

Equality Policy

Introduction

This Single Equality Scheme Policy addresses the statutory duties of the Equality Act 2010 (see appendix C). By harmonising all previous statutory duties in relation to race, gender and disability.

This document sets out how pupils with the following protected characteristics will be protected in our school from harassment and discrimination:-

- disability
- gender
- race
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation

The policy extends to cover all aspects of vulnerability, including those associated with socio-economic factors (e.g. pupils from low income families).

As well as delivering high quality services to our pupils, the school is also committed to being an excellent employer and as such this scheme outlines how we meet our varied duties in terms of recruitment and employment practices. We are also committed to be fully inclusive of all community users, including parents and carers. As such, this scheme therefore also sets out how we will work to overcome any discrimination related to the other protected characteristics.

However, it goes far beyond these strands to include the elements required under the new duty to promote community cohesion (see the school's Community Cohesion Policy and plan) therefore every aspect which has the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community such as against those with special educational needs or potential language barriers. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aims of the Every Child Matters agenda and these have informed and shaped this document.

- The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice can tackle discrimination, promote inclusive practice and ensure that those in our community requiring extra support receive it.

Through this Single Equality Policy, at Heronshaw we seek to ensure that no pupils, staff, parents, guardians or carers or any other person through their contact with the school receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, ethnic or national origin, language, religion or belief, gender and gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, responsibility for children or other dependants, trade union or political activities, social class. The principles of this policy should apply to all members of the extended school community, pupils, staff, governors, parents and community members. 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 this policy

We achieve the promotion of equality through:

Striving to ensure that the school environment is free from harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. (See the School's adopted *Dignity at Work Policy* and *Grievance Procedures*.) We will collect data related to the protected characteristics and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. This data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school. This will include the following functions:

- admissions
- attendance
- attainment
- exclusions

In addition we aim to carry out an equality impact assessment which will assist us to identify and predict how best to serve the needs of the different groups within our community. We endeavour to assess all policies and practice to ensure that there is no negative impact on any group or individual wherever possible. We also endeavour to ensure that any assessments that reveal any under-performing group(s) are used to provide a positive impact through an appropriate intervention programme.

Duties, Roles & Responsibilities within our school community.

Our Governing Body will:

- support the headteacher in implementing any actions necessary
- evaluate and review this policy every year

ensure the school complies with all current equality legislation make sure this policy and its procedures are followed

Our Headteacher will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, students and visitors and contractors are informed about the Single Equality policy.
 - oversee the effective implementation of the policy.
 - ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy action plan.
 - develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available.
 - producing regular information for staff and governors about the policy and how it is working, and providing training for them on the policy, if necessary.
 - monitor the policy action plan and report to the Governing Body on an annual basis, with regard to the effectiveness and positive impact of the policy.
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- ensure the policy is readily available and that the governors, staff, pupils and their parents/carers know about it via the school website.
 - making sure all staff know their responsibilities and receive training and support in carrying these out.
 - taking appropriate action in cases of harassment and discrimination.

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have general responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy.
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.
- seek ways through which subject leaders will ensure the curriculum provides community cohesion opportunities and promote equality.

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the ongoing development of the policy action plan.
- be fully aware of the Single Equality policy and how it relates to them.
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Single Equality policy.
- model good practice, dealing with racist incidents and being able to recognise and challenge prejudice and stereotyping.
- promote equality and good race relations and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, ethnic or national origins, language, culture, religion or belief, disability, gender, sexual orientation or social class.
- Accurately and swiftly respond to and report any equalities incidents.

- Be familiar with the process for reporting racist or religiously motivated incidents.

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the on-going development of the policy action plan
- have access to the policy via the school website (hard copies available on request, including translations)
- be encouraged to actively support the policy
- be informed of any prejudice driven incident which could directly affect their child:

Our pupils will:

- share input with staff on developing policies relating to this area. This may include the anti-bullying policy and developing school/class rules which challenge discriminatory behaviour.
- be involved in the ongoing development of the single equalities action plan and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy

Equal opportunities in employment

The school and governing body will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

The governing body will consider any possible indirect discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the governing body considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The governing body will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

The school will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

Dignity at work

The governing body has adopted a separate policy that covers issues of bullying and harassment on any grounds and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the school

The school will not discriminate unlawfully against customers (Including pupils and parents/carers) using, or seeking to use, goods, facilities or services provided by the school. Employees should report any bullying or harassment which they experience from the wider community (parents, suppliers, visitors or others) to the headteacher who will take appropriate action.

The responsibilities of the employee

Employees should be aware that they can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the governing body for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or parents and their families are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If any member of staff considers that they have experienced unlawful discrimination, they may use the school's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If their complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the *Dignity at Work Policy*. The governing body will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. An employee will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is vexatious. Parents may complain to the Headteacher in the first instance if they have a grievance and may follow the school's complaints policy.

Use of the governing body's adopted grievance procedure does not affect an employee's right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months beginning with the act of discrimination complained of.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically, jointly by the head teacher and the governing body, to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. A particular focus will be given during the monitoring of the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion) and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and the policy will be reviewed in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with *The Data Protection Act 1998*.

Policy and planning

Equal opportunities implications, including race equality, will be considered and recorded 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 strict 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, flexitime where appropriate, carers' leave provision).

HIV/AIDS: the governing body/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/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 by the LA.

Transsexual employees and gender reassignment: *The Sex Discrimination Act* now expressly covers discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment. The current LA guidelines will be followed.

Training and development

The success of the Equal Opportunities Policy is closely linked to the provision of relevant training. Governors will be encouraged to take up all relevant opportunities provided by the Local Authority's Governors Training Programme and other opportunities that are identified.

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 anti-discriminatory 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 local authority pupil admission policies that do not permit sex, race, colour or disability to be used as criteria for admission. The schools 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 will be reviewed regularly.

Equal opportunities issues will be taken account of in planning the curriculum. This should be reflected in curriculum planning documentation.

The school has identified several vulnerable groups (using government criteria) and tracks their progress. This enables us to see, at an early stage, any lack of progress and to institute intervention programmes and schemes to ensure that all pupils make the maximum progress that is possible. These vulnerable groups are:

SEN (Special Educational Needs)
FSM (Free School Meals)
EAL (English as an Additional Language)
Minority Ethnic
Summer Born
Mobile
Gender

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Monitoring is an essential aspect of this section, as it should provide important information by which the school can measure its performance against its aims and objectives. Statistical information can also enable the governors and head teacher to detect where potential or actual imbalances exist and to take steps to correct them. See Appendix C.

Monitoring with respect to employment will be undertaken in the following areas by sex, race, disability, grade and subject area:

- composition of the school staff;
- recruitment trends;
- take up of training opportunities;
- promotion patterns;
- use of complaints procedure;
- use of grievance, disciplinary, harassment etc;
- use of sanctions;

take-up of family-friendly policies, e.g. flexible working arrangements.

Governors will ensure that the Equal Opportunities section is reviewed on a regular basis.

Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan -Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Heronshaw School's policy on disability

Heronshaw School is committed to complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) by:

- Maximising accessibility to the School's services and activities for staff, students, alumni, visitors, and prospective staff and students with disabilities, and to ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on the grounds of disability.
- Developing a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose a disability, should they wish to do so, and to discuss reasonable adjustments in order to promote equal participation in the School's services and activities. In adherence to the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA1998), such information shall be passed on only with consent and where there is a legitimate reason to do so.
- Reviewing, monitoring and revising, as appropriate, all School systems, procedures, facilities, services and buildings in compliance with the DDA and SENDA in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998(HRA), which includes the right not be denied access to education.
- Creating, maintaining and disseminating information about services, support and facilities available for staff, students, alumni, visitors and prospective staff and students with disabilities.

Definition of Disability

For the purpose of this policy, the term "disability" has the same meaning as that given in the DDA and SENDA:

'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

In recognition of evolving case law, this includes, but is not limited to: sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental illness, clinically recognised severe disfigurements, cancer, HIV/Aids, progressive conditions even at an early stage, conditions which are characterised by a number of cumulative effects such as pain or fatigue and a past history of disability.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995(DDA) uses a broad definition of "disability". A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Physical or mental impairments can include sensory impairments (such as those affecting sight and hearing) and learning difficulties. The definition also covers certain medical conditions when they have a long-term and substantial effect on pupils' everyday lives.

An overview of the legislation supporting disabled pupils

There are three main strands of support for disabled pupils in school. The relationships between these different duties are important. Support is through:

- the SEN framework (Part IV of the Education Act 1996);
- the disability discrimination duties (section 28A – 28C of the DDA); and
- the planning duties (section 28D – 28E of the DDA)

Scope of the policy

It is estimated that 18% of 0-19 year olds have a long term illness or disability. (March 2004 figs from Office for National Statistics). About 2.1 million parents are disabled. (Equivalent to 7 pupils per class.) Just over 4% of teachers declare a disability. For pupils we need to consider those who suffer from

- Dyslexia
- Dysphasia
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Hearing loss
- Visual Impairment
- Pupils with SEN (especially at SA+ and statemented)
- Psychological conditions

For staff, parents and pupils the approach to be taken is not to ask “Are you disabled?” but rather “what extra needs do you have?” This will then give the information needed to make “reasonable adjustments.” These can include making adjustments to:

- the curriculum
- teaching and learning
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of pupils
- school discipline and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school sports
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- interaction with peers
- assessment and exam arranging
- school clubs and activities
- school trips..... all aspects of life

The reasonable adjustments duty:

- is anticipatory
- is owed to all disabled pupils, staff and visitors
- affects all policies, procedures, and practices
- involves early discussions with parents and pupils and staff
- involves early information from the LA, health and social services.

- is a continuing responsibility

The adjustments can include the content and pattern of certain curriculum areas, the teaching styles used, specialist or adapted resources as well as both human & ICT supports. The degree and level of these will depend on the level of need and the resources available. It will also need to be balanced between the needs of the individual and those of the others in the school. The focus of all our work is the teaching and learning that is the rationale for the school's existence. This will always be paramount.

Disability Equality Scheme (DES)

Accessibility – physical

The building will be reviewed regularly to ensure its maximum suitability for all pupils, staff and visitors with any physical need. Major works will require specific funding grants.

All areas of the school are accessible to wheelchair users and we have specialist WC facilities. The school has been redecorated with contrasting colours for walls, floors, doors and door furniture to help those with visual impairment. We have also fitted window blinds to help those who are visually and/or hearing impaired.

Accessibility – curriculum

We work to make all areas of the curriculum- the formal, extracurricular and informal available to all pupils. This will not only mean the physical environment but also offering a range of teaching and learning styles and situations.

Planning will include opportunities for pupils to learn in kinaesthetic, audiology and visual ways and will encompass the “wave” approach to supply pupils with needs

Wave 1 - Quality first teaching within effective whole school policies and frameworks. This will include differentiation at more than three levels.

Wave 2 - Catch-up small groups intervention e.g. At “School Action” stage of the SEN code of practice.

Wave 3 - Individualised support e.g. At “School Action Plus” stage of SEN code.

Pupils will where appropriate, be offered a range of recording systems to include pictorial as well as more formal written systems and/or the use of ICT.

At the annual reviews for SEN pupils information will be checked regarding the effect of our policy on the opportunities open to and the achievements of the pupils in terms of the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and policy.

We work with colleagues in the support agencies: Education, Physical & Mental Health & the Social Services. This work will focus on not only supporting pupils and staff with accessing the curriculum as either teachers or learners but also in providing therapy and life skills.

Recruitment and Admission packs for both staff/pupils will include the question “What do you see as your needs to access all aspects of school life?” The Office Manager will make arrangements for any requests to be actioned and the Headteacher will monitor the reasons for any member of staff leaving and draw the governors’ attention to any implications for our DES scheme and plan.

We will continue to look for developments to be incorporated in

- Buildings
- Facilities
- Curriculum (teaching and learning)

This will be reviewed regularly by governing body committees. Where appropriate we will act to encourage the employment or admission of staff and pupils who would be recognised as falling within the scope of the DES and policy. As part of our commitment to Equal Opportunities we believe in encouraging all pupils to take a full part in

the curriculum and employment opportunities as far as reasonably possible regardless of their physical or psychological state.

Heronshaw School Equality Objectives 2023 – 2024

At Heronshaw the spiritual, social moral and cultural development of all our children is paramount. We believe that the most important function of the school is to maintain an environment in which every member of the school is able to achieve success and self-fulfillment. There must be a total consistency of expectation that everyone (irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion or culture) should feel safe and secure; have empathy for all others and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

To achieve this, our equality objectives are as follows:

- To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding through a rich range of experience, both in and beyond the school.
- To reduce prejudice and increase understanding of equality through direct teaching across the curriculum.
- To ensure that all pupils are given similar opportunities with regards to after-school clubs and enrichment activities.
- Diminish the difference in attainment between those children considered to be 'disadvantaged' and those who are not.
- To allow equal access to information for all parents.
- To ensure the school environment is accessible to all pupils, staff and visitors.

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:

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

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.

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.

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 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 ill health will apply in such cases. Equally the school will make appropriate arrangements for the provision of counselling (i.e. by referral to external agencies);

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 training 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

For further information on the Equality Act 2010, please refer to:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/>

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