G1 Equal Opportunities Policy

This policy incorporates the school's policy on Admissions for Disabled Students (Appendix 1) Accessibility Plan (Appendix 2) and Curriculum Accessibility Plan (Appendix Three)

This policy is available on the School's website **www.purcell-school.org** and can be made available on request. All school policies can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Aims

The Purcell School prides itself on being an inclusive institution and embraces equal opportunities for all. The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote the concept of equality of opportunity throughout the school community
- Develop an understanding of, and promotion of, equality and equal opportunities
- Promote good relations between members of different racial, cultural and religious groups and communities
- Enable students to take responsibility for their behaviour and relationships with others
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics (as detailed below)
- Eliminate all bullying and unlawful discrimination on the basis that an individual has a disability; and
- Comply with the school's equality obligations contained in the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act').

The School will:

- Treat all members of the School community with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working and learning environment free from discrimination
- Endeavour to meet the needs of all children and to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed below
- Ensure that those students with a statement of special educational needs (or Education, Health or Care Plan) receive necessary educational and welfare support
- Ensure that students with English as an additional language receive additional support, such as extra English tuition where required
- Monitor the admission and progress of students from different backgrounds
- Challenge inappropriate discriminatory behaviour by students, staff and parents

- Offer all students access to all areas of the curriculum, including being able to participate in a full range of extra-curricular activities

- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and are given appropriate training and support

- Work with parents and external agencies where appropriate to combat and prevent discrimination in School

- Ensure that it reviews and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of inclusive practices

Responsibilities

The Principal has responsibility for the Equal Opportunities Policy, for delegating responsibilities and tasks to other staff, and for ensuring that this policy is known and understood by staff, students and parents.

The Principal and Vice-Principal are jointly responsible for ensuring equal opportunities in the curriculum.

Governors will review the Accessibility plans on a regular basis and according to need.

All staff are responsible for following the policy and reporting incidents of unequal treatment to the Principal or other senior member of staff.

Protected Characteristics

The School opposes less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristics under the Act. The Act defines these as:

- sex
- race
- disability
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity

Collectively, these are described as protected characteristics.

Measures to Ensure Equality

Admissions

- The School treats every application for admission in a fair and equal way in accordance with this policy, the School's Admissions Policy and Admissions-Disability Policy (see Appendix One)

- The School accepts applications from, and admits, students irrespective of any protected characteristic.

- The School is committed to full educational inclusion. Students are admitted to the School on the basis of their musical ability and the degree to which the School can adequately cater for their needs.

Educational Provision

- The School affords all students access to educational provision including all benefits, services and facilities irrespective of any protected characteristic subject to the School's obligations under the Act and considerations of safety and welfare.

Curriculum

- All students have equal access to the programmes of study throughout the school, suitable to their age, aptitude and ability. All subjects will have equality of opportunity at their core.

- The School may make reasonable adjustments to the way in which the curriculum is taught, to ensure that disabled students are not put at any substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled students. This may include differentiated tasks within lessons or in homework and, where necessary and reasonably practicable, alternative methods of examination or assessment will be offered.

- The School will take appropriate steps to ensure that lessons are organised in ways which offer the best possible opportunities for full participation by all students.

- The School recognises that discrimination may be, for example, direct, indirect or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional. Harassment and bullying in all its forms is unacceptable and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. The School's Anti-Bullying Policy forbids the intimidation of any individual or group within the school community. This includes for example the verbalisation or vocalisation of discrimination on the grounds of race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality and ability/disability.

- Positive attitudes and awareness development for equality of opportunity are specifically taught through the PSHE and tutor programme.

Bullying and Harassment

- The School recognises that discrimination may be, for example, direct or indirect or arising from disability whether or not it was intentional.

- All staff have a legal duty not to bully, victimise or otherwise harass other staff or students.

- Where staff come across incidents of bullying or harassment they must report these to the Principal or other senior member of staff without delay.

- Any bullying or harassment incident amongst students will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Specific Issues Related to Disability

Students

The 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'. A student may be considered disabled within the meaning of the Act where they have for example dyslexia or dyspraxia or a significant behavioural impairment.

Under the Act, the School is required to make reasonable adjustments where a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled students; or a disabled student would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled students unless and auxiliary aid or service is provided. The School recognises that its duty requires the School to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in education at the School, and enjoy other benefits, facilities and services which the School provides.

The School will ensure that students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries are able to access all internal and external examinations and assessments. Access arrangements will be agreed before an assessment. The access arrangements will meet the particular needs of an individual student so that they are able to show what they can do without changing the demands of or affecting the integrity of the assessment.

The School will ensure educational visits are suitable to the age, maturity and capability of students and so not discriminate against students. The School will consider whether any student with a disability will be affected by a proposed trip and what steps can be taken to prepare those students affected. All risk assessments carried out by the School will consider what reasonable adjustments are needed to accommodate disabled students on School trips.

The School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that a student who becomes disabled during their career at school remains at the School provided the School can adequately cater for the students' needs.

Staff

Difficulties at work caused by a disability should in the first instance be discussed with the Head of Department. They will consider any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Head of Department may wish to consult with a medical adviser or the School's Occupational Health advisers and should ask for consent to do this. The School will try to accommodate individual needs within reason. If a particular adjustment is not reasonable the School will explain its reasons and try where possible to find alternative solutions. Once an adjustment has been made it will be reviewed from time to time to assess its continuing effectiveness.

Access to Facilities

In common with many other schools, the school consists of many separate and old buildings, many of which are not provided with lifts. The School is aware that difficulties may be experienced from time to time by the need for disabled students to move around the site and as a result of the School buildings.

In order to provide specialist facilities, all subjects are taught in subject areas and students are therefore required to move from classroom to classroom and building to building between each lesson. However, the majority of the school is accessible to those with impaired mobility and, where it is not, the School will consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to enable disabled students to access the School's educational provision. For example, where possible the rooming timetable will be adjusted (whether temporarily or permanently).

The School is not legally required to make alterations to the school's physical environment as part of the reasonable adjustments duty. However, the School monitors and reviews the physical environment to consider what reasonable and proportionate steps can be taken to alleviate any substantial disadvantage caused to disabled students. The current Accessibility Plan can be found at Appendix 2. The School's Accessibility Plan will consider ways in which accessibility may be improved, subject to planning and budgetary constraints. Accessibility will always be a factor when planning new buildings.

Provision for Students with Particular Religious, Dietary, Language or Cultural Needs

The Purcell School welcomes students from across the world, including those from up to 20 different countries. Approximately one-third of the students are from countries other than the UK.

- Religious worship does not form part of The Purcell School timetable although boarders are able to attend services of their choice during the weekend
- The School 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
- Students for whom English is not a first language receive support, as appropriate, from the EFL Department
- The Catering Department will work with students and parents to ensure that as far as possible any dietary and religious needs are met
- The School, through the pastoral structure, will make every effort to support individual students with particular cultural needs (religious, ethnic, creative, etc.)

Recruitment and Selection

The staffing process is governed by the School's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between the individual's knowledge, skills experience and character and the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions. The details as to how these objectives are achieved are laid out in the staff recruitment policy.

Breaches of this Policy

Staff

The School takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If a member of staff feels that they have been the subject of discrimination, they can raise the matter through the School's Disciplinary Policy.

There will be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain of discrimination. However making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the School's Disciplinary Policy.

Students

The school takes a strict approach to any occasions when students breach this policy. These will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Behaviour & Sanctions Policy.

Policy author/reviewer:	***Policy date/review:***	***Next review due:***
Paul Bambrough	January 2020	January 2021
Paul Bambrough	September 2021	September 2022
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Paul Bambrough	September 2025	September 2026
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Appendix 1: Admission for Students with a Disability or Other Special Need

Appendix 2: Accessibility Plan

Appendix 3: Curriculum Accessibility Plan

APPENDIX 1: Admission for Students with a Disability or Other Special Need

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Admissions Policy.

The School welcomes all applicants irrespective of any learning needs and / or disabilities; however, the facilities (physical or otherwise) for students with significant learning needs are currently limited. The School will do all that is reasonable to comply with the Equality Act 2010 so that the School may accommodate the needs of disabled applicants for which, with reasonable adjustments, the School can adequately cater.

The School will do all that is reasonable to ensure the application procedure (and any information about the School) is accessible for disabled applicants and will make such reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all candidates for admission to the School are treated fairly, regardless of any disability, special educational need or other learning support needs. It also sets out details of support available and practical issues that parents may wish to take into consideration.

Admissions Criteria

All potential students must be able to demonstrate exceptional musical ability and promise, with the musical aptitude, understanding and commitment to satisfy the school that he or she will benefit from the musical and other educational opportunities at The Purcell School, and the stamina and perseverance to maintain a demanding programme of practice and musical activities.

The School must also feel reasonably sure that it will be able to educate and develop the prospective student to the best of his or her academic potential and in line with the general standards achieved by the student's peers, and that these criteria will continue to be met throughout the student's time at the School.

Other factors that will be taken into account are:

a) that the School is able to meet the musical, educational, pastoral and social needs of a prospective student

b) that the School receives a satisfactory reference from the student's current school

c) that a prospective student demonstrates a sufficient grasp of English appropriate to the age of entry, or the capacity to acquire the required level

d) that, where a boarding place is requested, there are sufficient vacancies in the relevant boarding house and that the student would benefit from boarding within the School's boarding community

e) that, where a day place is requested, there are sufficient vacancies in the day house, and that the student lives close enough to the School to enable their participation in all school activities

f) that, where a scholarship under the Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) is requested, there are sufficient MDS vacancies in the school

g) that, for students from outside the UK and EU, they are able to obtain a visa from the UK Visas and Immigration

The School is open to applications from any prospective student with a disability[1] or special educational needs. The School's policy is to apply the above criteria to all potential students regardless of any disability.

All applications will be judged fairly in accordance with the School's admission criteria.

When applying for a place, parents must complete the appropriate section of the Application Form (Section C, pages 3 & 4; available on our website), setting out the nature and extent of any special circumstances relating to their child which may affect their ability to participate in the admissions process in the education provided by the School should an offer of a place be made. The School may request further information, such as a medical certificate and / or a current Educational Psychologist's report, as well as a possible internal school assessment that the School considers necessary to make a fair assessment. The Principal may discuss any possible adjustment that may be required with the parents at the audition. Parents are welcome to contact the School for advice in advance of any application.

The School will consider each case on an individual basis. If, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, the School is unable to adequately cater for the needs of those children, parents will be informed why an offer of a place will not be made.

Specific Disabilities:

Sight- or Hearing-impaired Students

Prospective students who are sight- or hearing-impaired are welcome to apply for admission. The School will consider what reasonable adjustments they are able to make to ensure these applicants are able to fully participate in the admissions process. For example, an enlarged print version of admissions tests can be provided.

Special Educational Needs

The SEN department provides assistance to a small number of students on a one-to-one basis. This service is designed to assist those students with mild learning difficulties such as mild dyslexia or

[1] Disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 means a physical or mental impairment which has a long term, adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities

dyspraxia. However, the available time is limited and this service may not be suitable for students who need more help than one session each week can provide. The School may not be able to provide a designated classroom assistant for individual students, except where such support is provided through a statement or EHC Plan.

See the School's SEN Policy for further details.

Behavioural or Emotional Problems

Students with a history of behavioural or emotional problems may be accepted into the school. The School may require a medical report from the student's GP, consultant or Educational Psychologist and, if any medication is prescribed (e.g. Ritalin), parents must ensure that medical advice is followed. As with all disabilities, each case will be considered on an individual basis. The School will always seek to admit any student who will benefit from the opportunities the School can offer, provided that the School believes it can make the reasonable adjustments necessary to cater for their needs within the context of a specialist music school.

Disclosure

In order for the School to consider what reasonable adjustments it may need to make for each individual student, full disclosure by parents of any medical reports, educational psychology or psychiatric assessments, or any other relevant information, in advance of any application is essential. In cases of doubt, parents should consult the School well in advance of any application.

In the event of parents disclosing relevant information (of which they were already aware) after accepting a place, or being discovered to have deliberately withheld such information at any stage during or after the admissions process, and the School is unable to make reasonable adjustments to cater for the student, the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, if the student has already joined the School, to ask the parents to withdraw the child.

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APPENDIX 2: Accessibility Plan

Improving the Physical Environment

The School has recently commissioned a comprehensive, independent accessibility assessment and was found to have high levels of accessibility throughout the site and activities. Minor recommendations were made and all have been actioned. A copy of the assessment and records of works is available from the Director of Operations.

In common with many other schools, the School campus has developed over time, occupying separate buildings of several floors and many without lifts. Also common to many schools is the practice of having fixed classrooms for each subject, based on the valid operational grounds of having all the facilities for one subject in one place. Students must therefore go from classroom to classroom often upstairs or steps in buildings without lifts. Boarding facilities have historically faced similar challenges. The School will consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to assist access to the School site. However, the School's facilities (physical or otherwise) for students with significant mobility issues are currently limited and as such may limit access to some or all of the school's educational and other facilities.

The current action plan (below) sets out how the School plans to improve access to the physical environment.

Main Building (excluding Sunley and Gardner wings)

The main building was constructed in 1904 and currently houses classrooms, library, ICT suite, The Constance Pilkington Hall and admin offices.

Current Features	Future plans
The entrance to the school was refurbished in 2009. It has a ramped entrance, wide doors and enables wheelchair access to the CP Hall. Access is controlled by keypad entry and intercom (also at wheelchair height). Levels of lighting are adequate and there are 4 fully compliant disabled parking spaces at the front of the school. There is a disabled toilet on the Ground Floor. The staff / visitor toilet on the Ground Floor is DDA compliant.	
There is no lift in the building and the only access to the classrooms on the first floor is via stairs. There is an emergency evacuation chair and stretcher stored at the base of the central staircase.	
The Dining Hall, library, ICT suite and some teaching space on the ground floor is accessible.	

There is ramped access to the rear of the School via the Sunley / Percussion suite door and the door from the NMC by the gym. Both entrances provide ambulant access.	
One of the Science labs is accessible from the main building and the other could be if needed with a temporary ramp.	
There are currently eight practice rooms at the end of the main building, which are not easily accessible however there are other practice rooms available.	
Access to JCS is by staircase only. In the event of this being inaccessible by an individual, some activities may be relocated	

Sunley House

Sunley House is a girl's boarding house occupying the east wing of the main building. It was completely refurbished in October 2012 with 48 bed spaces, a houseparent flat and two studio rooms for Resident Graduate Assistants.

Current Features	Future plans
The boarding house utilises a staircase which meets the standards for ambulant disabilities. Rooms specifically designed for full accessibility are available elsewhere in the school. As part of the refurbishment a new staircase was constructed so that the boarding house staircase could be self-contained in the boarding house. The new staircase is designed for ambulant disability use.	The ground floor entrance to Sunley was repurposed and significantly enlarged in the summer of 2024

Art Block / SP Practice Rooms

This block contains 2 Art classrooms, an office (accessed via a staircase) and 12 practice rooms.

Current Features	Future plans
Access to the block is via staircase. The emergency exit at the rear of the building is a metal staircase and there are additional internal steps from the main entrance to the practice rooms. The power supply to take an external stair lift was installed as part of the enabling works for the construction of	These plans are currently under review owing to planning consent issues.

the New Boarding Accommodation. It was agreed with Building Control that the lift would only be installed if it was required as the building is due for demolition. Other accessible practice rooms are available in the school.	

West Wing

Prior to the construction of new boarding accommodation the West Wing was a boy's boarding house. It is currently being used as an office and practice space. There is a three bedroomed staff flat on the ground floor.

Current Features	Future plans
Access via a staircase.	Plans are currently under review with architects to consider development of this area.

Dulverton House

The top floor of Dulverton House is currently empty. The ground floor currently contains one residential flat and the School health centre.

Current Features	Future plans
Access to the health centre is via a ramp. One bedroom is DDA compliant.	

New Boarding Accommodation

The new boarding accommodation opened in January 2011. It contains 80 bed spaces which can be used in a flexible way for boys and girls. There are two residential flats on the Ground Floor and two on the top floor.

Current Features	Future plans
There are two fully accessible single bedrooms each with en-suite wet rooms with fully compliant fixtures and fittings. All floor levels are served by a single passenger lift suitable for wheelchair use. The escape staircase for each side of the building is suitable for ambulant disabled use and there is a wheelchair refuge at each floor level. The ground floor main entrance is fitted with electrically operated sliding doors served from external paving at a gradient of no more than 1:20.	

Avison House

Avison House provides boarding space for up to 22 junior boys and girls, one housemistress flat and one assistant housemistress flat. The house was refurbished in 2011 and re-opened in September of that year.

Current Features	Future plans
The House features one fully accessible single bedroom on the ground floor with en-suite wet room with fully compliant fixtures and fittings. All communal/social spaces are on the ground floor. There is no lift in the building. The ground floor main entrance is served from external paving at gradients no greater than 1:20.	

New Music Centre

The New Music Centre opened in 2008. It contains 3 teaching rooms, 1 composition room, a music technology office, recording studio, recital room, staff kitchen, toilets (including disabled facilities), 11 practice rooms and staff offices.

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APPENDIX 3: Curriculum Accessibility Plan

Curriculum Access

The Purcell School offers a musical and academic curriculum which includes a range of opportunities designed to maximise access for disabled students. The school will continue to review provision and seek input from students, staff, parents / carers, relevant specialist advisers and health professionals as appropriate. Appendix Three outlines the action plan in place to further develop provision.

Provision of Information

The main form of communication is via email and the school website / portal, and the school network allows for disabled students to employ accessibility tools (such as screen readers) if required. Other information is generally conveyed both orally and in written form (by notices). The school will continue to review its provision of information to both students and parents.

Accessibility for Internal and External Examinations

Exam Access Arrangements are implemented in school to comply with the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates, subject to current examination board regulations.

The Purcell School will ensure that students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries are able to access all internal and external examinations and assessments. Access arrangements will be agreed before an assessment. The access arrangements will meet the particular needs of an individual student so that they are able to show what they can do without changing the demands of or affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Specific Steps to Implement Curriculum Accessibility

In the Learning Support Department:

- Clear evidence and recording of students' normal way of working and access requirements is gathered for exam access arrangements; clear reminders are issued regularly concerning access arrangements and evidence gathering in support of them.

- IEPs are reviewed regularly to cultivate an increased awareness of strategies to be used in support of individual students.

- Student SEN profiles are listed on a current document accessible to all classroom and music staff and on SIMS. The Head of SEN gives oral updates on student SEN profiles to classroom teachers and music staff, on a regular basis.

Across the Classroom Teaching Programme:

- Staff INSET regularly addresses particular topics to support curriculum accessibility.

- Schemes of Work are reviewed and aim to document ways in which the curriculum is made accessible to all students.

- Appraisal of classroom teaching staff assesses the extent that all students are able to access the curriculum through lesson observation.

- International students with significant language issues will be supported by EAL provision and may, in some cases, study a reduced programme with agreement of all concerned.

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