

Holme Grange School



Equality Policy

This Policy document applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS - Little Grange and Reception Classes).

PURPOSE

To equip pupils with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. It now provides a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all discriminations that are unlawful.

The Equality Act 2010 established nine 'protected characteristics'; age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and sexual identity. The Act also placed general and specific duties upon all public bodies, such as local authorities, maintained schools and other state funded educational settings including children's centres and academies. The general duty requires public bodies to have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

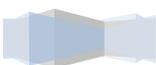
The specific duties require local authorities and maintained schools to:

- Publish information which shows their compliance with the general duty
- Publish specific and measureable equality objectives to meet the general duty.

Private or independent schools must abide by the law but are not required to comply with the general and specific equality duties imposed on public bodies and maintained schools, listed above, although they are encouraged to do so as it will help them to establish and maintain good practice in promoting equality. It is unlawful for private and independent schools to discriminate on grounds of age, race, sex, disability or sexual orientation in admissions, access to benefits or services, exclusions, and in the employment of staff.

Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Appendix A provides further information and definitions of discrimination, victimisation and harassment. Complaints relating to these matters must be dealt with promptly and investigated using the appropriate procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, anti-harassment policy and procedure.



Equal Opportunities - Statement of Commitment

The governing body and Holme Grange School is committed to a policy of equality. We aim to ensure that no employee, job applicant, pupil or other member of the school community is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief.

Any behaviour, comments or attitudes that undermine or threaten an individual's self-esteem on these grounds will not be tolerated. We aim to provide equal access to high quality educational opportunities and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to provide a safe and happy environment where all can flourish and where cultural diversity is celebrated.

We aim to empower our pupils to make informed choices so that they are better prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life within their community. Equality of opportunity cannot be realised without the involvement and commitment of all members of the school community and a common understanding of the pivotal role of equal opportunities in the context of the school's ethos and values, in particular, the recognition that the role of all staff is crucial in the delivery of the objectives of the policy.

All members of the school community are responsible for promoting the school's equal opportunities policy and are obliged to respect and act in accordance with the policy.

Aims and objectives

The governing body and school, through this Equal Opportunities Policy, aims to:

- carry out its legal duty in complying with the relevant legislation (*including The Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Employment Equality Regulations*);
- reinforce the school's position as a provider of high quality education and as a good employer providing development opportunities;
- establish good people management practice and to set out an agenda in which discrimination is recognised as an organisational issue which needs an organisational response;
- ensure all staff work together with a shared sense of purpose to meet the needs of every pupil;
- ensure that pupils and staff contribute towards a happy and caring environment by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals;
- ensure that complaints or evidence of failure to comply with the school's equal opportunities policy will be dealt with promptly and fully investigated according to the relevant procedure (e.g. complaints relating to staff may be investigated under the disciplinary, grievance or antiharassment procedure as appropriate). All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable.

Policy and planning

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered whenever school policies are developed or reviewed. All policies will be regularly reviewed to provide a comprehensive and consistent process of monitoring and evaluation.



Employment matters

Appointments: in all staff appointments the best candidate will be appointed based on professional criteria.

Family-friendly policies: the governing body/school is a family-friendly employer and will do its best to respond to the changing needs of all staff by publicising existing schemes designed to support employees in combining work and other responsibilities (parental leave arrangements, job share opportunities, carers' leave provision etc..).

HIV/AIDS: the governing body and Holme Grange School recognises that people with HIV/AIDS suffer not only from the purely medical effects of the infection but may also experience prejudice and misunderstanding leading to unfair discrimination and victimisation. The governors and Holme Grange School therefore will ensure that people with HIV/AIDS do not experience unfair treatment in relation to employment, as pupils or as other members of the school community. The school and governing body will follow the detailed guidelines regarding staff recruitment and pupil admissions set out in Appendix B.

Trans-sexual employees and gender reassignment: *The Sex Discrimination Act* now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment.

Training and development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training.

The school will endeavour to:

- enhance and develop the skills, knowledge and abilities of existing employees to realise their full potential, irrespective of background or employment status;
- provide equal access to training and development opportunities for all staff, including part time, on the basis of their assessed training needs;
- promote greater awareness of equal opportunities and the contribution which staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils can make;
- equip employees with the skills to provide personal and organisational solutions, discriminatory practices and behaviour and to promote antidiscriminatory behaviour generally.

Professional development involves a continuous process of learning involving self-development, encouragement and motivation. The school places great importance on the relationship between team leaders and their teams and will ensure that employees are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their own learning and development in the context of the school's performance management system.

Pupils and the curriculum

The school follows admission policies that do not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin.

The Education Reform Act 1988 stated that 'the school curriculum should reflect the culturally diverse society to which pupils belong and of which they will become adult members.' Pupils should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which avoids stereotypes and provides good role models for all pupils. Equality of opportunity should inform the whole of the curriculum and be reviewed regularly.



Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This is reflected in curriculum planning documentation. The current Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils is enclosed at Appendix C.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring in respect to employment begins with an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, which comprises part of the recruitment pack of information which is issued to all potential job applicants. A review of equality and diversity in employment will be considered annually by the Personnel & Welfare Committee, taking note of such issues as are listed below and taking appropriate action to ensure that no discrimination is taking place within the work place

- composition of the school staff;
- recruitment trends;
- take up of training opportunities;
- promotion patterns;
- use of complaints, grievance, disciplinary and harassment procedures;
- take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements.

Monitoring in respect of pupils begins with their data, as declared on their Application Form for a place at the school. This data is reviewed annually and reported to Department for Education as part of its annual School Census.

A review of equality and diversity in pupil education will be considered annually by the governors' Education Committee, taking account of aspects of pupils' pastoral welfare and curriculum opportunities and achievements. The number of international pupils is also reported to each meeting of the Governing Body.

Compliance with Section 10 of the Equality Act 2010 is set out in the school's policy document 'Accessibility Strategy to increase access for disabled students' , which includes the latest 3 year plans.

Governors will ensure that this policy is reviewed regularly.

Internal management issues

This policy is primarily designed to address pupil admissions, curriculum and employment aspects of governance and management. However, in reviewing and developing it further, the Governors, Principal and members of the Senior Leadership Group will take a range of other internal issues into account. Many of those issues will already be the subject of detailed agreed policies. All such existing polices, therefore, will also be 'audited' from an equal opportunities perspective.



Appendix A:

Discrimination, victimisation and harassment

Discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is illegal. However, for the school community, discrimination is also unacceptable on any of the other grounds referred to in this policy statement.

Failure to comply with the policy will be fully and promptly investigated using the appropriate procedures.

There are four ways in which discrimination may occur:

1. **Direct discrimination:** This means treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex etc
2. **Indirect discrimination:** This means applying a requirement or condition which cannot be justified to all groups but which has a disproportionately adverse effect on one group because the proportion of that group which can comply is smaller than the proportion of the group(s) which can comply with it.
3. **Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than other persons would be treated because that person has done a 'protected act' under the Equal Pay Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act or Employment Equality Regulations, for example, by bringing forward proceedings or giving evidence or information.
4. **Harassment:** Harassment can take many forms, from the most obvious abusive remarks to extremely subtle use of power. As with unfair or unlawful discrimination, harassment can be intentional or unintentional. However, the key issue is not simply the intention of the offender but the impact of the behaviour on the person receiving it.

Harassment may involve any of the following:

- physical contact or violence;
- offensive humiliating and intimidating remarks or actions;
- exclusion from participation in job-related or classroom-related discussions, training or social or other events;
- unfair work allocation;
- unjust or excessive or humiliating criticism of performance;
- offensive signs or notices;
- graffiti;
- repeated demands or requests for sexual favours.

These are merely examples and not an exhaustive list. Whatever the form, the school will provide support for any member of the school community, pupil or staff member who feels threatened or isolated because of such actions.



Appendix B: HIV/AIDS guidelines

The governors and Holme Grange School will:

- ensure that job applicants who are deemed to be medically fit to perform the job for which they have applied, are not denied an offer of work solely because they are HIV positive. In arriving at the decision, the school's normal recruitment criteria will be observed including the normal medical procedures;
- ensure, where possible, that resources are available to support employees or pupils with AIDS or other major health problems associated with HIV infection. The school's normal rules and procedures regarding counselling and ill health will apply in such cases;
- give positive consideration to applications for unpaid leave for those with responsibility for caring for people with AIDS-related conditions in accordance with carers' leave arrangements;
- treat any breaches of confidentiality as a serious matter to be dealt with in accordance with the normal disciplinary (or other appropriate) procedure;
- provide appropriate information in relation to AIDS in order to combat fears and prejudice and to enable the school community as a whole to function without risk to health.

Appendix C:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR PUPILS

Introduction

Holme Grange School is committed to promoting understanding of the principles and practices of equality and justice. Our aim is to equip pupils with an awareness of our diverse society and to appreciate the value of difference. This will be achieved by adherence to the following principles:

- Discrimination on the basis of colour, culture, origin, sex or ability is not acceptable.
- Discrimination against a pupil who is pregnant is not acceptable.
- Discrimination against a pupil who is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment is not acceptable.

The primary objective of this school will be to educate, develop and prepare all our pupils for life, whatever their sex, colour, origin, culture or ability.

Pupils and teachers will further these principles by contributing towards a happy and caring environment and by showing respect for, and appreciation of, one another as individuals.

The Aims and Values which underpin this policy are:

- To offer sound learning within the Christian tradition;
- To provide an attractive, stimulating environment where each child endeavours to achieve the highest standards;
- To accommodate dietary requirements on the basis of religion or culture. an environment for growth in spiritual, moral, social and cultural strengths;
- The development of an enquiring mind, self-respect and self-motivation, combined with appreciation of the attitudes, viewpoints and beliefs of others, leading to mutual understanding and respect for each other's differences and strengths.

We believe that with these aims a child will develop a willingness and desire to learn, work and enjoy school life. We also believe that achievement of our aims depends on a successful partnership between parents, children and teachers, all sharing in a common desire for learning.

All forms of discrimination by any person within the school's responsibility will be treated seriously as such behaviour is unacceptable. Racist symbols, badges and insignia on clothing and equipment are forbidden in school. Staff should be aware of possible cultural assumptions and bias within their own attitudes.



Equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and will be reviewed regularly.

Parents should be aware of the school's commitment to equal opportunities.

- The school's aim is to provide for all pupils according to their needs, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnic origin.
- Equality of opportunity permeates the whole curriculum and will be reviewed regularly.

COMPLAINTS

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about the operation of our equal opportunities policy. Copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request.

