

EQUALITY POLICY

Policy reviewed and updated	21/11/2023
Date of next review	20/11/2027
This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review in order to reflect changes in legislation where appropriate	

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It has consolidated this legislation to provide a single source of discrimination law.

Rationale

For the purposes of this policy the terms “inclusive”, “inclusively” or “inclusion” refers to individuals that could be treated with less equality than others due to their protected characteristics. These individuals form part of our community of staff, students, parents, visitors, and we will not tolerate racism, sexism, and homophobia relating to gender /transgender/gender reassignment or sexual orientation; prejudicial attitudes towards ethnicity, culture, religion, belief, special educational need/disability, social background, marriage or civil partnership status, bullying and any other oppressive behaviour. We will avail opportunities to all regardless of ability, age, gender, pregnancy and maternity and ethnic or social background.

Discrimination in any form is actively discouraged and students are encouraged to show respect for themselves, others and the community they are in. We recognise the important role which school plays in helping to form attitudes and values in young people and will actively promote anti-discriminatory behaviour and work to prevent anti-social behaviours.

We actively endeavour to provide teaching and learning environments which are free of discrimination. Education is about maximising opportunities for personal growth and fulfilment. Opportunities will be available to all inclusively. These opportunities are secured through positive action by the School and its community.

We seek to close the gap between the achievements of different groups of young people so that all have equal opportunities in their adult life and empower them in all areas of life to contribute purposefully to society. This is fully reflected in our School’s vision and values, which seeks to promote good relationships between everyone in the School community, building an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and confidence.

Aims

At Harefield we are committed to the following aspects of equality:

- to ensure high quality education for all students
- the School has high expectations of all students
- to support the positive development of personal and cultural loyalties and identities, preparing students for full participation in society
- to promote the principles of equality, respect, fairness and justice for all
- to develop universal values and citizenship by celebrating cultural diversity and supporting students in developing a positive self-image
- to provide students with equal access to the full range of learning opportunities

- to promote good relations between people of different racial groups, challenging stereotyping, prejudice and acting promptly to remove any forms of direct or indirect discrimination
- to ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve

Objectives

- To use performance data to monitor student achievement and respond to variations between groups of learners, subjects, courses and key stages. In particular we will seek to further improve the progress made by boys at GCSE whilst ensuring that the progress of girls continues to be promoted.
- To foster good relations between different groups through the use of assemblies, Religious Studies and the Personal Development programme.
- Through a student Equality Group, seek to involve the community in promoting equality and eliminating discrimination.
- To challenge stereotypes that can deny opportunities to students through option and careers guidance and to track options choices that students make.
- To further develop student and staff wellbeing and positive mental health.
- To promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the staff body. This will be achieved in several ways, including promoting flexible working, transparency in the gender pay gap and training for staff to eliminate any unconscious bias in recruitment.

The Role of the Head Teacher is to:

- ensure that School's policies take account of equal opportunities
- implement and review the School's Equality policy
- ensure that all members of the School community are aware of and implement the policy
- ensure that the policy is implemented with regard to staff selection and appointments
- take seriously reports of discrimination from parents, students or staff by investigating them and ensuring that appropriate action is taken
- ensure that information with regard to sensitive personal data is collected and entered into the School Management Information System and that this information is used as part of the monitoring of equality of opportunity in line with the Data Protection Act

Specifically this includes ensuring:

- cover for absent colleagues is fairly distributed
- requests for leave of absence are consistently met
- duties are fairly allocated
- non-contact time is distributed as per the recommended formula
- workload expectations are reasonable
- interviewing procedures adhere to safer recruitment procedures
- equal access to professional development is provided
- pay and conditions are implemented as per School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document
- monitoring curriculum planning
- monitoring school procedures and organisation
- undertaking initiatives to improve provision for all students
- create an environment which affirms and supports ethnic, cultural, religious and social diversity and effectively promotes good personal, community and race relations

The role of the Head of Department

When designing schemes of work, this policy will act as a guide both in their choice of topics for study and in how to approach sensitive issues:

- to ensure opportunities are provided in curriculum content to promote students' understanding of different environments and societies other than their own
- when devising curriculum policies and selecting resources all staff will ensure that teaching materials are non-discriminatory

- to provide balance in themes or topics and planned learning experiences, taking into account the interest of both boys and girls
- to implement strategies to raise levels of achievement, aspirations and self-esteem in all students

The Role of the Teacher

The teacher has a crucial role in providing for equal opportunities and enabling students to develop universal values that encompass the principles of equality, respect, fairness and justice.

- the class teacher will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect
- teachers do not discriminate against any child
- when selecting classroom materials, teachers pay due regard to the sensitivities of all members of the class and make every effort to provide material that is inclusive
- the class teacher will choose learning styles and teaching strategies that avoid gender bias and stereotyping and that also reflect the nature of our diverse society
- will use teaching styles, methods, language, questioning and classroom management that includes and engages students

Whole School Application

a. Admissions

- the school has an inclusive admissions policy.

b. Registration

- school lists are organised chronologically or alphabetically, not by group (unless this is required by an outside agency for a particular purpose)
- students' names will be accurately recorded and correctly pronounced. Students should be encouraged to accept and respect names from other cultures

c. Curriculum

All students have access to the School's curriculum. Staff are aware of how their own expectations affect the achievements, behaviour and status of each student. The curriculum is balanced, objective and meets the needs of all students.

d. School and Classroom Organisation

- equality will be considered when grouping students for activities. This may involve special specific groupings to ensure that every child participates fully
- each child will be given opportunities to exercise responsibility within the classroom or the School, with care taken regarding stereotyping of roles.

e. Resources

The School's aim is to inclusively provide for all students. In selecting curriculum resources, staff should aim to present positive images that are diverse. Students should be presented with accurate information about similarities and differences between cultural groups.

- books and resources are checked before use to ensure that they are inclusive in nature and do not give stereotypical or oversimplified views
- when choosing new materials we seek balance in the representation of the sexes and minority groups, looking for positive role models in stories and settings
- language used in resources is monitored for bias so that we do not promote negative or derogatory images
- display materials and illustrations reflect the diversity of our society where appropriate and show positive situations and roles

f. Strategies for positive reinforcement of good behaviour, rather than giving a high profile to students who are misbehaving, including:

- use of praise, certificates and rewards
- clear and concise School rules, phrased in terms that the students can understand
- all students need to understand that name-calling, bullying or biased attitudes and behaviour are unacceptable in our School

- changing groupings for specific tasks, so that students have opportunities to join in co-operative activities with different people
- creativity and role-play, including acting out feelings or conflicts, in order that students can see why their behaviour is unacceptable and be encouraged to change their attitudes
- visits and contact with people from the fullest possible diversity within our society
- recognition and praise for all forms of achievement from all students

g. Personnel and staffing issues

The School affords equal treatment to all its employees and prospective employees. The aim of this policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives treatment that is not inclusive and that they are not disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. Selection and promotion criteria will be kept under continuing review to ensure that individuals are selected and promoted on the basis of their relative merits, having agreed to the need of the specific job. Where possible, training will be given to enable employees to have an opportunity of promotion and progression according to their potential.

h. All staff

- all our staff will challenge incidents of prejudice or discrimination
- serious incidents are recorded and reported to the attention of the Head Teacher or designated member of the Leadership Group
- all staff will support the work of other colleagues and intervene in a positive way against any occurrence of discrimination

Action in Cases of Discrimination by Students

All staff must challenge incidents of prejudice or discrimination. Incidents are to be recorded using a Record of Incident Form and reported to their line manager who is responsible for reporting to the most appropriate staff member.

Serious Incidents

If a student or a group of students is found to be in breach of the Equality policy, the School will apply an appropriate sanction as outlined in the School's Behaviour for Learning policy which will be recorded in the student's file.

The following sanctions may be used:

- detention
- fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

Discrimination by Staff

Staff are required to adhere to the School's Equality policy. The complaints procedure will be invoked if it is found that the Equality policy has not been adhered to. Disciplinary action may follow in line with the School's Disciplinary policy.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher or designated member of the LG to ensure that there is a procedure in place to monitor and evaluate:

- the progress of students of all groups compared to the progress made by other students in the School
- the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post is discriminated against
- behaviour incident forms and exclusions to ensure that students from minority groups are not unfairly treated
- the impact of additional support on standards achieved

Access and Disability

The School has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to provide access to the site and its facilities or to

have a plan to do so. Harefield School is committed to ensuring that all reasonable adjustments and alterations are made to ensure that no students with a disability is disadvantaged compared to students without a disability.

In order to monitor whether the School can meet the needs of a student, parents are requested to inform the school of whether a student has a disability, special educational need or medical condition. The School may also take advice and arrange for assessments.

Where it is practicable, reasonable adjustments are made to enable a student to be admitted. The Head Teacher or designated member of the LG is responsible for:

- reviewing the School's policy, procedure and facilities with regard to the admissions, physical layout of the School and its facilities, access to the curriculum and extracurricular activities
- drawing up a disability plan as part of the School's Strategic Development Plan which makes recommendations to improve accessibility

To meet the requirements of the above the LG will:

- assess and monitor the impact of the Equality policy on students, staff, and parents, in particular the attainment levels and participation of students from different groups
- record incidents of discrimination and respond to them in the most appropriate way
- review the policy on an annual basis

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

- Behaviour for Learning policy
- Teaching and Learning policy
- Special Educational Needs policy
- Child protection and Safeguarding policies
- Curriculum policy
- Staff Disciplinary policy
- Relevant DFE Legislation

APPENDIX

Annex 1: Explanation of Discrimination

Discrimination is unlawful and can be identified as direct/indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The term "protected characteristics" is used as a convenient way to refer to the categories to which the law applies.

- **Direct discrimination** occurs when one person treats another less favourably, because of a protected characteristic, than they treat – or would treat – other people. This describes the most clear-cut and obvious examples of discrimination – for example if a school were to refuse to let a pupil be a prefect because she is a lesbian
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a "provision, criterion or practice" is applied generally but has the effect of putting people with a particular characteristic at a disadvantage when compared to people without that characteristic. An example might be holding a parents' meeting on a Friday evening, which could make it difficult for observant Jewish parents to attend. It is a defence against a claim of indirect discrimination if it can be shown to be "a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim". This means both that the reason for the rule or practice is legitimate, and that it could not reasonably be achieved in a different way which did not discriminate
- **Harassment** has a specific legal definition in the Act - it is "unwanted conduct, related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person". This covers unpleasant and bullying behaviour, but potentially extends also to actions which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, cause offence to a person because of a protected characteristic
- **Victimisation** occurs when a person is treated less favourably than they otherwise would have been because of something they have done ("a protected act") in connection with the Act. A protected act might involve, for example, making an allegation of discrimination or bringing a case under the Act, or supporting another person's complaint by giving evidence or information, but it includes anything that is done under or in connection with the Act. Even if what a person did or said was incorrect or misconceived, for example based on a misunderstanding of the situation or of what the law provides, they are protected against retaliation unless they were acting in bad faith. The reason for this is to ensure that people are not afraid to raise genuine concerns about discrimination because of fear of retaliation

Annex 2: Examples of incidents requiring serious response

- a physical assault against a person or group because of ethnicity
- verbal abuse, derogatory name calling, insults, threats, racist jokes; racist graffiti
- issuing/wearing of racist materials e.g. leaflets, magazines, insignia
- inciting others to behave in a racist manner
- making racist comments or suggestions in the course of discussions or lessons
- refusing to cooperate with colleagues or students because of colour or ethnic origin
- excluding students from activities, or recruiting and selecting in preferential ways
- physical abuse against a person or group because of their gender
- verbal abuse and intimidation, insults, threats against a person or group, because of their gender
- using lurid or suggestive vocabulary to cause offence or humiliation
- making sexist comments
- refusing to cooperate with colleagues or students because of their gender
- physical assault against an individual because of his/her disability
- verbal abuse, intimidation, insults, threats against the individual because of his or her disability
- offensive reference to an individual's disability
- refusing to cooperate with an individual because of his/her disability