



Anti- discrimination, Equality & Inclusion Policy

Approved by:
The Directors of Strive Alternative Provision

Signed on behalf of the Directors by:
Stacey Hickey, Head of Operations

Date Approved: October 2026
Review Date: October 2027

POLICY UPDATE SUMMARY (2026)

- Rewritten as an equality, anti-discrimination and inclusion policy rather than a complaints procedure.
- Updated to reflect the Equality Act 2010, including protected characteristics and reasonable adjustments.
- Updated for Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Strengthened expectations for anti-discriminatory practice, challenging racism and discrimination, and recognising disproportionality.
- Clarified reporting, safeguarding escalation, reasonable adjustments and responsibilities.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Strive Alternative Provision is committed to equality of opportunity, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice. We aim to provide an environment in which children and young people, staff, families, visitors, contractors and other professionals are treated with dignity and respect and are able to participate without unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Strive recognises that equality does not always mean treating everybody in exactly the same way. Individual needs, barriers and circumstances will be considered, and reasonable adjustments will be made where required and practicable so that disabled children, young people and staff are not placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Our approach is child-centred, SEND-aware, trauma-informed and culturally responsive. Discrimination, prejudice-based behaviour and harassment will be challenged rather than normalised or dismissed.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies across all Strive activities and locations, including off-site and community-based provision, and applies to:

- Children and young people attending Strive.
- Employees, directors, contractors, subcontractors, agency staff and volunteers.
- Parents, carers, visitors and professionals working with Strive.
- Admissions, access to provision, curriculum and activities, behaviour responses, safeguarding, employment and the provision of services.
- Conduct occurring online or outside Strive where it affects the safety, dignity, inclusion or participation of members of the Strive community.

3. LEGAL AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice.
- Education Act 1996 and Education Act 2002, where relevant to commissioning and education arrangements.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- DfE Alternative Provision statutory guidance and Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards, where applicable.

Although Strive is a commissioned alternative provision provider rather than a maintained school, it is committed to applying equality, safeguarding and inclusion principles appropriately to its role and to working with commissioning schools and local authorities where statutory responsibilities remain with them.

4. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from unlawful discrimination in relation to protected characteristics. These are:

- Age (subject to the specific way the Act applies in education).
- 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.

Strive will also challenge unfair treatment, prejudice or bullying connected with other aspects of a person's identity or circumstances, including SEND, neurodivergence, care experience, family circumstances, socio-economic disadvantage or perceived difference.

5. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Strive will not tolerate unlawful discrimination. This may include:

- Direct discrimination - treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination - applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages a group and cannot be objectively justified.
- Discrimination arising from disability.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments for disability.
- Harassment - unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- Victimisation - subjecting someone to a detriment because they have raised, supported or are believed to have raised an equality concern.
- Prejudice-based bullying, discriminatory language, stereotyping, exclusion or online abuse.

6. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SEND

Strive will consider reasonable adjustments proactively and on an individual basis.

Adjustments may relate to the environment, communication, timetabling, sensory needs, learning activities, behaviour support, access arrangements, transitions, medical needs or other aspects of provision.

Decisions will take account of available information, including EHCPs, professional advice, individual risk assessments and the views of the child and their parent or carer. Where an adjustment cannot reasonably be made, Strive will explain the reasons and work with the commissioner and family to consider alternative ways of meeting need.

7. ADMISSIONS, PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

Admissions and placement decisions will be needs-led and evidence-based. A child will not be refused solely because they have a protected characteristic or diagnosis. Strive will consider whether needs can be met safely and effectively with appropriate reasonable adjustments, taking account of the needs and safety of the individual and others.

Children and young people should have equitable opportunities to participate in learning, enrichment, trips, community activities and wider provision. Where barriers are identified, staff will consider reasonable and proportionate steps to remove or reduce them.

8. CURRICULUM, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Strive will promote an inclusive culture by:

- Using respectful and inclusive language.

- Challenging racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist and other discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Avoiding stereotypes and ensuring resources and learning reflect diversity appropriately.
- Supporting children to understand respect, difference, healthy relationships and equality through PSHE and day-to-day practice.
- Recognising that some children may experience overlapping forms of disadvantage or discrimination.

9. SAFEGUARDING AND DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination, racism, harassment or prejudice-based behaviour may also be a safeguarding concern. Staff must remain professionally curious about the impact on the child and must not assume that discriminatory incidents are simply behaviour matters.

Where an incident indicates abuse, child-on-child abuse, exploitation, significant harm or another safeguarding concern, staff must follow Strive's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report the concern to a Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.

Strive will consider patterns, disproportionality and contextual factors when reviewing safeguarding and behaviour information. Staff are expected to challenge racism and discrimination and to reflect on the possibility of conscious or unconscious bias in decision-making.

10. RESPONDING TO DISCRIMINATORY INCIDENTS

Where discriminatory behaviour or an equality concern is reported or observed, Strive will, as appropriate:

- Take immediate steps to ensure safety and stop harmful behaviour.
- Listen to the person affected and record the concern accurately.
- Inform the DSL where there is a safeguarding element.
- Investigate proportionately and fairly.
- Provide appropriate support to the person affected.
- Address the behaviour of the person responsible through education, restorative work and/or the Behaviour Management Policy, as appropriate.
- Inform parents/carers and commissioning organisations where appropriate.
- Consider whether external advice, referral or reporting is required.
- Review whether any policy, practice, environmental or organisational factor contributed to the incident.

Retaliation against a person who raises an equality concern, supports another person to do so or participates in an investigation will not be tolerated.

11. STAFF AND EMPLOYMENT

Strive is committed to fair and non-discriminatory recruitment, employment, training, development and workplace practices. Employment decisions will be based on legitimate role requirements, skills, conduct and performance. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled applicants and employees.

Staff who experience discrimination, harassment or victimisation should raise this with their line manager, Head of Operations or a Director, as appropriate. They may also use the Grievance or Whistleblowing Procedure depending on the nature of the concern.

12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors and senior leaders are responsible for promoting an inclusive culture and ensuring that equality considerations inform organisational decisions.

The Head of Operations is responsible for coordinating implementation and review of this policy and ensuring concerns are directed through the appropriate safeguarding, HR, complaints or operational route.

All staff, contractors and volunteers are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour.
- Make and support reasonable adjustments within their role.
- Report equality and safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Reflect on bias and avoid assumptions based on identity, diagnosis or background.

13. RAISING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Children, parents/carers and professionals may raise an equality or discrimination concern with any appropriate member of Strive staff. Concerns will be addressed promptly and sensitively. Where the concern cannot be resolved informally, or where a formal response is requested, Strive's Complaints Policy will apply. Safeguarding concerns will always be dealt with under safeguarding procedures.

14. RECORDING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Records of equality concerns and discriminatory incidents will be accurate, proportionate and stored securely. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection law, safeguarding requirements and Strive's Data Protection Policy. Safeguarding information will be shared where necessary to protect a child.

15. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Senior leaders will consider equality themes and patterns arising from complaints, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, admissions and staff matters where appropriate. The purpose of monitoring is to identify barriers, recurring concerns or disproportionality and to improve practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local authority requirements or significant operational changes make this necessary. The Head of Operations is responsible for coordinating the review and communicating relevant changes.

16. RELATED POLICIES

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- Anti-Bullying & Cyber-Bullying Policy.
- Behaviour Management Policy.
- SEND Policy.
- Admissions Policy.
- Complaints Policy.
- Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- GDPR & Data Protection Policy.

END OF POLICY

Version Control: 2026.1 | October 2026 | Full review and rewrite; updated equality, safeguarding and inclusion framework | Approved by Directors of Strive AP (via S. Hickey)