



Policy for Separation by Gender

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This policy is for Bury Grammar School

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Introduction

BGS maintained separate, single sex girls' and boys' schools until the merger of those schools in 2018. Prior to this, whilst the two schools shared the same Governing body, they each had a separate DfE number and operated autonomously from each other. This inevitably resulted in boys and girls having a different experience as the timetable, curriculum, school day, extracurricular and co-curricular provision were quite different.

From 2018 to date, the girls' and boys' schools have been organised in a Diamond Model under one DfE number 351/6008 and the inequalities in provision which existed prior to 2018 have been addressed with every aspect of school life being overseen by one SLT and one layer of middle management who continuously monitor to ensure equality of provision for boys and girls.

The school then operated a diamond model although girls and boys were taught separately between NC Y3-11 until August 2022.

From September 2022, transitional arrangements from single sex junior schools to coeducation are in place. A new primary school opened on a single site with coeducation being phased in over 12 months. In its first year NC YRS 3-5 will be taught coeducationally with Year 6 becoming coeducational from September 2023. The school considered each age group's needs carefully and decided, following careful consideration, that it advantages the pupils in Year 6 during 2022/23 to remain in the same class for a further year, given that they have a significant change in September 2023 when they move to the Senior School. Rigorous systems are in place to ensure equality of provision for boys and girls in year 6 during this transitional year. Primary Curriculum Leads and the Senior Teacher oversee planning, implementation, interim assessment data and standardised tests. In addition, Year 6 teachers meet regularly focusing on short term planning to ensure that provision for boys and girls is the same with outcomes being moderated through work scrutiny and data analysis.

Pupils are then taught in single-sex classes in Years 7-11 (Key Stages 3 and 4), with a co-educational Sixth Form (Key Stage 5).

In Years 7-11, boys and girls are taught separately. Whilst the timetables are separate, the curriculum in Years 7-11 is identical; the same subjects are provided with the same timetable allocations; all staff teach both boys and girls, and the school takes positive steps to ensure equality of provision.

Whilst academic lessons are separate, boys and girls receive co-education in the broader sense, via trips, Drama, Music, Outdoor Education, CCF, and Clubs and Societies. They are also able to mix freely before and after school, during breaktimes and lunchtimes and all staff teach both boys and girls, which is an important principle in achieving equality of provision. Indeed, the school had a pelican crossing installed on Bridge Road to ensure safe passage to and from the original boys' and girls' site.

The school is aware of a number of other independent and non-religious schools which use a similar structure.

The reason for the 2018 merger was to provide a more effective structure to support teaching and learning as well as to ensure that pupils' educational needs were better accommodated according to their age.

The school considers that the aims of the 2018 merger have been achieved and it continues to successfully strengthen academic standards for both boys and girls. The school believes these aims continue to be achieved, and that to revert to separate single sex schools would be detrimental to the education, wellbeing and development of pupils of both sexes. Equally, the structure is popular with parents with the school roll growing substantially in recent years, and during pupil focus groups suggest that they learn better in a single sex environment between years 7-11, citing that they feel better able to express themselves and less nervous of making mistakes than they might be in a coeducational class.

The purpose of this policy is to explain and justify the school's arrangements in this regard.

Policy on Gender Separation

BGS is a school which is proud to offer the best of both worlds which gives pupils a healthy, fair and positive balance between activities run with the opposite sex in which social skills are developed, and focused academic teaching in single sex groups which promote confidence and raise aspirations of both sexes.

- i. Gender separation between Year 7-11 is proportional and limited to only academic teaching and pastoral care. Although academic lessons are delivered separately for Years 7 - 11, the school does not fulfil the criteria of "strict segregation", as there are many and varied opportunities for, and contexts within which, boys and girls in Year 7-11 mix regularly. Indeed, strict segregation is far from an accurate description of what we are about: everything we say to stakeholders is about being one school, same opportunities for all, access to all teachers and all facilities, access to the same trips and extracurricular programme, same expectations and aspirations for all, led by one SLT
- ii. Within the diamond model structure, students are educated in co-educational classes up to Year 5 and again at Sixth Form. From Year 7 to Year 11 they are taught in single-sex forms and academic lessons. The separation of pupils within this age range provides measurable benefits for boys and girls through positive action to advance equality by maximising potential outcomes for all pupils and promoting equal opportunities for all pupils regardless of their sex. There is no difference in the education provision or the quality of provision. All teachers teach both boys and girls, follow the same schemes of work, resources are the same and any curriculum trips are the same. The internal quality assurance processes provide further assurance to ensure that provision is the same for both sexes and an important focus of each faculty's leadership is equality of provision.

- iii. Pastoral care is carefully planned and coordinated to ensure that provision is the same for boys and girls. Pupils in year 7-11 are assigned to forms according to their gender enabling pastoral care to be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner and challenging traditional gender stereotypes, giving pupils space to develop a strong sense of themselves and their value, and nurture the confidence to make their own choices, free of any sense that the script has been written for them.
- iv. Boys and girls are encouraged to interact socially before and after School, at break times and lunchtimes. Co-curricular activities, such as academic societies, enrichment talks, House activities and competitions, music ensembles, drama productions, the Combined Cadet Force, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and community service, involve boys and girls engaged in interacting and learning together in a broad educational setting. This is an important characteristic of pupil life at BGS and the benefits of interaction between the genders are advantages we actively promote and highlight
- v. Every effort is made to ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of sport. Where appropriate and permitted by national sports' governing bodies, pupils may experience single sex sport in a gender affected activity (eg Rugby and Football) where the physical strength, stamina, or physique of the average girl (or boy) would put her (or him) at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or girl). In sports which are not gender affected teams may be mixed (eg Cricket). The taught PE curriculum is the same for girls and boys supported by a wide range of extracurricular sporting activities which are mixed except for where they are required to compete separately or where they are participating in a gender affected activity.
- vi. During years 7-11, pupils are taught the same compulsory subjects, and have the same choice of optional subjects in Years 9-11. We ensure that any optional subject or subject combination offered to pupils of one sex is available to pupils of the other sex.
- vii. Extra classes, work clinics, revision lessons, special educational needs interventions, initiatives, are available in all years equally to both boys and girls and are arranged co-educationally, subject to need. When choosing GCSE and Sixth Form subject options, we encourage our pupils to pursue their interests and talents especially in subjects where national rates of participation by girls or boys are disproportionately low.
- viii. Teachers teaching single-sex classes take care to not propagate gender stereotypes through their teaching and are expected to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equality through their teaching. The school monitors the equality of provision and the quality of education through its quality assurance school review processes and staff training is used to underpin these principles.
- ix. The school ensures that resources are allocated proportionately to both sexes, for example in terms of infrastructure, facilities, staffing, such that neither boys nor girls suffer detriment.
- x. Male and female students in the Sixth Form receive teaching together in lessons and participate together in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (with exception of competitive sports where the sports' governing body does not permit this).

Rationale for separating pupils by gender between NC Year 7 – 11

In developing this rationale, governors, senior leaders, middle leaders, staff, and pupils have been involved in discussions and in addition, this policy has been communicated to parents. This policy is kept under annual review.

BGS is a school which is proud to offer the best of both worlds which gives pupils a healthy, fair and positive balance between activities run with the opposite sex in which social skills are developed, and focussed academic teaching in single sex groups which promote confidence and raise aspirations of both sexes.

The diamond model whereby pupils in Years 7– 11 are taught academic lessons separately provides measurable benefits through positive action to advance equality as set out below, whilst allowing pupils the benefits of mixing socially and participating in extracurricular activities together.

The school believes that the diamond model of separate academic teaching within the curriculum and pastoral care for Years 7-11, enables boys and girls to overcome any disadvantage in cognitive development accruing from being educated together.

The school is proportionate in its application of gender separation applying it only where there is a clear advantage to doing so, in this case limiting it purely to academic lessons and taught PE.

The School's Gender Separation Audit document sets out in detail, the research and evidence underpinning the School's Gender Separation Policy.

i. Promoting pupil achievement

The main benefits for operating the diamond model of education are in its ability to tailor pastoral and academic provision more sensitively and expertly to the differing education and pastoral needs of boys and girls resulting in better outcomes when taught separately than taught in a coeducational setting. The disadvantage overcome in this instance is less favourable exam results of pupils taught in co-ed schools. Our pupils perform exceptionally well at GCSE following the curriculum being taught separately for Years 7-11.

Single sex education within our diamond model allows teaching to be more specific to needs, enabling the attainment gap to be narrowed between girls and boys, maximising outcomes for all pupils.

At half-termly intervals the attainment and attitude to learning data is analysed for several different groups including sex, SEND, AGT and EAL. Tailored interventions targeted at individuals are agreed by the academic and pastoral teams and pupils are supported. Interventions are tailored with individual needs in mind and in some cases may have an element of tailoring depending on the sex and/or age group of the pupil in question.

Our systems have been tailored to enable analysis by sex and academic middle management are challenged on the consistency of reporting between different groups and any clear differences are investigated and addressed.

The school believes that pastoral care often involves dealing with sensitive gendered issues as young people navigate the physical, emotional and social upheaval of adolescence. This can be done more sensitively resulting in better outcomes when boys and girls are separate.

The school believes that single sex teaching promotes greater educational achievement within both cohorts as teaching can be tailored more effectively to meet specific needs, indeed separation inherently promotes equality in terms of educational outcomes. In doing so it promotes equality of opportunity for boys and girls, in part by ensuring different needs of boys and girls may be met more appropriately.

Analysis by the CEM Centre at Durham University shows that girls in single-sex girls' schools have a value-added performance on average 0.1 grades better per GCSE than girls in coeducation; and boys in single-sex boys' schools have a value-added performance on average 0.15 grades better per GCSE than boys in coeducation.

ii. Promoting young people's welfare, confidence and self-esteem

The diamond model enables us to tailor pastoral care more sensitively and expertly to the differing needs of boys and girls as they navigate the teenage journey. There are different rates of incidence of mental health conditions for boys and girls. Our tailored support enables us to deal with these more sensitively, resulting in better outcomes for all our pupils when boys and girls are separate.

Our diamond structure enables us to focus on the well-being and individual needs of every pupil in our care, helping them expand their horizons and understand the positive influence that they can have in wider society. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and take risks and our structure reassures pupils that they can develop at a pace that is right for their own talents and individual needs boosting their confidence, self-esteem and ability to forge new relationships with their peers.

Central to this is a pupil's happiness and their ability to be comfortable in their own skin and this is supported through the provision of excellent pastoral care.

Our internal safeguarding and welfare monitoring system confirms that our pupils, both boys and girls experience fewer instances of poor mental health compared to national norms.

This affirms that the structure of the school affords pupils better outcomes in terms of pupil mental health and wellbeing and this evidence justifies the separation on the basis of positive action. The care of pupils is advantaged by the segregation of boys and girls during the academic time of each day. This data corroborates staff, pupil and parent feedback.

iii. Promoting equality

The School's diamond model breaks down the stereotyping of subjects as being seen more suited to girls or boys, encouraging girls to be active in science and boys in the humanities and creative arts whilst the same curriculum is taught to both.

Indeed, since the curriculum review carried out at the merger of the two single sex schools in 2018, girls and boys follow an identical curriculum and do not learn to perceive subjects as being more suited to either girls or boys. This has the impact of widening academic choices for both girls and boys in terms of subjects pursued at A-Level, ensuring representation is less biased by gender stereotypes than would otherwise be the case.

There is less pressure to follow gender roles; all pupils can be who they wish to be and follow whatever path they wish to, without the pressure of social stereotypes and expectation of what is considered to be the norm or what is acceptable, so girls can be engineers and boys can pursue performing arts.

Some subjects such as Physics and Computer Science are typically more gender biased in terms of uptake, but this is not the case at BGS. There are actually more girls than boys taking these subjects in some cases, meaning that the current structure might actually be allowing these pupils to access subjects that they would not usually consider. Pupils succeed in these subjects in the single sex environment and so, with confidence, carry on with these studies into the Sixth Form.

The Diamond model ensures that pupils can be taught age appropriately, in a way that best suits their gender while ensuring they share the same core Bury Grammar School values and ethos

Ensuring proportionality of gender separation

The school has considered whether the means by which the positive action is undertaken is proportionate, and whether other options may achieve these ends which do not require the same level of segregation.

The school has also considered other means of by which it could provide an education with less segregation such as a fully coeducational model between Year 7 – 11. However, this would mean that the positive action benefits in respect of tailoring provision, widening academic choice, promoting better academic outcomes and avoiding gender stereotypes would be significantly reduced or lost.

Therefore, the School's conclusion is that the practicable alternatives are:

- i. De-amalgamating and the re-registration of BGS as two separate schools, a boys' school and a girls' school – in which there would be two options:
 - the Girls School to have a co-educational Sixth Form, to which the boys have right of access – however under this model boys would suffer detriment, by virtue of having to enter space designated as 'girls', which we prefer to avoid.
 - A segregated Sixth Form – but this model contains the disadvantage, in respect of the total segregation of separate single sex schools, and in respect of the restricted academic choices which would be a consequence of fewer pupils in each subject and restricted social and extracurricular opportunities.

De-amalgamation would have an economic impact through the loss of economy of scale (resources, more middle and senior managers) and potentially the loss of equality of subject offering as budgets for each school are run separately. This would impact negatively on pupils and in the opinion of the school have a detrimental impact.

- ii. Continuing with the Diamond model currently employed, noting the reduced segregation this implies, and the greater opportunities to prepare all pupils effectively for life in contemporary British Society, than would exist in two single sex schools.

The school believes that its current structure results in a better education for pupils of both sexes, and that to revert to separate single sex schools would be detrimental to the education, wellbeing, and development of pupils of both sexes.

Measures employed to ensure equality of provision

Governor & SLT oversight

The school's structure and the impact of the Gender Separation Policy are a standing item on every Directorate and SLT meeting. In addition, this Gender Separation Policy is reviewed annually by the School's Governing Body.

Where necessary, appropriate action is taken promptly to ensure equality of opportunity and experience amongst pupils.

Listening to parents and pupils

The school regularly seeks the views of pupils during pupil focus groups. Such discussions have enabled the school to reach a conclusion that pupils currently prefer the diamond model of education, they enjoy learning in single sex environments but equally enjoy the opportunities to socialise and enjoy extracurricular activities together.

The school surveys parents each year and currently parents seem content with the diamond model of education and feel that their children learn best when taught in a single sex environment.

School operations

The SLT meets to discuss day to day school operations and calendar events every fortnight which provides the opportunity to monitor school provision such as trips and other extracurricular activities and ensure that provision for girls and boys in Years 6-11 are the same. Equality and pupil academic and pastoral outcomes are a key focus of all meetings.

Quality assurance

Risk Assessment

The school will maintain and keep under regular review, the risk assessment within this policy to identify and record the measures to be taken to mitigate the risk of unintended consequences which may arise through gender separation.

This risk assessment is set out at **appendix A**.

Appendix A: Risk Assessment

Aim:

- To ensure appropriate steps have been taken to ensure equality of provision.
- To mitigate the unintended consequences of single sex teaching and pastoral care.

Schools are required to ensure that provision is equal in quality and nature such that the remediation of disadvantage does not result in inequality of provision. The school acknowledges this risk, and actively takes steps to assess and monitor to ensure that equality of provision is maintained.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>The risk of pupils being disadvantaged through the curriculum available</p>	<p>There is an identical curriculum for girls and boys (with the exception of competitive sports, where the physical strength, stamina or physique of an average pupil of one sex would place him or her at a disadvantage compared to an average pupil of the other sex). All academic options are available to both girls and boys, and the Curriculum Policy includes a clear procedure for the contingency in which an academic option became available at only at the boys' or girls' school as a result of the number of pupils opting for it.</p> <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each academic department has a single head overseeing the curriculum taught to boys and girls; • boys and girls are taught the same subjects and curriculum by the same teachers; • teachers teach in every part of school; • pupils' attention is drawn to the principles of equality as we encourage them to cast a critical eye at the equal (or not) nature of our provision • the school actively and promptly acts on pupil voice where genuine potential examples of inequalities are found • equal resources devoted to boys and girls • boys and girls equally likely to study set texts on typically 'male' and 'female' topics <p>One set of Heads of Faculty who lead one set of Heads of Department.</p> <p>Academic competitions simultaneously open to both boys and girls The school does not separate boys and girls on any grounds other than classroom teaching. All extra-curricular activities (with the exception of sport) are run as co-educational activities and pupils are allowed to mix freely at break and lunchtime with the exception that they may not meet in each others form rooms.</p> <p>All pupils have equal access to academic enrichment such as HPQ, EPQ (Extended Project Qualification), competitions, study skills days and Friday Activities.</p>

	<p>Trips and visits are offered equally to all pupils regardless of gender. Boys and girls receive the same opportunity to experience off site culturally enriching experiences. In some cases, boys and girls may travel on separate visits based on academic subject or pastoral limitations (e.g., Year 9 Geography trip). However, the same experience is offered to all pupils.</p>
<p>The risk of pupils being disadvantaged owing to access to different teachers.</p>	<p>This is not a risk.</p> <p>There is one teaching staff and one set of Heads of Department across the Senior Boys’ and Senior Girls’ Schools. Pupils have the same teachers across the Boys’ School and the Girls’ School and there is one of everything for each faculty/department, not two. For example, there is one Head of Faculty, one Head of Department and one budget across both schools. Clinics and academic workshops are co-educational, as well as all trips.</p>
<p>The risk of Careers Education encouraging pupils to pursue gendered courses and careers</p>	<p>Through its Careers programme, the school provides accurate, up-to-date careers guidance for all pupils in Year 7 – 11, presented in an impartial manner enabling pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helping to encourage them to fulfil their potential (paragraph 2(e) of the ISSRs (Independent School Standards Regulations))</p> <p>Analysis of university and other destinations is undertaken to identify negative trends which is addressed by the risk assessment.</p>
<p>The risk of single sex delivery of PSHE / RSE resulting in less respectful attitudes towards the opposite sex</p>	<p>Through the School’s broad-based curriculum in general terms, and specifically through the PSHE and RSE (Personal Development) programme, as well as through various extra-curricular activities, the School prepares all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraph 2(i) of the ISSRs) and actively promotes principles that encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (Paragraph 5(b)(vi) of the ISSRs).</p> <p>Mutual respect is at the core of school life. We encourage all children to take responsibility for their behaviour and contribute positively to the school and local community. We encourage children to have respect for others with particular regard to the Protected Characteristics as outlined in the 2010 Act, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. age, b. disability, c. gender reassignment, d. marriage and civil partnership, e. pregnancy and maternity, f. race, g. religion and belief, h. sex and sexual orientation.

	<p>The following are examples of the opportunities used to promote an understanding of mutual respect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The PSHEE curriculum with the RSE component ensures that pupils understand the importance of mutual respect – especially with regard to protected characteristics. b. The School’s Anti-bullying policy ensures that all forms of abuse and discrimination are dealt with robustly and where appropriate, support and education provided to individuals and groups. c. Through the assembly programme and Votes for Schools, topics such as International Women’s Day, Black History Month, Pride are discussed and celebrated. d. Outside speakers from all faiths come into school to speak to pupils. e. Throughout the year the School is visited by various members of the wider community – for example visitors have included journalists, medical professionals, police, war veterans, the fire brigade and many more. f. The School’s library contents, and teaching resources have been selected to ensure that pupils have access to ideas from a range of different faiths and backgrounds. g. BGS Pride is the School’s LGBTQ+ society which is open to all pupils regardless of sexual orientation. It gives a voice and identity to part of our community which previously was under-represented. h. The School has active Equality Committees, in the Senior and Junior Schools, made up of staff and pupils.
<p>The risk of pupils being disadvantaged owing to access to different facilities.</p>	<p>Boys and girls also have equal access to the same areas of the estate.</p>
<p>The risk of different assemblies resulting in different messages.</p>	<p>Whilst girls and boys do have separate assemblies, the same people deliver the same assemblies in both schools and themes are coordinated by the pastoral team. The main reason all pupils do not currently have assemblies together is essentially down to capacity and space, as there is not a hall big enough to fit all boys and girls in together</p> <p>From September 2022, assemblies will go back onto a two-week cycle, where boys and girls will have separate assemblies in week one, whereas week two will be held in key stages, with both boys and girls together.</p>

<p>The risk of pupils being unable to develop into socially confident individuals with peers of the opposite gender.</p>	<p>Gender separation is limited only to where it is reasonably believed to achieve an advantage which we currently limit to academic lessons and pastoral care. At all other times pupils are encouraged to socialise freely including in extracurricular and co-curricular activities.</p>
<p>Boys and girls do not get to work practically/ perform with pupils of the opposite gender in Drama classes.</p>	<p>We mitigate this by offering mixed gender extra-curricular opportunities such as whole school production, National Theatre Connections and KS3 Drama clubs.</p>
<p>The risk that boys and girls do not have the opportunity to participate equally in pupil voice activities</p>	<p>There are multiple ways in which the school seeks the views of all pupils through for example, focus groups, sports committees, school council, BGS Pride Group and the Equality Committee. The school is extremely careful to ensure that boys and girls are equally represented insofar as it is possible to do so.</p>
<p>The risk of pupils who are transitioning being treated less favourably</p>	<p>In consultation with the school and their parents, a transgender pupil may transfer from Girls' School to Boys' School or vice versa, without having formally to leave and re-enter a separate school (as defined by the DfE number). The school will take a pupil-centred approach and work to enable the pupil to transfer schools at the moment that is in pupil's best interests; the pupil's needs and desires will be taken into account. The pupil will be able to move to identical schemes of work and programmes of study, from a boys' class to a girls' class, or vice versa, with no interruption in learning.</p>
<p>The risk of single sex curriculum PE resulting in gendered participation</p>	<p>Section 195 of the Act contains an exception, which permits single-sex sports. It applies to participation in a "gender-affected activity". A "gender-affected activity" is a sport, game, or other activity of a competitive nature in circumstances where the physical strength, stamina, or physique of the average girl (or boy) would put her (or him) at a disadvantage in competition with the average boy (or girl). Girls and boys will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable activities and the school ensures that the experience is comparable and receives comparable resources.</p>
<p>The risk of teachers, parents and pupils viewing, addressing and treating each sex differently because we separate them.</p>	<p>The school recognises this potential risk and mitigates through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff induction, training and briefings with an emphasis on ensuring equality of provision within the taught curriculum and extracurricular activities; • continual dialogue with pupils and staff to: • raise awareness of the impact of language in shaping thought, and • continually using critical thinking skills to evaluate what we see around us • Regularly surveying parents concerning their views on diamond model v coeducational • Ensuring information provided to parents enables them to make an informed choices about the diamond model of education and where their daughters/sons are educated

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• regular reviews of opportunities for boys and girls to educational, co-curricular and social / recreational interaction
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