

# Disability Equality and Access Policy

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## **1. Rationale**

This document is for the information of parents and students, and for the guidance of staff and trustees. Its aim is to ensure that all of our work and all of the school's policies work towards giving all members of the community equal opportunities to succeed and reflects the school commitment to meeting the Equality Act (2010).

Other relevant documents in relation to equality and diversity include:

- School Aims
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy School Development Plan Accessibility Plan

## **2. Equality Vision and Values**

Henlow Church of England Academy aims to be a school in which all members of the community have equal access to the educational and professional opportunities that we can offer. In particular, we aim to:

- Ensure that the school welcomes and values students and staff from a variety of backgrounds
- Ensure that the wider community is welcomed by the school
- Promote the value of each member of Henlow Church of England Academy as an individual and to resist any form of stereotyping
- Ensure that students, regardless of age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, prior attainment, disability, religion, culture or ethnic origin are valued and encouraged to reach their full potential
- Promote non-sexist and anti-racist attitudes recognising that prejudice in any form limits the achievements of all
- Promote cultural and linguistic diversity, recognising that this diversity is an enrichment for us all.

Our commitment to these principles will be demonstrated through:

- Monitoring the impact of all of our policies on different groupings within the school
- Eradicating barriers in order to maximise participation and achievement of all
- Ensuring high expectations of all
- Drawing on the diverse experiences and skills of all students, staff and the wider community.

It is the responsibility of every member of our school community to ensure that this ethos is actively and consistently reflected in our practice.

## **3. School Context**

We are a Secondary school with 9-16 year old students in Henlow, Bedfordshire. The School is situated in a greenbelt area.

#### 4. Legal Background

Henlow Church of England Academy is committed to meeting our obligations as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Our General Duty under the Equality Act 2010:

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having “due regard” means that whenever we make decisions, take action or develop policy, we must assess whether there is an impact to any of the groups with protected characteristics, and that the equality duty must be integrated into school functions.

Our Specific Duties to enable us to meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

The Specific Duties require us to:

- a) Publish annually information quantitative and qualitative, showing compliance with the PSED set out in clause 149 of the Equality Act 2010
- b) Set every four years one or more specific measurable equality objectives that further the aims of the equality duty

The Equality Act 2010 gives protection from discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics. The protected characteristics for the school's provisions are:

- Age (staff only)
- Disability
- Ethnicity and Race
- Gender (Sex)
- Gender identity and reassignment
- Pregnancy, maternity and breast-feeding
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership (staff only)

The disability provisions in the Act are different from those for other protected characteristics in a number of ways, including a more complex definition of what constitutes discrimination, and protection that works in only one direction – i.e. it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as when a person has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.

Long-term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months. More guidance is available at <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/new/ea-guide.pdf>

Schools may, and often must, treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils by making reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled pupil can benefit from what they offer to the same extent that a pupil without a disability can.

The Equality Act 2010 extends the reasonable adjustment duty to require schools to provide auxiliary aids and services to disabled pupils.

At Henlow Church of England Academy we implement accessibility plans that are aimed at:

- Increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improving the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improving the availability of accessible information to disabled students.

We will maintain an Accessibility Plan that will be resourced and implemented as appropriate. The Plan will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees, and progress against targets published with information regarding our compliance with the Equality duties.

Information about students with disabilities is reported at regular intervals to the Local Authority via census returns.

Provision for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is made in accordance with the Poppy Hill MAT SEND Policy.

Provision for students with additional needs such as disability, medical and English as an Additional Language (EAL) is made through the school pastoral system. This provision is monitored by the Board of Trustees.

Provision for SEND students and their performance data are monitored regularly throughout the academic year by the Board of Trustees. An annual report on this monitoring is made to the Board of Trustees.

At present all students:

- Take part fully in the curriculum
- Participate in extra-curricular activities
- Are fully involved in enrichment programmes and social interaction
- Go on school trips, in accordance with the school's Trips and Visits policy

## Staff Recruitment:

When recruiting staff, we ensure equality as described in the Staff Appointments Policy.

The Accessibility Plan will be published on the school website and on request in any format required, such as audio tape, Braille or translated into other languages. The Freedom of Information Publication Scheme provides details of how to request this information.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the school implements the actions required in order to meet the equality objectives.

The Headteacher is responsible for managing the actions required to achieve the equality objectives.

Every 12 months, we will provide a report to the Board of Trustees on aspects of this Equalities policy. This will be in a single report to the AGM of the BoT in January and will include:

- Details of policies that reinforce requirements to avoid discrimination and other prohibited conduct
- Meetings of staff or trustees where responsibilities under the Equality Act have been discussed
- Evidence of staff and trustees training on aspects of the school's duties under the

## Equality Act

- Information on how we monitor equality issues
- Attainment data which shows how students with different characteristics (e.g. boys vs. girls, BAME, SEND, disadvantaged) are performing and where areas of inequality need to be addressed
- Steps taken in response to analysis of the available data for groups with different characteristics
- General data about how we will handle any potential issues associated with religion, belief and sexual orientation, such as measures to address racist or homophobic bullying. Data on how we handle potential issues related to sexual harassment
- Initiatives taken or policies developed to promote equality for particular protected groups
- Aspects of the curriculum which promote tolerance and friendship
- Aspects of the curriculum which share understanding of a range of religions or cultures
- Activities involving promotion of the behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- Assemblies dealing with relevant issues
- Involvement with local communities
- Liaison with other schools, which enable students to meet and exchange experiences with students from different backgrounds.

All staff have a responsibility to be aware of the general equality duty and our equality objectives, and to apply these in their day-to-day work with students and each other.

We comply fully with legislation which protects all our staff from discrimination on the grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures.

- We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and the wider society
- We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators
- We will provide regular training for staff to enable them to deal effectively with prejudice-related incidents
- We will report and record all forms of prejudice-related incidents such as racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism.

The school equality scheme and objectives will be aligned with the School Development Plan. Its implementation will be monitored within school self-evaluation and other review processes.

## **6. Eliminating Discrimination and Advancing Equality of Opportunity**

### **6.1 Sexual Discrimination and Harassment**

Sexist behaviour can take many forms. The following are examples of such unacceptable behaviour. They are for illustration only and do not constitute an exhaustive list.

- Threatened or actual physical assault.
- Verbal abuse, name calling and general teasing. For example, words such as "slag" and "tart" are offensive to girls; the use of the word "woman" as a term of abuse to boys is unacceptable; also terms that refer implicitly to homosexual or lesbian behaviour as a form of abuse are unacceptable.
- Expressions of prejudice calculated to offend others, or to influence the behaviour of others even if they are not calculated to be so and even if no student is offended.
- Sexist graffiti.
- Use of, or reference to, stereotypes or stereotypical behaviour or characteristics. For example, assumptions that suggest that males have a monopoly of dominant, assertive, powerful characteristics and females a monopoly of submissive, caring, expressive characteristics are stereotypical.

- The use of modern technology, such as email, text and online messaging on mobile phones, to send unsolicited messages, ask for images or 'nudes' and those containing inappropriate content as defined by the examples above.

It is important that staff set a fair and positive example in their dealings with each other and students. This will include gender neutral behaviour in terms of both rewards and punishments, for example, in regard to interaction with students. Equally, it is vital that students are encouraged to avoid sexist language and behaviour.

Staff will also use gender neutral language, both written and spoken, whenever possible. It is important to identify and challenge stereotyping in both curricular and non-curricular activities. For example:

- When referring to occupations by using the name of the job without qualification by gender
- When referring to positions of authority it should be made clear that both males and females can occupy them.

Staff should use opportunities that arise naturally to raise awareness concerning gender neutral language.

Above all, the School will continue to provide a caring and supportive learning environment within which such issues are tackled in a way which is consistent with other curricular, pastoral and disciplinary matters.

## **6.2 Race Discrimination**

Since our school community is not ethnically diverse, we consider our role in promoting racial equality to be crucial as we prepare students to live in our multi-cultural society.

We respect and value the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity which exists in the wider community. We are committed to challenging attitudes that promote racial discrimination, ensuring respect for all and preparing students for life in a culturally diverse society

Our commitment to race equality will be demonstrated through:

- Fostering respect for all groups and individuals, within the context of Human Rights
- Promoting positive non-discriminatory behaviour
- Providing a Race Equality Log to record all incidents/complaints/allegations of racial discrimination and ensuring that all incidents/complaints/allegations are logged and fully investigated and monitored
- Ensuring appropriate support for isolated individuals of different ethnic groups, within the context of normal school activities involving all students
- Ensuring representation of a wide range of heritages within our curriculum and school
- Encouraging links with the wider community (see section 7).



## 7. Fostering Good Relations

The vision of Poppy Hill MAT is to recognise and celebrate the diversity within our catchment area and welcomes the contributions which different groups and individuals make to the community. Differences between groups of people can cause misunderstanding and friction. A key commitment of Henlow Church of England Academy is to build and promote community cohesion within the school and the wider community.

We will ensure that:

- Lessons across the curriculum promote common values and help students to value differences and to challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping – for example, opportunities in classes for students to discuss issues of identity and diversity and what it means 'to live together in the UK'.
- Students' understanding of community and diversity is enriched through visits and meetings with members of different communities.
- Support is in place for students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) to enable them to achieve at the highest possible level in English.
- Students have an effective voice and involvement in the governance and organisation of the school in a way that teaches them to participate in and make a difference in school, in their local community and beyond.
- Our teaching and curriculum provision supports high standards of attainment, promotes common values, and build students' understanding of the diversity that surrounds them.
- Assemblies are used as a vehicle to promote the engagement of learners and shared understanding as well as the School's ethos and values.
- Learners are encouraged to value diversity and to develop a better understanding of society by challenging assumptions.
- Tracking systems enable us to evaluate progress of groups with and without protected characteristics and to tackle underperformance by any particular group.
- We monitor record and deal effectively with incidents of prejudice, bullying and harassment, taking into account the rates of exclusion or behaviour issues among students from particular groups.
- Our school admissions arrangements emphasise the importance of community cohesion and social equity.
- High standards and expectations are set for all students from all ethnic backgrounds and of different socio-economic groups.

Working with other schools:

- We shall seek to broaden the ways that we work in partnership with other schools. We shall look to develop existing relationships with local schools – and link primary schools and develop new relationships with educational establishments outside the local community.
- Sharing facilities also provides a means for students to interact, as do opportunities for meaningful intercultural activities such as sport and drama.

Working with parents and the community:

- We will work with community representatives, for example through mentoring schemes or bringing community representatives into school to work with students
- We will engage with local community groups and organisations, enabling them to play a role in the school and encouraging students to make a positive contribution in the local area.
- We will maintain strong links and multi-agency working between school and other local agencies, such as the youth service, the police and social care and health professionals
- We will engage with parents through subject taster mornings, curriculum evenings, parent and child courses and family liaison work.
- We will bring parents from different backgrounds together through parenting and family support, and community use of facilities for activities that take place out of school hours.

## **8. Engagement**

Our school is committed to encouraging everyone to contribute to the development and review of all policies and practices affecting the life of the school and its impact within the wider community. We have involved a number of staff, students, parents and trustees with particular interests in the development of our equality objectives.

When deciding what to do to tackle equality issues, we will consult and engage both with people affected by our decisions – parents, carers, students, staff, members of the local community – and with people who have specialist knowledge who can inform the school's approach, such as disability equality groups and other relevant special interest organisations. Evidence of this engagement will be included in published information showing how the duty has been addressed.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment (EQIAs)**

EQIAs help us to analyse whether what we are planning potentially has a differential impact on one or more particular groups (either positively or negatively). All school policies are assessed and reviewed by the lead member of SLT in conjunction with the board of trustees.

We work to ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub- contractors. More information regarding procurement may be found in the Academies Financial Handbook.

## **10. Accessibility Plan**

(available via school website – policies and privacy notices - Accessibility)

Issue: January 2021

Review: March 2024

### **Introduction**

Henlow Church of England Academy acknowledges the requirement to carry out accessibility planning for disabled students. These are the same duties as exist under the Equality Act 2010.

- promote equality of opportunity for disabled students, staff, parents, carers and other stakeholders that use the school.
- not treat disabled students less favourably for reasons related to their disability
- to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students so that they are not at a substantial disadvantage

### **Purpose**

It is our intention to remove, as far as possible, those barriers which make it hard for a person who has difficulties with: mobility, physical co-ordination, manual dexterity, continence, ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects, speech, hearing, sight, memory or ability to learn, concentrate or understand or are unable to perceive risk or physical danger.

This plan sets out the proposals of the Trustees of the academy to increase access to education for disabled students in three areas:

- increasing the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school curriculum
- improving the environment of the school to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services
- improving the delivery to disabled students of information that is provided in writing for students who are not disabled.

### **Process**

Information regarding users and their disabilities has been gathered and used in the formulation of this plan. The assessment of the academy is that there is good access to the curriculum and this is demonstrated by the results achieved by students with disabilities. The physical site covers a large area, despite this, access is assessed as good. Particular attention has been paid to hearing and sight impaired disabilities. There is wheelchair access to the majority of the school site and changing and toilet facilities have been improved for PE with the introduction of new changing areas for the 3G football pitch. Evidence for this judgement is that Hertfordshire Football Association have located their 'Football for the disabled' programme at the venue.

An action plan will be put into place and reviewed annually. The plan will take into account physical developments to the school site and curriculum planning will take

accessibility into account. It is the responsibility of the whole school community to implement the plan in a manner that promotes an inclusive ethos.