



Larwood Academy Trust

Chair of Trustees: Daniel Login | BA (Hons) |

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Larwood School

Headteacher: Mr Pierre van der Merwe | BA, NPQH |

Brandles School

Headteacher: Mr Paul Smith | BA (Hons), AVCM |

Version Control

V1.1	March 2024	Version Control added and Brandles Wheelchair access added.

Registered office:

C/o Larwood School, Larwood Drive Stevenage, Hertfordshire. SG1 5BZ, UK. Company Number: 10359418
Telephone: 01438 236333 Email: admin@larwood.herts.sch.uk



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Brandles School

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Dan Login
Chair of Trustees

Pierre van der Merwe
Executive Headteacher

EQUALITIES AND ACCESSABILITY POLICY

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LARWOOD ACADEMY TRUST – EQUALITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

The Trustees of Larwood Academy Trust believe that all pupils, their families and staff should be treated fairly and equitably and without prejudice. They affirm their commitment that there will be no discrimination on grounds of Disability, Gender, Race, Religion and Belief or Sexual Orientation. Diversity is to be celebrated as bringing a wealth of different experiences to bear on the education of the pupils.

This policy is written to conform to the legislation contained in

- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **The Equality Act (Religion and Belief) 2006**
- **The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016**

This policy is written under the following headings

- **Disability**
- **Gender**
- **Race**
- **Religion and Belief**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Age**

Discrimination in any of the above areas will not be tolerated in this Trust. The policy will apply to the treatment of pupils and their parents, staff and governors and visitors to the school.

LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

THE TRUSTEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- ensuring that the schools comply with all Equalities legislation;
- ensuring that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented.

THE HEAD TEACHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- ensuring that this policy is implemented on a day to day basis ;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given training and support where needed
- taking appropriate action in any cases of discrimination.

ALL STAFF ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- dealing with any incidents of discrimination, and knowing how to identify and challenge bias and stereotyping;
- promoting equality and not discriminating on the grounds of race, disability, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

DISABILITY

PUPILS

The schools in the Trust are for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils may also have ADD, ADHD, ODD, DAMP sensory impairments or autism. Pupils may only enter the school if they have a statement of special educational needs or an Educational Health Care Plan.

Although all pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties it is recognised that there is still the scope for unfair treatment on the grounds of behaviour within the trust. The trust has a positive policy for inclusion which ensures that all pupils are treated equally and fairly. No child will be denied access to education or activity on the grounds of their behaviour unless it presents as an immediate danger to themselves or others.

STAFF

Disability is not a bar, per se to employment in the Trust. However, depending on the nature of the job, certain abilities are required. For all staff working directly with children, the key concern is the safety and welfare of the children. As long as the disability does not compromise this, it will not be a factor in employment. Members of the child contact teams are required to complete Hertfordshire Steps training which includes physical intervention training. Children who run away and have no sense of danger may require staff to follow them and catch up with them before they have the chance to get into danger. All capable staff need to be prepared to take their part in these activities, both to spread the workload and to ensure that there are always staff on hand ready to respond when needed.

Premises staff have to be able to carry out the full range of work as given in their job description.

OTHERS

Parents, governors, trustees and visitors with disabilities are well catered for but we are not a level site and so access from one end of school to the other by wheelchair users would need to be around the outside of the building. All external classroom doors and the main entrance doors have access ramps.

LEGISLATION

The Act provides protection for individuals against discrimination on grounds of disability, in employment and when goods, facilities and services are being provided. This extends to the delivery of education and other services by schools.

DEFINITION

The definition of disability has been redefined in the Equality Act 2010.

“A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (S6(1)).”

OFFICE FOR DISABILITY ISSUES, EQUALITY ACT 2010 GUIDANCE

The Office for Disability Issues also provides protection for people who have cancer, MS, HIV/AIDS as well as those who have had heart surgery; are on kidney dialysis; people with diabetes; stammer; dyslexia; people with severe disfigurements; mental health issues and learning difficulties or disabilities – provided their condition results in a disability which meets the Office for Disability Issues definition. Also covered are those who have previously had a disability (e.g. a mental health problem).

SCOPE

The legislation applies to:

Pupils and parents, prospective pupils, parents, staff and others using all schools facilities.

It is unlawful to treat disabled pupils less favorably, without justification, than their non-disabled peers. Schools must comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not put at a substantial disadvantage compared to nondisabled pupils, even if it means treating them more favorably. The duty covers:

- admissions
- exclusions
- education
- benefits, facilities and services
- extended schools services

ACCESS

The trust has carried out an accessibility survey with an action plan for improvements, and the recommended improvements have been carried out.

GENDER

PUPILS

As all pupils at both Larwood School and Brandles School have social, emotional and mental health difficulties, they are likely to be affected by ideas on gender stereotypes. They are affected by television and other media propaganda and peer pressure often has an effect on our students. Pupil attainment does not conform to the male/ female differences seen in

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mainstream results. We have an imbalance of female pupils when compared to male pupils. All curriculum subjects and extra-curricular activities are equally open to both boys and girls – for example the school has a mixed gender bell boating team.

STAFF

Employment opportunities are open to both male and female applicants. The trust will employ people only on the strength of their qualifications experience and aptitude for posts and not on the basis of their gender.

OTHERS

The same policy which applies to staff applies to the recruitment of governors and trustees. Gender is not an issue and the governing body has always had a fairly even spread of male and female members which has been the result of recruitment on the basis of availability of candidates and their suitability for post.

LEGISLATION

The Act provides protection for individuals against discrimination on the grounds of gender, in employment and when goods, facilities and services are being provided. This extends to the delivery of education and other services by schools.

SCOPE

The legislation applies to:

Pupils and parents, prospective pupils and parents, staff and others using school facilities.

Schools must treat pupils equally, and not subject them to any detriment, irrespective of their gender. The duty covers:

- admissions
- exclusions
- education
- benefits, facilities and services
- extended schools services

CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

The school's curriculum and the resources chosen to support it will be carefully selected to avoid perpetuating stereotypes about the roles of males and females.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The school uniform consists of a polo shirt and sweatshirt or sweat cardigan. Pupils may wear skirts or trousers as they wish, head scarves may be worn.

RACE

PUPILS

The trust has a predominantly white pupil population which reflects the school's geographical setting. Pupils gain admission to Larwood and Brandles only if they have a statement of special educational need or an Educational Health Care Plan classifying them as having social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The LA is the placing authority of the school and pupils are placed at Larwood from a provision panel which is concerned to place children in their nearest appropriate school.

As a trust with relatively few pupils of ethnic minority background, we recognise the following:

- the particular need for vigilance to ensure that ethnic minority pupils are neither victims of racism or experiencing a sense of isolation and/or marginalisation
- the particular need to train all members of the school community to avoid negative and stereotypical assumptions about those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- the importance of recognising the significance of and responding to cultural, linguistic and "racial" differences in striving to ensure to achieve equality of opportunity for all.

As all pupils at Larwood and Brandles have social, emotional and mental health difficulties they are often more affected by ideas on racial stereotypes than their mainstream peers. They are affected by peer pressure, television and other media propaganda.

STAFF

As reflects the area, and the pattern of job applications Larwood has a predominantly, but not solely, white staff group. Vacancies are open to people of all races. The one pre requisite we ask of all people of whatever their race is that they are able to communicate clearly and effectively in English as communication is a key issue in the education of our children. Regional accents, British or of any other of kind are not an issue per se but all staff must be able to provide good role models of English for children, and be able to be understood by the children. If children cannot understand their teaching staff they will not be able to learn, and learning has to be the prime motivator of this school

It is important to recognise that, because there are few staff members of ethnic minority background, there may, on occasions, be difficulties in establishing a full and accurate understanding of some issues of racism and cultural diversity. The school will make use of all available sources of support to ensure best practice.

OTHERS

The school Governing is predominantly but not solely white British, which reflects the school's geographical setting. It is important that the governing body is aware of this fact and take steps to ensure that all policies and practices are impartial.

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Particular care must be taken to ensure that all parents of an ethnic minority background are able to take part as fully in school life as others and that any cultural issues that may affect this involvement are treated with openness and respect.

LEGISLATION

The regulations make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race in employment, and when goods, facilities and services are being provided. These provisions extend to include the delivery of education and other services by schools.

DEFINITIONS

The term 'Race' includes:

Colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin and citizenship as well as race.

Sikhs, Jews and Gypsy Roma people are covered, as they are groups of separate ethnic origins.

Muslims are not, in law, deemed to be a group with a separate ethnic origin and are not, therefore, covered by the RRA but are protected by the religion and belief provisions.

Note: Although Traveler families who are not Gypsy Roma or Irish are not officially covered by the RRA, schools are advised not to treat these pupils differentially as this may conflict with their rights under the Human Rights Act 1999.

SCOPE

The legislation applies to:

Pupils and parents, prospective pupils and parents, staff and others using school facilities.

Schools must treat pupils equally and not subject them to any detriment, irrespective of their race. The duty covers:

- admissions
- exclusions
- education
- benefits, facilities and services
- extended schools services

CURRICUUM AND RESOURCES

The schools curriculum and the resources chosen to support it will be carefully selected to avoid perpetuating racial stereotypes.

DRESS CODE FOR STAFF

Staff may wear any clothing as appropriate to their race or religion but the education of the children is paramount and this school has a strong emphasis on developing communication

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for pupils. It is essential that staff, whilst working with children, have their faces uncovered and their lips and facial expressions clearly visible as this aids understanding of language.

RACIST INCIDENTS

The trust adopts the definition of a Racist Incident recommended by the Macpherson report following the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence as:

"any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

Both schools have records of racist incidents and staff are aware that any racially motivated attack – physical or verbal must be recorded and will be reported, via our termly returns, to the LA.

RELIGION AND BELIEF

PUPILS

The schools do not have a wide range of religions represented amongst its pupil population. Where the religious beliefs of pupils are known to the teaching staff and management team allowances are made for appropriate religious observances.

STAFF

The schools do not have a wide range of religions represented amongst the staff group. It is important to recognise that because of the lack of diversity of religion and belief in the staff group there may be difficulties in establishing a full and accurate understanding of some issues associated with religion and belief. The schools will make use of all available sources of support to ensure best practice.

OTHERS

The schools do not have a wide range of religions represented on the governing body. It is important to recognise that because of this there may be difficulties in establishing a full and accurate understanding of some issues associated with religion and belief. The schools will make use of all available sources of support to ensure best practice. The schools will make sure that the religious beliefs of parents are considered as appropriate for example in the setting of annual reviews to ensure they do not clash with days of religious observance.

LEGISLATION

The Act provides protection for individuals against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief (including perceived religion, or lack of religion or belief) in employment, and when goods, facilities and services are being provided. This extends to the delivery of education and other services by schools.

DEFINITION

The definition of religion and belief covers fringe or cult religions and a range of other philosophical beliefs (e.g. humanism).

It does not include political beliefs.

It is unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds that they do not have any religion or belief at all (e.g. an atheist), or that they do not adhere or sufficiently adhere to a particular religion or belief.

SCOPE

The legislation applies to:

Pupils and parents, prospective pupils and parents, staff and others using school facilities.

Schools must treat pupils equally, and not subject them to any detriment, irrespective of their religion or belief – or lack of it. The duty covers:

- admissions
- exclusions
- education
- extended schools services

CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

The Act enables schools to continue to deliver the broad content based and inclusive curriculum to which all pupils are entitled without fear of challenges based on the religious views of particular parents or children. The exemption covers the National Curriculum, together with subjects such as RE, which is not part of the National Curriculum but is required by law to be taught in maintained schools, and also includes elements such as library books.

The situations in which schools may act without infringing the provisions of the Act (on grounds of religion or belief) or laying themselves open to lawful challenges from parents or children include:

- the teaching of evolution theories in science classes
- use of technology to teach all pupils
- selecting literature or texts for study which are challenging and interesting, and which promote discussion among pupils

The school RE syllabus includes teaching modules on the 5 main world faiths. The PSHE /SEAL/ Citizenship curriculum promotes an acceptance of all people celebrating diversity.

Resources for RE will include artefacts from the main world faiths. These artefacts will be treated with respect and consideration and will be handled as far as possible in accordance with the precepts of that faith.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Schools are required to provide a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian character. The collective worship exemption in the Act ensures that all schools can continue in this requirement without lawful challenge. It also extends to activities organised by, or on behalf of, the school including, for example, harvest festival, Christmas carol services, Diwali or other faith-based events.

Parents not wishing their children to participate in collective worship or other related activities have the right to withdraw them. However parents of other religions or beliefs cannot claim their children are discriminated against (on grounds of religion or belief) simply because the school does not provide alternative facilities or services for separate worship.

The school uses its assemblies to explore and celebrate a range of festivals from around the world.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION PUPILS

The Trust treats all pupils equally, and does not subject them to any detriment, irrespective of their apparent or perceived sexual orientation or that of their parents.

STAFF

The sexual orientation of staff is not an issue that is taken into consideration as part of the recruitment procedure.

OTHERS

Sexual orientation is not a relevant factor in the recruitment of governors / trustees and has no significance in the way the schools responds to parents or other visitors in both schools.

LEGISLATION

The regulations make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of apparent or perceived sexual orientation in employment, and when goods, facilities and services are being provided. These provisions extend to the delivery of education and other services by schools. The legislation does not require schools to *promote* gay rights or homosexuality to children

DEFINITION

People who have changed their sex (trans-gender people) are not covered by these regulations. They are protected by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended in 2003.

SCOPE

The legislation applies to:

Pupils and parents, prospective pupils and parents, staff and others using school facilities.

Schools must treat pupils equally, and not subject them to any detriment, irrespective of their apparent or perceived sexual orientation or that of their parents. The duty covers:

- admissions
- exclusions
- education
- benefits, facilities and services
- extended schools services

CURRICULUM AND RESOURCES

Sex education is delivered at a level and pace to suit the needs of individual pupils and mainly to pupils in Y6. The sex education programme covers relationships at an age appropriate level for our pupils. There will be no value judgements made about the nature of different relationships. The sex education programme places the emphasis on the need for sexual activity to be part of a loving relationship of any nature.

Teachers will deal honestly and sensitively with issues of sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support if required.

The school curriculum and the resources chosen to support it will be carefully selected to avoid perpetuating stereotypes about homosexual and heterosexual people.

AGE

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Larwood Academy Trust does not discriminate against people on the basis of their age. Staff are welcome to stay at work beyond statutory retirement age, and in recent years staff have remained until their 70th year and beyond as productive members of the school team.

We adopt national guidance not to impose a retirement age, and will renew contracts annually beyond retirement age for anyone who wishes and who is mentally and physically fit enough to work to the benefit of the children

It is important that we try and recruit staff of all ages and we currently have staff of all ages in the school which ensures a variety of experience for the pupils and continuity of staffing for the schools. However, age will never be the prime consideration in recruitment.

ACCESSIBILITY

CURRENT SITUATION

As things stand there are no pupils with physical disability that require wheelchair use, attending Larwood and Brandles School. The nature of the building and its actual construction would preclude anyone requiring such aid attending the school and being able to access all areas of the school. This would include the second floor, conference room area (used to deliver some areas of the curriculum and events for pupils), as well as the 'top end' of the school. Having stated the concern with the 'top end' of the school, it would be possible to enter this side of the school via a separate entrance. However, movement would be limited to the dining hall as there are steps at each end of this space.

All of the above would have a similar effect on any potential member of staff.

DEVELOPMENT

There are no planned major builds taking place or likely to take place in the near future. Where this has occurred, we have ensured that any building is compliant. For example, the Play Barn has wheel chair ramp access. However, as there are no pupils who currently use wheel chairs, we would reconsider this and conduct an audit if needed in the future.

Areas of Larwood school where wheel chair access is possible:

- Main reception-ground floor
- Classrooms on the ground floor, however, door access may be a limiting factor
- The residential area of the school
- The Playbarn
- The outside play areas, however, dependent upon the weather, areas of the grounds accessed via grass may prove to be inaccessible.
- The 'top end' of the school can only be accessed by the small playground and movement would be limited to the dining hall area.

Areas of Larwood school where wheel chair access is not available:

- The conference room and second floor area which is only accessible via a flight of stairs
- Moving from the main hall to the top end of school as there are a small set of 4 steps to gain access to the dining room and beyond
- All areas where door widths are set to non-wheelchair size

Areas of Brandles school where wheel chair access is possible:

- All classrooms in the main building.
- The Hall and canteen
- Staff room
- All toilets in main building
- New build classrooms
- The Hive

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- The multi gym
- Science Lab
- Art Room
- Disabled Toilet
- The outside play areas, however, dependent upon the weather, areas of the grounds accessed via grass may prove to be inaccessible.
- Outside football gym