respectful conversations, reflection and education are essential in creating an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture.

2. Our Values

At Bensham Manor School we will:

- treat everyone with dignity and respect
- value diversity in all its forms
- challenge discrimination whenever it occurs
- encourage respectful curiosity and learning
- create an environment where everyone feels they belong
- recognise that everyone continues to learn.

3. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination based on the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Bensham Manor School is committed to ensuring that every member of our community is treated fairly and respectfully regardless of any protected characteristic.

4. Assuming Positive Intent

We encourage colleagues to assume positive intent wherever possible.

This means recognising that someone may not have intended to cause offence. However, good intentions do not remove the impact of words or actions.

When inappropriate language or behaviour occurs, our approach is to:

- assume the person is willing to learn
- explain why the comment or behaviour may have caused harm
- encourage reflection
- support positive change.

This approach allows us to maintain a culture of learning whilst making it clear that discrimination is never

acceptable.

5. What is Discrimination?

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic or perceived characteristic.

Discrimination may include:

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- harassment
- victimisation
- failure to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Examples may include:

- offensive jokes or comments
- excluding someone because of who they are
- making assumptions based on appearance or identity
- undermining someone's work because of personal characteristics
- using discriminatory language
- displaying offensive images or material
- asking intrusive or discriminatory questions.

Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated.

6. Understanding Bias, Stereotypes, Prejudice and Banter

6.1 Bias

Bias refers to preferences or assumptions that influence how we think about others. Everyone develops biases through their experiences, upbringing and environment. Being aware of our biases helps us make fairer decisions.

6.2 Stereotypes

A stereotype is a generalised belief about a group of people.

Although stereotypes may seem harmless, they can lead to unfair assumptions and discrimination because they overlook people's individuality.

6.3 Prejudice

Prejudice is forming an opinion about someone before knowing the facts or the individual.

6.4 Banter

Good-natured banter is enjoyable when everyone involved is comfortable and laughing together.

It stops being banter when comments target someone's:

- race
- ethnicity
- religion
- disability
- neurodivergence
- sex

- gender identity
- sexual orientation
- age
- appearance
- culture
- family background.

If someone feels uncomfortable, upset or excluded, it is no longer "just banter."

6.5 Microaggressions

Microaggressions are everyday comments or behaviours that may unintentionally communicate negative assumptions or stereotypes.

A single comment may appear small, but repeated experiences can significantly affect a person's wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging.

Examples include:

- "You speak really good English."
- "Where are you really from?"
- Mispronouncing someone's name repeatedly after being corrected.

If someone tells us that a comment has caused offence, we should listen respectfully and be willing to learn.

7. Neurodiversity

People think, learn and communicate in different ways.

Neurodivergent people may include autistic people and people with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette syndrome and other neurological differences.

Our role is to remove barriers, make reasonable adjustments where appropriate and value different ways of thinking and learning.

8. Being an Ally

An ally actively supports inclusion and challenges discrimination respectfully.

Being an ally means:

- listening without judgement
- speaking up when something isn't right
- reflecting on our own behaviour
- learning from mistakes
- supporting colleagues and students
- helping everyone feel welcome and valued.

9. Inclusive Language

Language changes over time and respectful terminology evolves.

Where possible:

Instead of	Consider using
BAME	ethnic minority groups (or be specific where appropriate)
wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user

Instead of	Consider using
suffers from...	has... / lives with...
able-bodied	non-disabled
the disabled	disabled people
special needs	additional needs or SEND (where appropriate)
elderly	older person
race	ethnicity (where appropriate)

Many disabled people prefer identity-first language (for example, "autistic person"), while others prefer person-first language ("person with autism"). Wherever possible, use the terminology an individual prefers.

We also respect the names and pronouns people ask us to use.

10. Accessibility

Inclusion also means making communication accessible.

This may include:

- using plain English
- visual supports
- accessible fonts
- colour contrast
- captions
- Easy Read resources
- British Sign Language (where appropriate)
- reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

11. Speaking Up

We all have a responsibility to challenge discrimination respectfully.

Silence can unintentionally suggest acceptance.

When something feels inappropriate, it is usually worth addressing.

You might say:

- "I'm not comfortable with that comment."
- "Can you explain what you meant?"
- "I'm not sure everyone would experience that as a joke."
- "I don't think that reflects our values."
- "That language could be hurtful."
- "I know you probably didn't intend offence, but I'd like to explain why that comment could be upsetting."
- "Let's think about how someone else might hear that."
- "Can we rephrase that?"
- "I appreciate you may not have meant harm, but the impact could still be hurtful."

Aim to remain calm, respectful and professional. The goal is to educate rather than shame.

12. Student-Friendly Responses

We encourage students to seek support from adults whenever needed.

Examples include:

- "Please stop. That isn't kind."
- "That comment has upset me."
- "I don't think that's respectful."
- "Let's ask an adult to help."
- "We don't judge people here."
- "Everyone deserves respect."

13. Psychological Safety

Bensham Manor School aims to be a psychologically safe environment where staff and students feel able to:

- ask questions
- admit mistakes
- apologise
- challenge discrimination respectfully
- continue learning without fear of embarrassment or humiliation.

Learning happens best when people feel safe to grow.

14. When Should I Speak Up?

Consider:

- Is this the right moment?
- Would a private conversation be more appropriate?
- Do I need support from a colleague?
- Would the person be more receptive after having time to reflect?

There may be occasions where immediate intervention is necessary, particularly where someone is at risk of harm.

15. If You Need Support

If you experience or witness discrimination, or are unsure how to respond, support is available.

You may wish to speak with:

- a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- the school's designated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead - Amy Simmons.

Concerns will be treated sensitively and taken seriously.

Where an issue continues despite supportive conversations, it should be escalated through the school's established procedures.

16. Our Commitment

Diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are not destinations—they are an ongoing commitment.

We recognise that language evolves, society changes and understanding grows. Every member of our school community has a role in creating an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

By listening, reflecting, learning from mistakes and supporting one another, we strengthen our school

community and ensure that Bensham Manor School remains a place where everyone can belong.