

# Equality and Diversity Policy



<b>Last Reviewed by:</b>	Jude Hickey
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<b>Headteacher:</b>	Rebecca Thompson

# Highfield School Equality & Diversity Policy

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# 1. Introduction

## What is the equality duty?

Previously public bodies were bound by three sets of duties to promote disability, race and gender equality. In April 2011 these were replaced by a single public sector equality duty (PSED) or the equality duty. (See: Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance for Schools – Equality and Human Rights Commission). This new duty extends to all the aspects of a person's identity – known as 'protected characteristics' – that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These include race, disability, gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

The equality duty has two main parts: the 'general' equality duty and 'specific duties'.

The general equality duty sets out the equality matters that schools need to consider when making decisions that affect pupils or staff with different protected characteristics. This duty has three elements. In carrying out their functions public bodies are required to have 'due regard' when making decisions and developing policies, to the need to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is defined further in the Equality Act 2010 as having due regard to the need to:

1. Remove or minimise disadvantages
2. Take steps to meet different needs
3. Encourage participation when it is disproportionately low. In order to help schools meet the general equality duty, there are two specific duties that they are required to carry out.

These are:

- To publish information to demonstrate how they are complying with the equality duty
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives.

They will need to update the published information at least annually and publish objectives at least once every four years

For a school, having 'due regard' means:

- When making a decision or taking an action a school must assess whether it may have implications for people with particular protected characteristics.
- It should consider equality implications before and at the time that it develops policy and takes decisions; not as an afterthought, and it needs to keep them under review.
- The equality duty has to be integrated into the carrying out of a school's functions. The analysis necessary to comply with the duty should be carried out rigorously and with an open mind

The equality duty supports good education and improves pupil outcomes. It helps a school to identify priorities such as underperformance, poor progression, and bullying. It does this by requiring it to collate evidence, take a look at the issues and consider taking action to improve the experience of different groups of pupils. It then helps it to focus on what can be done to tackle these issues and to improve outcomes by developing measurable equality objectives.

Highfield School is committed to promoting and achieving equality of opportunity for all students, parents, staff, governors and visitors. **We believe that all people are of equal value and are entitled to equality of opportunity irrespective of age, ability, disability, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, social class, appearance or sexual orientation.**

## 2. Values and Principles

This policy is underpinned by our ethos statement (above) and also the values, principles and standards stated below:

- equality and social justice
- acknowledging and valuing diversity
- respect for others
- compliance with equal opportunities legislation
- elimination of all forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination
- active challenge to stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes and unfair discriminatory behaviour
- commitment to inclusive education which enables and supports all pupils to develop their full potential
- commitment to the positive development of all
- accountability for compliance with this policy by all members of the Highfield School community

### Objectives

We aim to achieve this by:

- Treating all those within the whole school community (e.g. pupils, staff, governors, parents) and wider community as individuals with their own particular abilities, beliefs, challenges, attitudes, background and experiences
- Creating a school ethos which promotes race equality, develops understanding and challenges myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices.
- Encouraging everyone within our school community to gain a positive self-image and high self-esteem.
- Having high expectations of everyone involved with the whole school.
- Promoting mutual respect and valuing each other's similarities and differences and facing equality issues openly.
- Identifying and removing all practices, procedures and customs which are

discriminatory and replacing them with practices which are fair to all.

- Endeavour to ensure diversity in the staff body and in leadership roles.
- Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all of the above to secure continuous improvement in all that we do.

## **Communication**

We will take active steps to communicate this Equalities Policy to all pupils, parents & carers, staff, governors and all partners who support Highfield School.

## **3. Making Reasonable Adjustments**

A key element of meeting the Equality Duty for Highfield School is ensuring that we make Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Schools and education authorities have had a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils since 2002 (originally under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) and, from October 2010, under the Equality Act 2010).

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission has published updated guidance for Schools on the duty to make reasonable adjustments the guidance includes the following sections:

- What is the reasonable adjustments duty?
- Who does the duty apply to?
- What is meant by 'substantial disadvantage'?
- What does the duty cover?
- What is meant by 'reasonable' steps and factors to be taken into account?

## **Key Principles**

1. We find unacceptable any attitude or behaviour which may result in anyone feeling disrespected, undervalued and unsupported. Such behaviours may include:
  - insults, name calling, jokes ('banter') or comments relating to those with different protected characteristics; and
  - sharing images which may offend or foster negative perceptions of those with different protected characteristics;
2. Action will be taken against individuals that display behaviour that is incompatible with this policy.
3. Everyone should all take special care to record and pronounce each other's names correctly, and to respect everyone's religious and cultural traditions and practices (e.g. clothing, diet and special times/days of worship and celebrations).
4. Everyone should all be aware that our expectations and behaviour affect the attitude, achievement and status of all those around us.

5. This policy will be considered when assessing all resources and activities, including classroom resources and materials, the appropriateness of out of school venues and activities, the recruitment and induction of staff and volunteers.
6. Furthermore, all Highfield School self-evaluation activities will consider equalities (e.g. ensuring that all pupil groups achieve to their potential).
7. It is the duty of everyone to challenge and/or report any discriminatory or disrespectful behaviour.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

This equalities policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved and connected with the Highfield School, so that each individual knows what is expected of them. Promoting equality and raising the achievement of all pupils is the responsibility of everyone.

### **Governors**

The governing body of Highfield School has agreed this policy and will assess and monitor the impact of this policy. It will also ensure that equality is promoted in all policies and is referenced in Highfield School Development Plan. The Governing Body will ensure that specific and measurable equality objectives are set at least every 4 years.

The Governing Body will receive progress reports from the Principal and other school staff on a termly basis, as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.

One member of the Governing Body will have responsibility for monitoring this policy, acting as the designated governor for Equalities.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will demonstrate through personal leadership the importance of this policy. She/he will ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy and will ensure that staff receive equalities training annually

The Headteacher will ensure that information that demonstrates our compliance with the Equality Duty is updated at least annually.

The Headteacher will assess and monitor the impact of the policy and devise strategies, as appropriate, via action planning as part of the Highfield School development planning process.

Outcomes will be reviewed in relation to the plan, and reported to the governing body on a termly basis as part of the Headteacher's report.

Where additional funding is available for raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils, the Headteacher will ensure that the additional resources are used appropriately and targeted on the basis of identified need for this purpose.

### **Leadership Team**

The Leadership Team will be responsible for reviewing and monitoring curriculum policies and ensuring that equality is promoted in all aspects of our provision.

### **Teachers and Higher Level Teaching Assistants**

Teachers will familiarise themselves with this policy and know what their responsibilities are

to ensure that the policy is implemented. They will know the implications of the policy for their planning, teaching and learning strategies as well as for personal support for pupils.

**Classroom-based Support Staff, Administrative Staff, Ancillary Staff and members of Facilities Team.**

All staff will familiarise themselves with this policy and know what their responsibilities are in ensuring that it is implemented.

**Pupils**

Pupils will be encouraged to share in the development of the race equality policy and be made aware of how it applies to them. They will learn to treat each other with respect (e.g. via UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award and the PSCHE curriculum) and report incidents of a discriminatory nature to trusted adult/member of staff.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be led by the Headteacher and the Equalities Governor.

## **5. Highfield School – Equalities Policy Appendix 1**

### **How do we know? Prompts for policy review**

#### ***Pupils – Achievement and Personal Development & Well Being***

- Do all our pupils achieve as much as they can, and do they all get the most from what is on offer, based on their individual needs?
- Which groups of pupils are not achieving as much as they can? Why not?
- What do we have to do to ensure all pupils achieve as much as they can?
- What are our exclusion figures? What is being done to reduce them? Is there a higher proportion of pupils from a minority group that have been excluded?
- How many pupils leave us without access to employment, education or training? Is there a higher proportion of pupils from a minority group that are in this category?
- What does the Behaviour Data tell us? Are we providing the right support for all our pupils?
- How many racist incidents of this are there each term? What are we doing to stop it? Are our actions working?)
- What about bullying? Are we dealing with it effectively?

#### ***Curriculum, teaching and learning***

- How inclusive is our curriculum? Does it reflect the diversity of the social, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of our pupils?
- To what extent does it match the needs and interests of the pupils?

#### ***Leadership and Management***

- How do staff (and partners) feel about working in Highfield School (e.g. do they state that there is equality of opportunity for them?)
- To what extent does our staff profile reflect the diversity of our community?
- Do all staff have equal access to training and professional development opportunities?
- Are there particular groups of staff that exit our employment at a higher rate than others?
- Are there staff from a particular group that are hindered in their career progression?
- How many complaints/grievances have been lodged? Do they come largely from a particular group of staff? Are they dealt with satisfactorily?
- Does the membership of the Governing Body reflect the diverse make-up of our pupil population and wider society?
- Are parents and carers from ethnic minorities as involved in the education of their children as other parents? What about those of other disadvantaged backgrounds? What are we doing to engage all parents & carers.



