



# LEWESTON

## SHERBORNE

### 2.17 DISABILITY AND EQUALITY POLICY

Leweston is a Catholic boarding and day school for girls aged 0-18, and boys aged 0-13.

Its aims and objectives are set out in the prospectus and the Mission Statement.

Leweston School is an equal opportunities employer.

In order to promote an environment within which the school can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skills and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, Leweston is committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area, in terms of sex, race, nationality or national or ethnic origin, religion or religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, marital status or civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and disability.

To achieve this we regularly review the operation of our recruitment, promotion, training and development policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This does not mean that applicants for employment or members of staff are excused from their general obligation as employees to support and promote the Catholic ethos of the school, even if it conflicts with their personal religion or religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

### EQUALITY

Leweston's equality policy is informed by those aims and objectives; we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in regard to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender (including issues of gender reassignment, and of maternity and pregnancy), religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, or sexual identity. Leweston recognises that these duties reflect international human rights standards.

Leweston regards all learners and potential learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value:

- Whether or not they are disabled,
- Whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status,
- Whatever their gender and gender identity,
- Whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background,

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc	Page	Page 1 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017	Next review	Aug 2018		
NMS	8.1, 12, 16	ISI	17a, 5, B8A	S48	

- Whatever their sexual identity.

Treating people equally does not necessarily involve treating them all the same. We will not discriminate, but nevertheless take account of difference of life-experience, outlook and background, and in the kinds of barrier and disadvantage which people face, in relation to:

- Disability, so that reasonable adjustments are made,
- Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised,
- Gender so that the different needs and experiences of girls and boys, and women and men, are recognised,
- Religion, belief or faith background,
- Sexual identity.

### Ethos and Organisation

Leweston ensures that the principles of equality apply to our policies and practices, including:

- Pupils' progress, attainment and achievement,
- Pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being
- Teaching styles and strategies,
- Admissions and attendance,
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development,
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions,
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians,
- Working with the wider community

All staff are expected to promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classrooms, deal with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur (to disability and SEN, around racism and xenophobia including those directed towards religious groups and communities, and reflecting sexism and homophobia).

### DISABILITY

The Equality Act of 2010 states that a pupil is disabled when 'he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc	Page	Page 2 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017	Next review	Aug 2018		
NMS	8.1, 12, 16	ISI	17a, 5, B8A	S48	

day-to-day activities'. Such a disability would prevent or hinder a child from making use of the educational facilities that are provided for other children of the same age.

## Admissions

The Leweston admissions policy lays out the general criterion for the acceptance of pupils into the school. Admissions decisions will have regard to the school's capacity to educate each individual to the best of their ability and in line with the general level of attainment of the peer group.

Leweston is able to provide individual support via the facilities and staffing of the Individual Needs Department; the department works with pupils in one to one sessions or in very small groups. An admission decision will take into account the provision that the School can reasonably make, consistent with the size and dynamics of the Individual Needs group in each year cohort.

Admissions policy, in relation to disability, is set in the context of the current School Business Plan. The first key whole School objective in the Business Plan commits the School to strive to continuously improve standards of learning and teaching.

Leweston's policy and practice is to have equal regard for all pupils and potential pupils notwithstanding any disability of which it is aware, and to make reasonable adjustments so as not to put any disabled pupil or potential pupil at a substantial disadvantage compared to any pupil or potential pupil who is not disadvantaged, because of her disability. The same applies to general principles of equality.

Prospective parents should identify a disability, which might affect a potential pupil, on the Registration Form at the time of application. In assessing any pupil or prospective pupil Leweston may take such advice and require such assessments as it regards appropriate. This may include:

- an up to date school report, including a confidential statement from the pupil's current Head
- a specialist report, e.g. from a doctor or educational psychologist
- a report from the Leweston Individual Needs Department
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs
- any other information/background material parents feel will assist the School

Leweston will be sensitive to any parental requests for confidentiality, subject to the need to involve specific staff of the School in an assessment of a pupil's or prospective pupil's needs.

Leweston will seek to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled candidates for scholarships notified to the School. Prospective parents will be asked to discuss any relevant adjustments at the time of application.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- allowance of extra time in any school entrance examination

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc			Page	Page 3 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017		Next review	Aug 2018			
NMS	8.1, 12, 16		ISI	17a, 5, B8A		S48	

- allowance for the use of laptop computers
- use of large print materials

## Curriculum

Leweston aims to enrich its pupils' lives with a well-rounded academic education in the Catholic Christian tradition as well as to provide them with the necessary qualifications to ensure they are equipped to take their place in society.

At Leweston, up to GCSE, average class size is 14 and for Sixth Form it is six and substantial effort is made to differentiate to enable all pupils to access the curriculum. There is also an advantageous staff pupil ratio of approximately 1:6.

Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with disabilities, including being allowed to use a laptop in class or being given large print or documents printed on coloured paper if required. In addition, pupils who have been assessed as likely to benefit, will be provided with a reader and/or scribe for examinations.

The School has considered:

- The need to balance additional support for disabled pupils against their need to integrate into the school community.
- The problems of physical access caused by a subject-based classroom arrangement; the topographical spread of teaching areas; the physical size and layout of classrooms; and the difficulties associated with some old buildings on the Leweston campus.

For adjustments that either have been made or can reasonably be made, the Three Year Accessibility Plan, refers.

In addition, all teaching staff, and support staff where necessary, are given regular training on working with disabled pupils, which is tailored to the needs of the current pupil requirements.

## Pupils with Statements and Carers

Pupils with statements from their local authorities who are suited to the education that Leweston offers are welcome. If a pupil with a statement requires a dedicated carer in school, for example, to assist with personal care, writing, etc. this can be accommodated provided that the carer has an enhanced DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service, arranged by the School and complies with the child protection regime in force at the time. The School would require a carer (like a new member of staff) to sign a written agreement undertaking to comply with the School's child protection policies and to attend the induction briefing that is given to all new members of staff before working unsupervised on site.

A pupil's dedicated carer is not a School employee and the pupil's parents would be asked to provide the School with a written undertaking indemnifying it from any legal responsibility or cost connected with the provision of their services to their child.

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc	Page	Page 4 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017	Next review	Aug 2018		
NMS	8.1, 12, 16	ISI	17a, 5, B8A	S48	

## Pastoral

Leweston aims to provide for all its pupils an environment that is caring, purposeful and professional, with a strong emphasis on pastoral support.

The School pastoral system focuses on the needs of the individual. Pastoral care of pupils is the responsibility of all staff and every pupil has a Form Tutor who is, in the first instance, responsible for their well-being. The PSHE curriculum encourages pupils to know themselves and understand their relationship with others in the school and beyond.

The School has considered ways in which the pastoral structures and systems can be adapted to meet the needs of disabled pupils. For adjustments that either have been made or can reasonably be made, the Accessibility Plan Appendix 1 refers.

## Medical

Leweston has a modern, fully staffed medical centre which is open during the school day so that qualified help can be summoned immediately. The School Doctor holds two surgeries a week. The medical team are happy to discuss any pupil's health problems with parents, as well as the management of any medical condition

## Extra-Curricular Activities

Leweston takes pride in a carefully organised extra-curricular programme for pupils which is modified each term in line with (amongst other things) pupil take-up. Activities take place in the lunch hour, after school on weekdays (except Thursdays) and, particularly for boarders, on Saturdays and Sundays. The programme provides opportunities for pupils to develop specific interests, to mix socially and to broaden their cultural, physical and recreational horizons.

The School seeks to provide the appropriate balance of extra-curricular activities for all pupils, taking into account their age and their other commitments either in School or outside.

The school has considered access to certain activities which may be potentially hazardous for pupils with certain disabilities and would seek, in such cases, the advice of the Disability Rights Commission and or other national bodies in making a risk assessment.

Where School trips are organised, the normal risk assessments would be used to identify any potential hazards for disabled pupils and the means, if any, of minimising any risks.

## Premises

The physical plant at Leweston comprises a number of different buildings of different styles and ages whose functions have changed over the years. Many of the buildings are old and do not readily lend themselves to major structural change.

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc			Page	Page 5 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017		Next review	Aug 2018			
NMS	8.1, 12, 16		ISI	17a, 5, B8A		S48	

The School has carried out a thorough programme of refurbishment to its old buildings in recent years and this has included a number of developments which increase access for disabled pupils, including:

- The replacement of desks by chairs and tables in all teaching areas
- Acoustic improvements to classrooms and other areas by the use of carpets
- The use of whiteboards in all classrooms
- Increased provision of computers and increased access for all pupils
- Provision of computers in the Individual Needs Department
- New Health Centre with ground floor access and disabled toilet
- Provision of disabled toilet access at ground floor level in Manor House and Dining Hall
- A lift in the Science Centre
- A lift in the Kitchen and Dining room complex
- Ramped access to the main building
- The provision of handrailing at key passage points including short half-flights of stairs
- More development and upgrading of computing facilities across the School is planned
- Further new building at Leweston will comply with, or exceed, the normal disabled access requirements

## Boarding

Boarders access the curricular and extra-curricular programme as for all pupils.

The School has considered the particular problems for disabled pupils of access to boarding whether full boarding or flexi boarding.

Boarding is located in accommodation situated on first and second floors, with the difficulties of physical adaptation indicated in the previous section.

Certain disabilities might require a pupil to have an adult helper resident with the pupil. The School has considered whether changes to the present layout and staffing of its Boarding Houses would make this feasible, but is of the view that this would not be a reasonable adjustment given the size of the Boarding Houses and the staffing arrangements currently in place.

## Food

Through discussion and meetings, cultural, medical or dietary needs will be met wherever possible. With food being onsite at least three times daily, the scope to make particular dietary or cultural requests is particularly wide alongside the Catering team and the Head Chef.

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc			Page	Page 6 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017		Next review	Aug 2018			
NMS	8.1, 12, 16		ISI	17a, 5, B8A		S48	

## Resources

Leweston is an independent school which relies for its funding on fees paid by the parents of its pupils. The school receives no support from central government and resources are limited.

The School will seek to find the resources needed to make reasonable adjustments as indicated above through careful allocation of its financial resources but without making unreasonable demands on fee-paying parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the policy on Special Educational Needs which sets out the School's charges for specialist support. The School will assist parents in obtaining extra resources needed through the funding of Statements of Special Educational Needs where this is appropriate. The School will assist and support parents in applications for financial help to Charitable Trusts where this is appropriate.

Leweston strives to integrate disabled pupils in such a way that all pupils and their parents understand their special needs. Parents of other pupils are aware that the School admits a number of pupils with disabilities. The School will do everything possible to encourage parents to support us in our commitment to all our pupils, mindful that provision for all, disabled and able-bodied, depends on the choice parents make to pay for their daughters to be educated at the School.

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc	Page	Page <b>7</b> of <b>10</b>	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017	Next review	Aug 2018		
NMS	8.1, 12, 16	ISI	17a, 5, B8A	S48	



# LEWESTON

## NURSERY

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROCEDURE

**This document to be read in conjunction with policies and procedures of Leweston School**

Leweston Nursery works in accordance with all relevant legislation, including:

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
2. Race Relations Act 1976
3. Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
4. Sex Discrimination Act 1986
5. Children Act 1989
6. Human Rights Act 1998
7. The Employment Equality Age Relations Act 2006
8. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Leweston Nursery's group activities will be open to all children and families. The school and nursery Equal Opportunities Policy will be practised by all staff. All children and attends will be treated as individuals and equals.

Leweston recognise children can learn about the importance of diversity.

#### **We recognise**

1. Each individual and family are equally important and each religion and belief is unique
2. Linguistic and cultural backgrounds for everyone will be respected and reflected
3. The ethnic origins of all children, families and staff will be respected and reflected
4. Age – Leweston values and recognises the different contributions that are equally valuable from all staff irrespective of age
5. Gender – on entering Leweston Nursery all individuals will be treated equally and fairly regardless of their gender

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc	Page	Page 8 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017	Next review	Aug 2018		
NMS	8.1, 12, 16	ISI	17a, 5, B8A	S48	



# LEWESTON

## NURSERY

6. Ability – all children have individual strengths and weaknesses and these will be identified and supported by all staff

### Employment

Appointments will be based on employing the best person for the job and therefore all applicants will be treated fairly.

### Festivals

Our aim is to show respectful awareness of all major events in the lives of the children and families in the Nursery, and our society as a whole, and to welcome the diversity of the backgrounds from which they came. In order to achieve this, we aim to acknowledge all major festivals.

1. Without propaganda in any specific faith, children will be made aware of festivals which are celebrated by their families or others, and will be introduced where appropriate to the stories behind the festivals.
2. Before introducing a festival which the adults in the Nursery are not themselves familiar with, appropriate advice will be sought from the people to whom the festival is a familiar one.
3. Children and families who celebrate at home festivals with which the rest of the nursery is not familiar, an invitation to share their festival with the rest of the group will be offered.
4. As part of life diversity, children will be encouraged to welcome a range of different festivals. Stories, food and costume will play an important part of the teaching.

### The Curriculum

Leweston Nursery provides an environment free from discrimination and prejudice and all children will be respected, valued and potential recognised.

Appropriate opportunities will be given to children to explore, acknowledge and value similarities and differences between themselves and others.

### Resources

To ensure our children are provided with a balanced view of the world, resources will be sourced to reflect the appreciation of our multi-racial society.

Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc			Page	Page 9 of 10	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017		Next review	Aug 2018			
NMS	8.1, 12, 16		ISI	17a, 5, B8A		S48	



# LEWESTON

## NURSERY

Materials will be selected to help children to develop their self-respect and to respect other people by avoiding stereotypes and derogatory pictures or messages about any group of people.

### Special Needs

Leweston Nursery recognises the wide range of special needs of children and their families in the community, and will consider what part it can play in meeting these needs.

### Discriminatory Behaviour / Remarks

These are unacceptable within Leweston Nursery.

The response will aim to be sensitive to the feelings of the victim(s) and to help those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices.

### Language

To ensure as far as possible that all staff, children and parents understand, information will be both spoken and written.

Bilingual / Multilingual children and adults are seen as an asset by all. They will be valued and their languages recognised and respected in Nursery.

### Food

Through discussion and meetings, cultural, medical or dietary needs will be met wherever possible.

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Location	U:\SHB August 2016\Section 2\2.17 Disability and Equality Policy (08.2017).doc			Page	Page <b>10</b> of <b>10</b>	Author	DH(P), Prep Head
Last review	Aug 2017		Next review	Aug 2018			
NMS	8.1, 12, 16		ISI	17a, 5, B8A		S48	