

Belonging Policy

Longwill School for Deaf Children

1.0 Document Control and Approval

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2.0 Policy Purpose and Scope

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every member of the Longwill School community experiences a strong sense of belonging. This means that all pupils, staff, and families feel accepted, valued, respected, and able to participate fully in school life, regardless of background, identity, ability, or need. The policy sets out our statutory duty to foster good relations, eliminate discrimination, and promote equality and inclusion, as required by the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Children and Families Act 2014](#).

This policy also aims to:

- Embed belonging and inclusion in all aspects of school life, including curriculum, relationships, environment, and leadership.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

- Provide practical guidance for staff, pupils, and families on creating and sustaining a culture of belonging.
- Set out clear responsibilities and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and review.

2.2 Scope

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors at Longwill School. It covers all of our provision and applies to all school activities, both on and off site.

The policy is relevant to all aspects of school life, including teaching and learning, behaviour, safeguarding, admissions, extra-curricular activities, and community engagement.

3.0 Vision and Values

3.1 Vision Statement

At Longwill School, we believe that belonging is the foundation of a happy, safe, and successful school. Our vision is that every child, regardless of their background, identity, or need, feels welcomed, valued, and empowered to participate fully in school life. We are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion, respect, and celebration of diversity, where every pupil can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Our ethos is rooted in the belief that diversity enriches our community and that every child's unique strengths, experiences, and perspectives are valued. We are committed to the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils, as required by the 2014 National Curriculum and Ofsted's current school inspection framework.

We are especially proud of our specialist Deaf provision and are committed to ensuring that Deaf pupils develop a strong sense of identity, pride, and belonging within both the Deaf and hearing communities.

3.2 Core Principles

Our approach to belonging is underpinned by the following principles:

- Every child and adult should feel safe, welcome, and respected.
- Positive relationships are central to wellbeing and learning.
- All members of the school community should see themselves represented in the curriculum and environment.
- Pupil voice is valued and actively promoted in decision-making.
- All pupils should have equitable access to learning, opportunities, and support.
- Diversity is celebrated, and all identities are valued.
- Barriers to participation and inclusion are identified and removed.
- Staff are supported and trained to develop inclusive, trauma-informed, and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Belonging is everyone's responsibility and is embedded in all aspects of school life.

4.0 Statutory and Regulatory Framework

4.1 Legislative Requirements

Longwill School is committed to meeting all statutory duties relating to equality, inclusion, and safeguarding. The key legislative requirements underpinning this policy are:

[Equality Act 2010](#): Requires schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different groups. The Act protects characteristics including disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment. The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) requires schools to have due regard to these aims in all policies and practices.

[Children and Families Act 2014](#): Places duties on schools to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to promote participation and inclusion, and to involve children and families in decision-making, including through Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

[Education Act 2002](#): Requires schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#): Statutory guidance on safeguarding, requiring schools to create a safe, inclusive culture and respond effectively to concerns.

[School Admissions Code](#): Requires fair, inclusive admissions practices.

[British Sign Language Act 2022](#): Recognises BSL as a language of England, Scotland, and Wales, with implications for schools with Deaf provision.

[SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#): Statutory guidance for supporting children with SEND, including participation, voice, and high aspirations for all pupils.

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(2020\)](#): Requires schools to promote respect, equality, and inclusion through the curriculum.

4.2 Regulatory and Inspection Frameworks

Our approach is informed by the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted:

Current Ofsted school inspection framework: Ofsted evaluates the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. Inspectors look for evidence of an inclusive, ambitious curriculum; positive relationships; effective anti-bullying and anti-discrimination practice; and support for vulnerable groups.

DfE Guidance: Emphasises the importance of inclusion, equality, pupil voice, and wellbeing. Schools must publish equality objectives and accessibility plans and ensure compliance with all statutory guidance.

[SEND Code of Practice](#): Requires person-centred planning, participation, and high aspirations for all pupils.

5.0 Whole-School Approach to Belonging

5.1 Embedding Belonging in School Culture

Belonging is woven into the fabric of Longwill School. It is not a one-off initiative but a sustained commitment that shapes our vision, policies, and everyday practice. We ensure that belonging is reflected in our curriculum, teaching, relationships, environment, and leadership.

We adopt trauma-informed and attachment-aware approaches throughout the school, recognising that positive relationships, emotional safety, and repair are essential for all children, especially those who have experienced adversity. All staff receive regular training on unconscious bias, anti-racism, and inclusive practice, equipping them to recognise and address barriers to belonging and to respond with empathy and understanding.

We celebrate diversity in all its forms and actively challenge discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes. Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they promote equity and inclusion.

5.2 Leadership and Accountability

The leadership team, including the Headteacher, Senior Leaders, and Governing Body, are responsible for ensuring that belonging is prioritised across the school. Leaders model inclusive values, set high expectations, and ensure that all staff understand their roles in fostering belonging.

Accountability is maintained through regular monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to governors and the school community. Leaders ensure that all statutory duties are met, that staff receive appropriate training, and that the school responds effectively to feedback from pupils, families, and staff.

All staff are expected to uphold the principles of this policy in their daily practice, and to contribute to a culture where every child feels that they belong.

6.0 Representation, Visibility, and Inclusive Environment

6.1 Representation in Curriculum and Environment

We are committed to ensuring that the diversity of our school and wider community is reflected in the curriculum, resources, displays, and staffing. This includes:

- Selecting books, images, and learning materials that represent a wide range of cultures, identities, abilities, languages, and family structures.
- Ensuring that all pupils see themselves and their experiences reflected in what they learn and in the school environment.
- Celebrating a wide range of cultural, religious, and awareness events, such as Black History Month, Eid, Christmas, Diversity Week, and Deaf Awareness Week.
- Displaying pupil work and achievements throughout the school, ensuring all children feel valued and celebrated.

We regularly review our curriculum and resources to ensure they are inclusive, up to date, and free from stereotypes or bias.

6.2 Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making our school environment and resources accessible to all pupils, staff, and visitors. This includes:

- Providing accessible formats for all key information, including large print, BSL, and translated materials as required.
- Using visual supports, such as Communicate in Print symbols, to support understanding and communication for all pupils, including those with additional communication needs.
- Ensuring that classrooms, corridors, and communal spaces are physically accessible and welcoming for all.
- Making reasonable adjustments to support pupils with disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) or additional needs, as required by the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [SEND Code of Practice](#).
- Maintaining and regularly reviewing our Accessibility Plan, which is published on the school website.

We work closely with pupils, families, and external agencies to identify and remove barriers to participation and learning.

6.3 Specialist Provision for Deaf Pupils

As a specialist sign-bilingual Deaf provision, we are committed to viewing English and British Sign Language (BSL) as equal languages and we have Deaf role models throughout school life. This includes:

- Providing BSL interpretation when needed.
- Deaf studies lessons foster our children's Deaf identity, teaching them about the wider Deaf community and Deaf history.
- Ensuring that Deaf pupils see successful Deaf adults in a range of roles within the school.
- Celebrating Deaf identity, culture, and language throughout our curriculum, displays, and enrichment activities.
- SMiLE therapy equips our children with strategies to communicate with hearing people within the community.

We are proud to empower our Deaf pupils to develop confidence, pride, and a strong sense of belonging within both the Deaf and hearing communities.

7.0 Building Positive Relationships

7.1 Relationships and Restorative Practice

Positive relationships are at the heart of belonging. At Longwill School we prioritise the development of trusting, respectful relationships between pupils, staff, and families.

All pupils are greeted by name each day, ensuring that every child feels recognised and welcomed. We use the “Hand of Friendship” approach, where each pupil identifies five trusted adults they can approach if they are worried, upset, or need support.

We use restorative conversations to repair relationships when difficulties arise. As a Trauma Informed Attachment Aware School (TIAAS), we understand that behaviour is a form of communication. We prioritise repair, reflection, and rebuilding relationships, rather than punitive responses.

We celebrate effort, kindness, resilience, and personal development, recognising children holistically rather than solely through academic achievement. Every success, no matter how small, is valued and celebrated.

7.2 Anti-Bullying and Anti-Discrimination

We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination, and prejudice. Our Anti-Bullying Policy sets out clear procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying, including racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, and other discriminatory incidents.

All incidents are recorded and monitored. We analyse data to identify patterns and address any emerging issues. We provide support for all involved and include families as appropriate.

We teach pupils to recognise and challenge discriminatory language and behaviour, and to be active allies for one another. Staff receive regular training on anti-bullying, anti-racism, and inclusion.

8.0 Pupil Voice and Participation

8.1 Pupil Voice Mechanisms

We believe that children have the right to be heard and to influence decisions that affect them. We provide a range of meaningful opportunities for all pupils to contribute to school life, including:

- School Council, where elected representatives from each class meet regularly with staff and leaders to discuss issues, share ideas, and help shape school policy and practice.
- Regular pupil surveys and feedback activities.
- Involvement in the EHCP Annual Review process, where pupils share their views, aspirations, and experiences.

We are committed to ensuring that all children are actively included and supported to participate.

8.2 Acting on Feedback

We listen to pupils’ ideas and act upon their suggestions wherever possible. Outcomes from pupil voice activities are shared with the school community through assemblies, newsletters, and displays.

We regularly review how we gather and act on pupil feedback, ensuring that all children feel confident to share their opinions and that their voices make a difference.

9.0 Inclusive Teaching and Learning

9.1 Adaptive and Inclusive Pedagogy

We believe that every child can succeed when barriers to learning are removed. Our approach to teaching and learning is based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, which means:

- Planning lessons that are accessible and engaging for all pupils, with multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.
- Using a range of teaching strategies, resources, and technologies to support different learning styles and needs.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, learn from one another, and develop social and communication skills.
- Valuing and building on pupils' strengths, interests, and prior experiences.
- Staff receive regular training and support to develop adaptive, inclusive teaching practice.

9.2 Removing Barriers to Learning

We are committed to identifying and removing barriers to learning for all pupils. This includes:

- Making reasonable adjustments for pupils with, disabilities, or additional needs, in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [SEND Code of Practice](#).
- All of our lessons are delivered using both BSL and spoken English.
- Providing accessible resources, such as Communicate in Print symbols and assistive technology.
- Offering alternative ways for pupils to demonstrate their understanding, such as through practical tasks, visual supports, or technology.
- Implementing support plans, interventions, and personalised approaches as needed.
- Avoiding practices that single out or stigmatise pupils, and ensuring that all adjustments are made sensitively and respectfully.

We work closely with pupils, families, and external professionals to ensure that support is tailored to individual needs and regularly reviewed.

10.0 Celebrating Diversity and Identity

10.1 Curriculum and Enrichment

We actively celebrate the diversity within our school and wider community. Our curriculum is designed to promote equality, respect, and understanding, and to reflect the experiences and identities of all pupils.

We deliver a broad and inclusive RPSHE (Relationships, Personal, Social, Health and Economic) curriculum that covers equality, diversity and anti-bullying. We include stories, literature, and learning experiences that feature diverse role models and perspectives.

We recognise and celebrate a wide range of cultural, religious, and awareness events throughout the year, ensuring that all pupils feel seen and valued. We encourage respectful discussion about similarities and differences, and teach pupils to challenge stereotypes and prejudice.

Enrichment activities, such as clubs, trips, and special events, are planned to be accessible and inclusive for all pupils.

10.2 Developing Deaf Identity

As a specialist Deaf provision, we are committed to helping every Deaf child develop a strong, positive Deaf identity. Our Deaf Studies curriculum includes:

- Learning about Deaf history, heritage, and culture.
- Celebrating British Sign Language (BSL) as a rich and valued language.
- Exploring the achievements of significant Deaf role models.
- Understanding Deaf rights, equality, and advocacy.

We believe that being Deaf is something to be proud of. We explicitly teach our Deaf pupils to celebrate their identity and recognise deafness as an important part of who they are.

Our school community is enriched by the presence of Deaf adults working in a range of roles. These colleagues provide authentic linguistic, cultural, and professional role models, enabling children to see successful Deaf adults and to aspire to achieve their own ambitions.

11.0 Supporting Wellbeing and Emotional Safety

11.1 Emotional Literacy and Regulation

Children flourish when they feel emotionally safe and supported. We teach emotional literacy and self-regulation through our RPSHE curriculum, Circle Time, and targeted interventions.

We provide quiet, calm, and regulatory spaces for pupils who need support with emotional regulation. Learning Mentors and other pastoral staff are available to offer support and guidance.

Personal Support Plans are developed for pupils with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, in partnership with families and external agencies. These plans are regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure they are effective.

We help pupils develop resilience, coping strategies, and positive peer relationships, equipping them with the skills they need to manage challenges and thrive.

11.2 Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We follow the statutory guidance set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) and have clear procedures for identifying and responding to concerns.

Staff are trained to recognise signs of vulnerability, abuse, or neglect, and to respond promptly and appropriately. We have designated safeguarding leads who oversee all aspects of safeguarding and welfare.

We monitor the wellbeing of all pupils, with a particular focus on those who may be at greater risk of exclusion or marginalization.

We work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that all pupils are safe, supported, and able to participate fully in school life.

12.0 Family and Community Engagement

12.1 Partnership with Families

Families are valued partners in creating a sense of belonging. We welcome families into school through events, workshops, and community activities, and encourage open, two-way communication.

We work collaboratively with parents and carers throughout the EHCP Annual Review process and in all aspects of support planning for their children. We seek parents' views and involve them in decision-making through initiatives such as our TIAAS Parent Working Group.

We communicate in accessible ways, including telephone calls, Class Dojo messages, newsletters, and the provision of interpreters whenever required. We are committed to ensuring that all families feel included, respected, and able to contribute to school life.

12.2 Community Links

We actively engage with the local community, specialist organisations (such as Birmingham Institute for the Deaf), and external agencies to enhance our provision and support for pupils and families.

Children from Year 3, are able to attend a weekly Youth Club at BID providing socialization for our Deaf students with pupils from other schools, whilst engaging in a rich variety of activities, all accessible and provided through BSL.

13.0 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

13.1 Monitoring Arrangements

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored through a range of methods, including:

- Pupil voice activities, such as surveys, focus groups, and School Council feedback.
- Parent and carer feedback, gathered through surveys, meetings, and informal conversations.
- Staff feedback, including through staff meetings and professional reflection.
- Monitoring of attendance, behaviour, participation in clubs, trips, and enrichment activities.
- Analysis of wellbeing and safeguarding data, including records of bullying and discriminatory incidents.
- Review of EHCP Annual Reviews and support plans.
- Leadership monitoring, including learning walks, observations, and monitoring of displays and resources.

13.2 Evaluation and Reporting

Findings from monitoring activities are reported to the Governing Body and shared with the school community through newsletters, the school website, and meetings.

We use data and feedback to inform policy and practice, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate successes. Where issues are identified, we develop action plans and monitor progress.

13.3 Policy Review Process

This policy is reviewed annually, involving pupils, families, staff, and governors in the process. Reviews take account of statutory changes, Ofsted guidance, best practice developments, and the evolving needs of the school community.

Feedback from stakeholders is actively sought and used to shape future policy and practice.

14.0 Roles and Responsibilities

14.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Approving and monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that statutory duties relating to equality, inclusion, and safeguarding are met.
- Holding leaders to account for the effectiveness of the school's approach to belonging.

14.2 Headteacher and Senior Leadership

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Leading the implementation of this policy and modelling inclusive values.
- Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training and support.
- Monitoring practice, analysing data, and responding to feedback.
- Ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and best practice guidance.

14.3 All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Fostering a culture of belonging and inclusion in their daily practice.
- Building positive relationships with pupils, families, and colleagues.
- Challenging discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes.
- Making reasonable adjustments and providing accessible resources.
- Participating in training and professional development.

14.4 Pupils and Families

Pupils and families are encouraged to:

- Participate actively in school life and decision-making.
- Share their views, experiences, and feedback.
- Support the school's values of respect, kindness, and inclusion.
- Work in partnership with staff to create a welcoming, inclusive community.

15.0 Communication and Accessibility

15.1 Policy Dissemination

This policy is shared with all staff, pupils, families, governors, and the wider community. It is available on the school website, in the staff handbook, and in the school office.

The policy is introduced to new staff and families as part of the induction process and is regularly referenced in assemblies, newsletters, and training sessions.

16.0 Appendices

16.1 Appendix A: Key Legislative and Statutory Requirements

- [Equality Act 2010](#) (including [Public Sector Equality Duty](#))
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#)
- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [British Sign Language Act 2022](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(2020\)](#)

16.2 Appendix B: Equality Objectives and Accessibility Plan

[School's published equality objectives and accessibility plan should be inserted here. These documents set out the school's priorities for advancing equality, removing barriers, and improving accessibility.]

16.3 Appendix C: Pupil and Parent Voice Mechanisms

- School Council structure and meeting schedule
- EHCP review process and pupil participation
- Parent forums and working groups
- Feedback and consultation processes

16.4 Appendix D: Staff Training and CPD Log

- Record of all staff training on unconscious bias, inclusion, trauma-informed practice, Deaf awareness, and safeguarding

- Schedule for ongoing professional development

16.5 Appendix E: Monitoring and Reporting Templates

- Templates for recording bullying and discriminatory incidents
- Pupil, parent, and staff feedback forms
- Participation and attendance monitoring tools

16.6 Appendix F: Specialist Guidance for Deaf Inclusion

- [National Deaf Children's Society \(NDCS\) guidance](#)
- [British Sign Language Act 2022](#) summary
- Guidance on embedding BSL and Deaf role models
- Best practice resources for Deaf inclusion

17.0 References

- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#)
- [School Admissions Code](#)
- [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#)
- [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(2020\)](#)
- [British Sign Language Act 2022](#)
- [Department for Education \(DfE\) statutory guidance](#)
- [Ofsted Education Inspection Framework \(EIF\)](#)
- [National Deaf Children's Society \(NDCS\) guidance](#)
- [Whole Education Belonging Framework](#)
- [Anna Freud Centre "Mentally Healthy Schools" resources](#)
- [National Children's Bureau \(NCB\) guidance on inclusion and participation](#)
- [Local Authority Name] guidance and policies
- [Other relevant documents as appropriate]

Related school policies

- Accessibility Plan
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- RPSHE / RSHE Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Teaching and Learning Policy