



Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre

LEARNING · RESPECT · BELONGING

EQUALITY POLICY

Date approved by Governors
March 2015

HOMEWOOD SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Equality Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years

Please note that full consultation has taken place with recognized trade unions on this document; however, not all of the document has necessarily been agreed with all the trade unions.

DATE OF POLICY: MARCH 2015

DATE OF REVIEW: MARCH 2018

Member of staff responsible for Policy:

Principal & VP Students

Responsibility

Signed.....Head Teacher

Signed.....Chair of Governors

Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre Equality Policy

Introduction

Equality legislation exists to protect people but also to try and advance equality. Inequality still persists in the UK despite 40 years of equality legislation.

The new Equality Act 2010 harmonises and streamlines legislation that has come before it. The Act refers to protected characteristics:

- Age (for staff only)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies including maintained schools and Academies.

This combined **Equality Duty** came into effect in April 2011. It has three main elements. In carrying out their functions, public bodies are required 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. (remove or minimize disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics)
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding)

The Act also introduced specific duties, which are designed to help public authorities to meet their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED is set out on the face of the Act, while the specific duties are set out in secondary legislation.

The Specific Duties require schools to:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duty
- Publish equality objectives every year (one or more as is proportionate to the organisation).

All information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public.

Why we have developed this Equality Policy

This Equality Policy for Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre brings together all previous policies, schemes and action plans around equality including those that we had previously for Race, Gender and Disability (Equality Policy, Equality Scheme including Action Plan and Race Equality Policy.) It includes all the protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010 as well as other aspects which have the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our community. We are further committed to the development of cohesive communities both within our school's physical boundaries and within our local, national and global environments. Our school embraces the aim of working together with others to improve children's educational and wellbeing outcomes, and notes the rights set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community, students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies - who we have engaged with and who have been actively involved in and contributed to its development.

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation.

Overall aims of our Equality Policy

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes.

Issues relating to adults within the school community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

Our approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values; aspirations and needs underpin our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other

- Social cohesion within our school and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

As our Vision statement indicates we provide flexible learning opportunities and have high aspirations for all.

Our vision statement about Equality

Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met where possible. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by always treating everyone the same.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all. We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately or negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster good relations between different groups of pupils and the wider school community.

We will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under an SEN statement or Education Health and Care Plan, or where the statement /EHCP does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services.

These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies

- preparation for entry to the school
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of students for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of students
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or Theatre in Education (TIE).
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Principal will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, students and visitors are engaged in the development of and are informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- monitor the policy and report to the Governing Body at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy and publish this information
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our governing body will:

- designate a governor with specific responsibility for the Equality Policy
- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- support the Principal in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives every 4 years.
- Contribute their viewpoints via the Equality Focus Group

Our Senior Leadership Team will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the Principal, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues
- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP
- put forward its points of view via the Equality Focus Group

Our students will:

- be involved in the review of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability. A student based focus group will be put together in order to seek student viewpoints (students from potentially vulnerable groups will also be included in this group)
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the development of the Policy through the school website
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child
- an Equality Focus Group will be put together in order to seek parental viewpoints. The group will meet at least annually

Our school staff will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy through the Equality Focus Group.
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy through the Equality Focus Group.
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy.

The Equality Focus Group will be made up of:

A member of SLT

Clerk to the Governors

A member of the Governing Body

Parent/s

Member of staff

Member of the Personnel Team
Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator
Inclusions Officer
SENCO / Principal Teacher Learning Support
Union representative
A member of the local community.

Using information

We use data from a variety of sources, including exam analysis, Raiseonline, attendance information, intervention logs, Pupil Premium tracking, incident reporting and revision sessions/extended school activities. Student and staff surveys are carried out to ascertain their opinion on Equality.

This data is used to determine the effects of the Equality Policy and inform future objectives and interventions. This helps us to ensure there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups. They help to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our students and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, faith, disability and gender.

The school interacts and works with a variety of agencies to support equality, these include Kent Police, KCA, Behaviour and Attendance Service, School Nurses and Early Help professionals, Social Services, CAMHs, Speech and Learning, various religious organisations and the Area Safeguarding Officer.

We have established good links with our local and our wider community. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school. Equality issues are addressed through the schools PSHRE and Citizenship programmes.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and student teachers) from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. 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 people who are 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 wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job

offer has been made or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure.

We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Our Personnel team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community. We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development (through SIP and the Equality objectives.)

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses. Restorative justice practices are utilised across the school.

We will record all hate incidents and prejudice based bullying. We will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

Raising Awareness

The protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010 are addressed through the school PSHRE and Citizenship programmes, through Restorative Justice practices and through identified areas of the curriculum.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our governors who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives.

We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular the educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

Equality Objectives

Using the views of students, parents, staff and community and analysis of the information as outlined above we have set ourselves specific and measurable objectives that will help us achieve the aims of the general equality duty. These will be reviewed and published every 3 years.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES: 2014 - 2017

1 = Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization

2 = Advance equality of opportunity

3 = Fostering good relations

See School Improvement Plan for Levels of Progress targets.

Link to Public Sector Equality Duty	Aim / Objective	Target group(s): e.g. whole school, girls, boys, SEN, staff etc	Action:	Who's responsible?	Dates from and to:	Milestone/progress:
1 & 2	To develop the work of the Achievement and Early Intervention teams in identifying inequality amongst protected characteristics.	All students in terms of SEN, disability, gender, social deprivation and ethnic minority.	Achievement group and Early Intervention group analyse available data (exam, tracking, incident logs, attendance) and determine additional interventions	Achievement Team & Early Intervention Team	Sept 14 – July15	Further interventions identified and implemented as appropriate.
2	Close gender gaps in English to ensure that boys are reaching their potential.	All male students	English dept and Literacy Team to identify strategies to engage boys fully in the curriculum.	AVP Curriculum & PT English. Achievement Group to monitor	Sept 14 – July 15	To achieve national expectations or better.
1 & 2	Narrow the Pupil Premium gap in Maths.	All Pupil Premium students	Maths dept and Early Intervention team to target students for further intervention (emphasis Yrs 10 & 11).	PT Maths & Inclusions Officer	Sept 14 – July 15	To achieve national expectations or better. 5A*-C inc En &Ma is 50% (FFT D 40%)
1 & 2	Track and monitor the use of Pupil Premium funding in providing interventions for FSM ever students. All staff to be aware of PP students in their groups.	All Pupil Premium students.	Use of funding is analysed and reported through the Pupil Premium statement. Use of student data available within SIMs.	Inclusions Officer / School Business Manger	Sept 14 – July 17	PP statement available on school website and updated annually.
3	Target interventions for Gypsy / Roma students to ensure that they reach their full potential.	All students showing as GRT	Progress discussions through Inclusion Team, plus identification of alternative strategies to	Inclusion and Student Team	Sept 14 – July 15	Targets of 25% A*-C inc En & Ma. (FFT D 15%)

			engage students in their learning.			
1 & 2	Ensure that the new SEN&D processes are implemented and that staff are trained accordingly. Provision mapping to be completed for all teaching groups.	All students with a SEN&D need.	Training to be provided to all staff, including the completion of provision maps for all students with SEN&D. Key workers and passport system to be in place	AVP SEN	Sept 14 – July 15	40%A*-C inc En&MA (FFT D 46%.)
1, 2 & 3	To address equality in terms of the protected characteristics through the PSHRE and Citizenship programme.	All students.	Curriculum to incorporate opportunities to address the three Equality Duty strands (April 2011.)	VP Students & APT PSHRE & Citizenship	Sept 14 – July 17	Curriculum covers Equality
1, 2 & 3	To increase student, staff and governors awareness of legal and human rights and the responsibilities that underpin society. For pupils to understand they have rights, how they can exercise their rights and understand how rights link to responsibilities	All pupils and staff	To address equality in terms of the protected characteristics through the PSHRE and Citizenship programme.	VP Students & APT PSHRE & Citizenship, Equality Focus Group	Sept 14 – July 17	Curriculum covers these aspects.
1, 2 & 3	To increase the participation of pupils/students from minority, marginalised or vulnerable backgrounds in school. Increase the diversity of pupils/students involved in the decision-making processes of the school life.	Minority, marginalised and vulnerable pupils/students	Identify which groups are under-represented in the School Council and/or student voice processes within the school Set up group of pupils/students to develop actions which better involve the target group	Head of Enterprise College/ Student Leadership	Sept 14- July 17	Numbers in student leadership roles increases in identified groups.
1	To prevent and respond to	Students belonging to	To review and update	SLT	Sept 14 – July	Students feel safer as reported

	all hate incidents and prejudiced based bullying	vulnerable or minority groups including Sexual Orientation /Race/Gender identity/Disability/Religion or belief.	existing policies and practice relating to bullying (Opportunity to carry out EQIA). Access staff training. Ensure continuing professional development for staff to develop skills in identifying and challenging homophobia and transphobia Promotion of hate incident recording to students. Education of students through Focus Days and tutor periods	Anti-bullying lead	17	in safer schools survey as feel incidents will be dealt with.
1 & 3	To ensure LGBTU students are accepted and homophobia is challenged	Whole school and specifically LGBTU students	Addressed in PSHRE and Citizenship programmes	VP Students & APT PSHRE & Citizenship, Equality Focus Group	Sept 2014-July 2017	Sessions timetabled
2	To continue to provide sexual health services on the school site.	Year 9 students and targeted individuals	Establish and run small group sessions for targeted students via the Healthy Relationship workshops and advertise the onsite service for sexual health.	DCPC and VP Students	Sept 15 July 17	Attendance remains high.
2	To increase social and emotional skills for pupils/students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs	Pupils/students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs	Train staff to deliver small group work sessions to support targeted students in developing social and emotional skills through the Asdan programme, Key Skills groups and therapeutic work.	AVP SEN & SENCO	Sept 14- July 17	Students are identified and groups run on an annual basis.

1,2 & 3	To audit the provision for disabled children within the school and ensure that where possible students can access full time provision.	Disabled students / students with medical conditions	Evaluate current provisions both within and outside of school	VP Students & Site Manager and Director of Learning Support	Sept14 – July15	Evaluations completed and proposals put forward to SLT
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Appendix A: Key legislation

Equality Act 2010

Equality Act 2010

Harmonises and streamlines existing equality legislation into one Single Act.

The Act protects pupils from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics':

- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

This relates to:

- prospective pupils
- pupils at the school
- in some limited circumstances, former pupils

The Act also contains positive action provisions which enable schools to take proportionate action to address disadvantage faced by particular pupils. Such action could include targeted provision, resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged pupil group.

The Public Sector Equality Duty commenced in April 2011.

There are exceptions to enable single-sex schools to admit only pupils of one sex and for schools with a religious character to enable them to have admissions criteria which give preference to members of their own religion.

For more information:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00215460/equality-act-2010-departmental-advice>

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/new-equality-act-guidance/>

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/inclusionandlearnersupport/inclusion/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010>

Accessibility planning

Accessibility planning is a statutory duty and can be incorporated into this policy. Schools must plan for:

- Increasing access for disabled children and young people to the school curriculum
- Improving access to the physical environment of schools, and
- Improving the delivery of written information to disabled children and young people.

Auxiliary aids and services

We acknowledge our duty to provide auxiliary aids as part of the reasonable adjustment duty for all schools as from September 2012.

The school and the Local Authority acknowledge our reasonable adjustment duties under the Equality Act 2010. We will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under an SEN statement, or where the statement does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

Community Cohesion – Education and Inspection Act 2006

General duty

- To promote community cohesion

Specific duties

- Teaching, learning and curriculum – helping children to learn to understand others, to value diversity while also promoting shared values
- Equity and excellence – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest possible level
- Engagement and extended services – to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations with different schools and communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.