

Freman College Equality Scheme (incorporating annual report) and Disability Policy

1. Vision and Values

We provide an approach to learning which encourages and supports students and members of the college community in the full development of their intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills to enable them to contribute to society.

Core values that underpin our work are:

- All our students are respected as individuals taking account of race, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, background, sexual identity, age and ability. The college respects and values the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity which exists in our college and in the wider community.
- We respect our students as individuals who have the right to enjoy equal access to a rich, relevant curriculum, high quality learning experiences and enrichment activities. The college strives to give support to individuals and groups of students who require something extra to meet their needs.
- We regard parents as an integral part of our community and involve them as much as possible in the joint enterprise of making learning positive for all.
- We are outward-looking community and involve the wider community as much as possible.

2. School Context and annual report
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Freman College is a 13 – 18 upper school in a small rural town. Its student body is predominantly but not exclusively from white British backgrounds. The majority of students live in Buntingford, Royston, Puckeridge and the surrounding villages, which contain a mixture of types of housing and include pockets of rural deprivation. Buntingford and Puckeridge are areas of high employment so few students are eligible for free school meals. A significant minority of students travel to the college from Stevenage and therefore live in a more socially and culturally diverse urban environment.

Key information

Characteristic	Total	Breakdown (number and %)
Number of students	1043	48% Female 52% Male
Number of teachers 2025/26	73	56% Female 44% Male
Number of support staff 2025/26 (Not incl invigilators or sixth form students)	47	87% Female 13% Male
Number of governors 2025/26	13	62% Female 38% Male
Students eligible for FSM* in past 6 years	112	10.74% (National average: 25.7% in 2025/26)
Disabled staff 2025/26	5	4%

Students with SEN support Students with an EHCP *	137 24	13.14% (National average: 14.2% in 2025/26) 2.30% (National average: 5.3% in 2025/26)
BME students	128	11% (National average 38.0% in 2025/26)
BME staff	13	11% (National average 16.8% in 2024/25)
Students who speak English as an additional language *	15	1.44% (National average: 21.4% in 2025/26)

3. Legal Background

The college is committed to meeting its public sector statutory duties as detailed below. We understand that the duties apply to service delivery and employment and staff management as well as policy development and implementation.

General Duty under the Equality Act 2010:

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Specific Duties of the Act enable schools to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) The specific duties require schools to:

- Publish annually information quantitative and qualitative, showing compliance with the public sector equality duty (PSED) set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- Set every four years one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 protects students from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for school provisions are:

- age (for staff only)
- disability
- ethnicity and race
- gender (sex)
- gender identity and reassignment
- pregnancy, maternity and breast feeding
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership (for staff only)

Disability

At Freman College we implement accessibility plans which are aimed at:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum;
- improving the physical environment of the college to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided;
 - improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students

Community Cohesion

Freman College takes seriously its duty to promote community cohesion. It understands community cohesion to mean working towards a society which has a common vision and sense of belonging shared by all; a society in which diversity is appreciated and valued; a society in which all have similar opportunities and in which there are strong and positive relationships. We believe strongly that we have a responsibility towards our students to create such a society within and beyond our college community. Our students have the right to be a member of a community which is guided by these principles and they are entitled to the opportunity to actively participate in such a community.

4. Roles and responsibilities and publishing information

The Governors, supported by the Headteacher and staff, are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this scheme.

The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for ensuring that the action plan is delivered effectively.

Every 12 months, as part of the review of this policy, there will be a report on equality and diversity to the Governors' Curriculum & Personnel Committee.

All staff are responsible for delivering the scheme both as employees and as it relates to their area of work.

Responsibility for	Key person
Single equality scheme	Headteacher
Disability equality (including bullying incidents)	Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing) and SENCO
SEN/LDD (including bullying incidents)	Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing) and SENCO
Accessibility	Business Manager and SENCO
Gender equality (including bullying incidents)	Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing)
Race equality (including racist incidents)	Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing)
Equality and diversity in curriculum content	Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum)
Equality and diversity in student achievement	Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum)
Equality and diversity – behaviour and exclusions	Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing and Pastoral)

Participation	Headteacher
Impact assessment	Headteacher
Stakeholder consultation	Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing and Pastoral)
Policy review	Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing and Pastoral)
Communication and publishing	Headteacher

The college equality scheme is aligned with the College Improvement Plan. Its implementation is monitored within the college's self-evaluation and other review processes. We will publish information annually on the college website.

Governors will:

- Review the college's equality and other policies
- Ensure the accountability of the Headteacher and senior staff for the communication and implementation of college policies.

The Headteacher and senior staff will:

- Initiate and oversee the development and regular review of the equality policy and procedures
- Implement the college's equality scheme, holding staff accountable for their behaviour and providing support and guidance as necessary
- Behave in accordance with the college's policies, leading by example
- Respond appropriately to the behaviour of students and staff, as a whole, and individuals (praising/challenging as necessary)
- Contribute to managing the implementation of the college's equality scheme.

All staff: teaching and support will:

- Raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development
- Maintain awareness of the college's equality policy and procedures
- Implement the equality policy and scheme
- Behave with respect and fairness to all colleagues and students
- Provide a consistent response to incidents, e.g. bullying cases and racist incidents

The college operates equality of opportunity in its day to day practice including in teaching and learning, admissions and exclusions and in relation to the recruitment and employment of staff.

5. Engagement

We have welcomed the participation and involvement of people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities in our annual consultation and self-evaluation activities. We consult and engage both with people affected by our decisions - parents, students, staff – and with people who have special knowledge which can inform the college's approach.

7. Equality Objectives

Our objectives were identified through

- Student focus groups
- Analysis of attendance data
- Curriculum analysis

Equality Objectives	Protected Characteristic
1. Close the gap girls' and boys' attendance	Gender
2. Increase girls' take up of STEM subjects	Gender
3. Recognise the multi-cultural character of the student body	Race
4. Recognise the sexual orientations of the student body	Sexual orientation

8. Equality Objectives Action Plan

Equality Objectives	Protected Characteristic	General Duty	Responsibility	Measurable success Indicator	Timing	Review date
Reduce girls' and young women's experience of sexism	Gender	Advance equality of opportunity	All staff	Student survey reflects equality of treatment and opportunity and strong levels of respect for difference Use of the curriculum to educate all students on their use of sexist language within their communications with each other Greater use of College monitoring systems has ensured reporting is robust and actions are taken where necessary. As a result of this increased awareness is that have been fewer repeat offenders when reported.	2026-2027	Summer 2027

Continue to close the gap girls' and boys' attendance	Gender	Advance equality of opportunity	Pastoral team	Reduce gap between boys' and girls' attendance to <1% (< 3% for PA) 2024-25 (up to May 25) update Girls absence: 8.4% Girls' PA: 20.9% Boys' absence: 6.4% Boys' PA: 19.8% Gap: 2% PA gap:1.1% 25-26 (up to May 26) Girls absence: 7.5% Girls' PA: 21.1% Boys' absence: 6.9% Boys' PA: 14.4% Gap: 0.6% PA gap: 6.7% The gap has decreased between boys and girls however the PA gap has increased.	2024 - 25	Summer 2025
Continue to increase girls' take up of STEM subjects (excluding Biology)	Gender	Advance equality of opportunity	Subject staff / SLT	Increase proportion of girls from 25-26 Increased STEM engagement through female students taking part in national competitions, university experiences specifically for science and increased engagement in extracurricular activities for lower school students. <u>2024/25 L6 STEM subjects</u> Female/Male	26-28	Summer 2028

				Physics 4/12 33% Maths 13/21 62% Fur Maths 1 / 5 20% Chemistry 11/10 52% <u>2025/26 L6 STEM subjects</u> Female/Male Physics 2/27 7% Maths 5/52 10% Fur Maths 1/11 9% Chemistry 9/21 43%		
Race						
More effectively reflect the multi-cultural character of British society and the college in the daily life of the college	Race	Advance equality of opportunity	All staff / SLT	<u>2025 Student survey results</u> Stated that 90% of our students strongly agree that Freman College encourages the students to respect people from other backgrounds and treats everyone equally <u>2026 Student survey results</u> Stated that 91% of our students strongly agree that Freman College encourages the students to respect people from other backgrounds and treats everyone equally Greater monitoring of College systems to ensure reporting is robust and actions are taken where necessary. The result of the increased monitoring, we have seen students and staff reporting their concerns. There has been less repeat offending as a result of this.	2026-2027	Summer 2027

Ensure students of all sexual orientations feel equally well recognised and supported	Sexual orientations	Advance equality of opportunity	All staff	Ensure all students feel equally supported and free to be open about their sexual orientation Ensure we educate all students effectively to make sure they understand what homophobia is and that it is unacceptable, so that we see a reduction in the use of homophobic language and less repeat offenders when it has been reported. Greater use of College monitoring systems to ensure reporting is robust and actions are taken where necessary.	2026-2027	Summer 2027
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Ratified: Summer 2026
Review: Summer 2027

Appendix: Disability Policy

FREMAN COLLEGE

DISABILITY POLICY & PROCEDURES

POLICY

A person has a disability if they have physical or mental impairment that has substantial or long term adverse effects on their ability to carry out every day activities. (Equality Act 2010).

We are committed to the provision of equal opportunities for all students, staff and parents as outlined in the Equality Act 2010, so that we meet the Disability Equality Duty. (Dec. 2006).

The Disability Policy covers the following elements:

The promotion of equal opportunities for all people with disabilities.

The elimination of discrimination that is unlawful. Equality Act 2010.

The elimination of harassment related to disability.

The promotion of an ethos of positive attitudes.

The encouragement of full participation for disabled students and adults in college. To take steps to meet the needs of disabled people, even if this requires a measure of positive action.

The key areas of the policy are:

- To endeavour to remove any physical access barriers to ensure our college is as accessible as possible for students, staff and visitors with disabilities.
- To foster positive attitudes amongst students and staff towards people with disabilities through education.
- To encourage the development and implementation of procedures to address the requirements of students and staff with disabilities across all departments of the college and to operate within the Disability Policy framework.
- To provide reasonable adjustments in the form of teaching strategies, alternative assessments, and support assistance for students with disabilities in all aspects of academic programmes.
- To advertise and promote the Disability Policy and procedures, and the provision of disability support within all areas of academic learning, and employment opportunities.
- To ensure monitoring and evaluation of this policy is a continuous process carried out by all members of staff. A formal evaluation will be carried out annually.

The college may change the procedures as appropriate.

PROCEDURES

Disclosure of information

Should a student or adult disclose information about his/her disability, the colleague or the member of staff receiving the information will treat it with complete confidence and not impart it to anyone else.

Where it is proposed that the information should be revealed to a third party, the reasons for this will be explained to the individual and the individual's permission obtained before proceeding. Even if the member of staff believes it would be in the individual's interest to reveal the information, it would be improper to do so if the person declines to give permission.

In rare circumstances, staff, following consultation with the Headteacher, reserve the right to relax confidentiality when there appears to be serious risk to the individual or someone else. In such circumstances, the individual's consent will be sought, if at all possible.

Provision for students with disabilities

All students wishing to attend the college will be considered for a place regardless of disability.

The college will respond, wherever possible, with reasonable adjustments to meet special requirements for students with disabilities, the provision of appropriate materials, equipment and facilities.

Our curriculum, tutor time, assemblies and work with the wider community, will be a means to encourage staff, students, parents and visitors to respond positively to the diversity and richness that people with disabilities bring to our college community.

The college will use its best endeavours to ensure that the environment for work and study does not limit people with disabilities from playing a full and meaningful part in every aspect of college life.

The college will hold an up to date register of any student who legitimately declares they have a disability so that effective monitoring of academic and social progress may be made.

The college will inform staff of individual students with disabilities to facilitate academic and social monitoring.

Recruitment of staff

The college ensures its recruitment procedures encourage applicants with disabilities and ensures that no unlawful discrimination takes place.

Candidates with disabilities will have any additional needs met wherever possible and practicable if called for interview.

All staff appointments will be made on the basis of qualifications, experience and skills of the applicant, regardless of disability.

Wherever possible, the college will make such reasonable adjustments as are required to enable a successful candidate with a disability to take up the position.

Retention of staff

The college will support, where possible, any employee who suffers a disability whilst at work, so that they may continue their employment.

Any reasonable adjustments to the working environment will be made.

Training and CPD

Training and CPD opportunities will be available to all staff regardless of disabilities. Additional needs with regard to access, equipment and facilities will be made to ensure full participation is available.

The working environment

The college will make every effort to ensure that the environment for work does not prevent people with disabilities from taking up or continuing in employment for which they are suitably qualified.

Parents with Disabilities

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that any information sent to or made available to parents will be published and accessible.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the environment does not prevent people with disabilities from visiting the college.

Disability Awareness

The college will ensure that awareness of disability is raised amongst all staff, students, parents and visitors. This is to ensure that:

- those involved in recruitment and selection are thoroughly acquainted with the policy and procedures.
- all managers and colleagues of any employee with a disability have a clear understanding of the specific requirements and adjustments necessary and make a positive response.
- any member of staff, student, parent, governor or visitor with a disability is able to seek assistance, if required, to support and enable them to fully participate.

Monitoring

The college will hold a central record on the SIMS system, of all people who wish to declare a disability, so that regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy may take place.

Links with External Agencies

Liaison will be maintained, when required, with specialist advisory agencies and groups at local and national level.

In order to ensure that people with disabilities gain the best possible support, the college will seek to consult with advisory groups so that we may make the best possible use of available resources.

In conjunction with Equality Policy

Ratified: Summer 2026

Review: Summer 2027