

Public Sector Equality Duty Policy



Highfields Primary School - Public Sector Equality Duty Policy

Mission Statement

Highfields Primary School's mission is to be of service to our children and all people in our local community, irrespective of their race, religion, ability, gender or ethnic background. To that end, we aim to offer a high-quality and enjoyable learning environment that is underpinned by strong moral beliefs and values.

We believe that everyone is unique and therefore encourage all members of our community to value and develop their own gifts and skills. We value one another's cultural inheritance and the diversity of languages and beliefs represented in our school. We believe in developing the whole person – socially, emotionally, creatively, physically, academically and spiritually – in an environment that is safe, calm and challenging.

We have high expectations for all our children and work hard to ensure that they achieve their full potential. We encourage confident and independent learning in an atmosphere where everyone can try out new challenges without fear of failure, so that our children acquire the enthusiasm and skills for life-long learning, develop questioning minds, respect each other and build up a cohesive community.

Vision Statement

We are committed to:

- Providing a school with a strong positive ethos which is truly inclusive and actively celebrates diversity. Creating a safe, positive and welcoming atmosphere in which the values of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness and protection of the vulnerable are lived out.
- Building a community based on a love of learning, in which all children and adults participate with enthusiasm, enjoying each other's company and supporting each other to grow in knowledge and in self-esteem.
- Delivering a challenging, creative and rewarding curriculum, underpinned by high expectations of all children, which prepares them for happy, healthy, fulfilled, productive and well-rounded adult lives.
- Developing in our children self-discipline, social and environmental responsibility, and appropriate standards of behaviour, for the benefit of the whole community.
- Providing good role models of respectful, sensitive, trusting relationships, and ensuring that the same approach is nurtured amongst our children.
- Promoting a culture of self-reflection, continuing improvement and healthy work-life balance, to benefit both staff and children.
- Working in partnership with parents as joint educators of their children.
- Creating a learning community that all are proud to belong to and all will look back on with happy and affectionate memories.

1.0 Introduction

Highfields Primary School is an inclusive school where we believe that all members of our community are of equal worth. We demonstrate our commitment to this by prioritising the well-being and progress of every child in our school and by striving to ensure that all members of our community are treated fairly in all situations.

We believe that the Equality Act provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups represented in the school.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Our approach to equality is based on the following 7 key principles:

- **All learners are of equal value.** Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation.
- **We recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.** We take account of differences and strive to remove barriers and disadvantages which people may face, in relation to disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, belief or faith and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.
- **We foster positive attitudes and relationships.** We promote positive attitudes and mutual respect between groups and communities different from each other.
- **We foster a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.** We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to feel that they are respected and able to participate fully in school life.
- **We observe good equalities practice for our staff.** We ensure that policies and procedures benefit all employees and potential employees in all aspects of their work, including in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development
- **We have the highest expectations of all our children.** We expect that all pupils can make good progress and achieve to their highest potential
- **We work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.** We believe that improving the quality of education for the most vulnerable groups of pupils raises standards across the whole school.

2.0 Purpose of the policy

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against pupils, staff, parents and carers or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

Age and marriage and civil partnership are also "protected characteristics", which are covered by this policy, but not as part of the school provisions related to pupils.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties:

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** or 'general duty'

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Two 'specific duties'

This requires all public organisations, including schools to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty by April 6th 2012
- Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable by April 6th 2012

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations. Appendix 2 shows the Equality Glossary for clarification.

3.0 Development of the policy

This policy was developed by the Governing Body. It is part of our commitment to promoting equalities and providing an inclusive school.

When developing the policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010, the OFSTED inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards and the Ofsted Briefing "Inspecting Equalities". We also note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.

4.0 Links to other policies and documentation

Our responsibilities under the Equality Act also inform policy and practice with regards to the school's behaviour, admissions, SEND and anti-bullying policies as well as minutes of meetings involving the Governing Body, PTFA and Parent Council.

The Equality Act also applies to schools in their role as employers, and the ways we comply with this are found in our recruitment policy.

5.0 What we are doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- We take account of equality issues in relation to admissions and exclusions, the way we provide education for our pupils and the way we provide access for pupils to facilities and services.
- We are aware of the Reasonable Adjustment duty for disabled pupils, which is designed to enhance access and participation to the level of non-disabled pupils and stop disabled children being placed at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this policy so that no one is discriminated against when it comes to employment, promotion or training opportunities.
- We ensure that those who are affected by a policy or activity are consulted and involved in the design of new policies and in the review of existing ones.
- We take seriously the need to consider the equality implications when we develop, adapt and review any policy or procedure and whenever we make significant decisions about the day to day life of the school.
- We actively promote equality and diversity through the curriculum and by creating an environment which champions respect for all.
- Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and we do not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the grounds of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief. In principal, this also includes sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, however in regards to pupils of primary school age, these will rarely apply. Wherever these protected characteristics do apply either in regards to new pupils or their parents / carers, the school will not treat their applications for a place in the school less favourably.

6.0 Behaviour, exclusions and attendance

The school policies on behaviour and exclusions take full account of the new duties under the Equality Act. We make reasonable, appropriate and flexible adjustment for pupils with a disability. We closely monitor data on exclusions and absence from school for evidence of over-representation of different groups and take action promptly to address concerns.

7.0 Addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying

The school challenges all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based bullying, which stand in the way of fulfilling our commitment to inclusion and equality:

- prejudices around disability and special educational needs
- prejudices around race, religion or belief, for example anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, Travellers, migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum

- prejudices around gender and sexual orientation, including homophobic and transphobic attitudes

There is guidance for all staff on how prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously.

We keep a record of different prejudice-related incidents and provide a verbal report to the Governing Body about the numbers, types and seriousness of prejudice-related incidents at our school and how we dealt with them.

8.0 What we are doing to advance equality of opportunity between different groups

We know the needs of our pupils very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements. We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our pupil admissions procedures.

We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of pupils and use this data to support school improvement. We take action to close any gaps, for example, for those making slow progress in acquiring age-appropriate literacy and numeracy skills.

We collect, analyse and publish data on the school population by gender, pupil premium, ethnicity, EAL, SEND and by year group.

We collect and analyse data on inequalities of outcome and participation, related to our potentially vulnerable groups.

We also collect, analyse and use data in relation to attendance and exclusions of different groups.

We are aware that the legislation relates mainly to current, but also to future pupils. We will, for example, be sufficiently prepared if Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired or Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils join our school. We use a range of teaching strategies that ensures we meet the needs of all pupils. We provide support to pupils at risk of underachieving. We are alert and proactive about the potentially damaging impact of negative language in matters such as race, gender, disability and sexuality.

In addition to avoiding or minimising possible negative impacts of our policies, we take opportunities to maximise positive impacts by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that may already exist between, for example, disabled and non-disabled people, people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, and girls and boys.

We ensure equality of access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, removing barriers to participation where necessary.

The Governing Body reviews the Accessibility Plan annually and makes reasonable adjustments to increase the extent to which pupils with disability can participate in the curriculum, to improve the physical environment and to improve the availability of accessible information to disabled pupils and other users of the school premises.

9.0 Positive action

We will take positive and proportionate action to address the disadvantage faced by particular groups of pupils with particular protected characteristics, such as targeted support. The actions will be designed to meet the school's Equality Objectives.

What we are doing to foster good relations

- We prepare our pupils for life in a diverse society and ensure that there are activities across the curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils.
- We teach about difference and diversity and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination through Faith, Ethics and Philosophy and across the curriculum.
- We use materials and resources that reflect diversity in terms of race, gender, sexual identity and disability, avoiding stereotyping.
- We promote a whole school ethos and values that challenge prejudice based discriminatory language, attitudes and behaviour.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures

- We include the contribution of different cultures to world history and that promote positive images of people

- We provide opportunities for pupils to listen to a range of opinions and empathise with different experiences
- We promote positive messages about equality and diversity through displays, assemblies, visitors, whole school events and cultural days

In order to ensure that the work we are doing on equalities meets the needs of the whole school community we:

- Review relevant feedback from the parent questionnaires and consultations, parents-teacher conferences and other formal / informal feedback from parents and carers
- Analyse responses from staff surveys, staff meetings and training events
- Review feedback and responses from Pupil Voice and from the School Council
- Analyse issues raised in Annual Reviews or reviews of progress on Individual Education Plans and Provision Maps
- Gather feedback from Parent Governors, other members of the Governing Body and from the Governing Body's committees

10. Publishing equality objectives

The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities. They also take into account national and local priorities and issues.

We evaluate our success in meeting the Public Service Equality Duties by the extent to which we achieve improved outcomes for the different groups. We produce equality data analysis which informs our discussions about the equality objectives.

Our Equality Objectives for 2015-2017 are:

- We will strive to ensure that all pupils meet their age related expectations in English and Mathematics, including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) where applicable
- We will achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the attainment gap in English and Maths at the end of KS2 between pupils within the school's identified groups (for example, pupil's for whom we receive Pupil Premium) and their peers
- We will increase participation by our potentially vulnerable pupils in after school clubs, extra curricular activities (for example, instrumental tuition), homework and other extended school provision

11.0 Monitoring and reviewing objectives

We review and update our equality objectives every two years and report annually to the governing body on progress towards achieving them.

12.0 Roles and responsibilities

We expect all members of the school community and visitors to support our commitment to promoting equalities and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act. We will provide training, guidance and information to enable them to do this.

12.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

Every Governing Body committee keeps aspects of the school's commitment to the Equality Duty under review, for example, in terms of standards, curriculum, admissions, exclusions, personnel issues and the school environment. Governors annually review the Equality Policy and evaluate the success of the school's equalities work taking account of quantitative evidence (e.g. data) and qualitative evidence (e.g. surveys).

12.2 Headteacher and leadership team

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support; and for taking appropriate action in any cases of unlawful discrimination. The Headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy and for monitoring outcomes.

12.3 Teaching and support staff

All teaching and support staff will:

- Promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classroom
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Plan and deliver lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- Maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- Support different groups of pupils in their class through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- Keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

12.4 Visitors

All visitors to the school, including parents and carers, are expected to support our commitment to equalities and comply with the duties set out in this policy.

13.0 Equal opportunities for staff

The school is committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made on the basis of merit and ability, and in compliance with the law. We are also concerned to ensure wherever possible that the staffing of the school reflects the diversity of our community.

As an employer we strive to ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce. We respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents, and comply with reasonable requests relating to religious observance. We ensure that all staff, including support and administrative staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development in line with the school's improvement priorities and performance management policy.

14.0 Monitoring and reviewing the policy

We review the information about equalities in the policy at least every two years and make adjustments as appropriate.

15.0 Sharing the policy

This Equality Policy containing the Equality Objectives are available on the school website. We publish on the school's website copies of relevant policies and guidance, including those on behaviour, anti-bullying and inclusion.

Appendix 1 - Check list for school staff and governors

1. The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both pupils and staff, e.g. pupil achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training.
2. This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides.
3. The Equality Policy and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, governors, pupils and other stakeholders.
4. The school publishes information to demonstrate purposeful action on the general duties.
5. The school analyses pupil achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and takes action when there trends or patterns indicate a need.
6. The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils and monitors progress on reaching these objectives.
7. The Headteacher has responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes.
8. The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
9. The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy.
10. The curriculum includes opportunities for all pupils to understand and celebrate diversity and difference.
11. All groups of pupils are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through class assemblies and the school council.
12. The school monitors bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern.
13. Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community.
14. Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and class assemblies.
15. The school takes part in events to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender.
16. The school environment is increasingly accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the school with disabilities.
17. Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered.
18. The accessibility needs of parents, pupils and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information.
19. The Governing Body is increasingly representative of the community it serves. Procedures for the election of parent governors are open to candidates and voters who are disabled.

Appendix 2 - Glossary

Advancing equality: The Equality Act 2010 states that this involves having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic; meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Age: This refers to a person having a particular age (for example, 32 year olds) or being within an age group (for example, 18-30 year olds). This includes all ages, including children and young people.

Assessing impact on equality: This involves looking at equality information and the outcomes of any engagement in order to understand the impact or potential impact of decisions on people with different protected characteristics.

Civil partnership: Legal recognition of a same-sex couple's relationship. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters.

Compliance notice: The Equality and Human Rights Commission can, if a public authority does not comply with its general or specific duties, serve a compliance notice on that authority under section 32 of the Equality Act 2006.

Direct discrimination: This refers to less favourable treatment because of a person's protected characteristic.

Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Engagement: A broad term, covering the range of ways in which public authorities interact with their service users, employees and other stakeholders, over and above what they do in providing services or within a formal employment relationship.

Equality Act 2006: This legislation made provision for the establishment of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the dissolution of the three legacy commissions for Disability, Race and Gender Equality. It sets out the Commission's powers and responsibilities (these were not repealed by the Equality Act 2010).

Equality Act 2010: This brings together the majority of existing equality legislation into one place so that it is easier to use.

Equality information: The information held (or collected) about people with protected characteristics, and the impact of decisions and policies on them.

Equality objectives: A requirement to prepare, set and publish objectives is one of the specific duties set out under the equality duty.

Equality outcome: The results that individuals or groups actually achieve and are able to benefit from. For example, equal pay between men and women.

Fostering good relations: The Equality Act 2010 states that having due regard to the need to foster good relations involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Function: The full range of a public authority's activities, duties and powers.

Gender: The wider social roles and relationships that structure men's and women's lives. These change over time and vary between cultures.

Gender reassignment: This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. See also trans, transgender, transsexual.

General equality duty: The requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Appendix 2 -

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Indirect discrimination: This is when a provision, criterion or practice is applied in a way that creates disproportionate disadvantage for a person with a protected characteristic as compared to those who do not share that characteristic, and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Intervention: The Equality and Human Rights Commission can intervene in legal proceedings in matters that are relevant to its functions by providing the Court with expert advice to help the Court reach its decision.

Judicial review: A claim to the High Court asking the Court to review the way a public authority or other body carrying out public functions made a decision.

Listed authority: A public authority covered by the specific duties and who is listed in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

Marriage: A union between a man and a woman. This definition is set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Maternity: The period after giving birth. It is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

Mitigation: This is when measures are put in place that lessen the negative effects of a policy or policies on protected groups.

Positive action: Lawful actions that seeks to overcome or minimise disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs (for example, providing mentoring to encourage staff from under-represented groups to apply for promotion).

Pregnancy: The condition of being pregnant.

Proportionality: The weight given to equality should be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. This may mean giving greater consideration and resources to functions or policies that have the most effect on the public or on employees.

Protected characteristics: The public sector equality duty covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

Public authority: The general equality duty applies to public authorities. For this purpose, a public authority is a body that is named (listed) or described in Schedule 19 of the Equality Act. It also applies to all other organisations who exercise public functions.

Public functions: The Equality Act 2010 defines a public function as a function that is of a public nature for the purposes of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Race: This is the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Appendix 2 -

Reasonable adjustment: Public authorities making adjustments to the way in which they carry out their functions so that disabled people are not disadvantaged by the way in which those functions are carried out.

Relevance: How far a function or policy affects people, as members of the public, and as employees of the authority. Some functions may be more relevant to people with certain protected characteristics than to others, and to one or more of the three aims of the general equality duty.

Religion or belief: Religion means any religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. **Belief** includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism).

Section 23 agreement: The Equality and Human Rights Commission can enter into a formal agreement with an organisation under section 23 of the Equality Act 2006 if it believes the organisation has committed an unlawful act or failed to comply with the general equality duty.