



At Heltwate, We SHINE

We aim for our students to be
Supported, Happy, Independent, Nurtured, Empowered

Equality and Diversity Policy

“Equal Opportunities and Respect for All”
Developed for Equality and Diversity Award Feb 23

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Introduction

Our Policy brings together under one umbrella the following protected characteristics:

- Race and ethnicity
- Disability
- Gender and gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Age
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Community cohesion

This document outlines and cross references our combined Equality Policies and Schemes, it is designed to communicate the following:

- Our Diversity statement
- Our legal responsibilities in terms of race, disability, gender and gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation
- Our particular provision for Special Educational Need
- Our intention to promote community cohesion
- Our response to recent legislations
- Our desire to fully meet statutory requirements
- An overview of some actions we have taken to date
- Our Equality Plan.

Inclusiveness is at the heart of our equality plans and we are keen to ensure that we are an inclusive organisation that supports and promotes **Equality for All** within our school, and the wider, community.

We have incorporated all policies into an Equality and Diversity Policy and Plan to create a coherent framework for promoting diversity and equality within the school. The purpose of this document is to show how our school is going to promote equality for disabled pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. We believe in treating everyone fairly and we are committed to creating an environment in our school which is appropriate and accessible to all.

We aim to encourage and listen to local views and involve local people in the work of our school. We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the whole school community working together- learners, staff, governors and parents/carers. All school staff and members of the school's community have a responsibility to treat everyone fairly and to promote arrangements for people with disabilities.

National and Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 which became law in October 2010 has brought together all the current discrimination laws into one. All schools have duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. Schools also have a duty to promote community cohesion, developing good relations across groups within the community.

The three aims of the general duty are:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, by taking steps to meet their needs where they are different from the needs of others
- To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by encouraging participation in activities where it is disproportionately low.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy covers our responsibilities under legislation for ensuring equality in relation to:

- Protected characteristics in schools: Sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity
- Positive action: alleviation of disadvantage schools are allowed to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics.
- Victimisation – protection for children. It is unlawful to victimise a child for anything done in relation to the Equality Act by a school parent or a sibling.
- Direct discrimination: This refers to a person that treats someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic than they would treat another child in the school.
- Indirect discrimination: Provision or practice applied that has the effect of putting children with a particular characteristic at an advantage compared to others. There is special provisions law for disability - Schools are allowed to treat disabled children more favourably. Harassment: This is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic e.g. ridicule of a pupil due to disability.

School Context

The achievement of pupils is monitored by race, gender and disability and the data will be used to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment that embraces respect for all. At Heltwate, we believe that diversity is strength and as such should be celebrated by all who learn and teach here. The current school profile is available on the school website.

Equality in Policy and Practice

In addition to the specific actions set out in the plan, Heltwate School operates equality of opportunity in its daily practice in the following ways:

Teaching and Learning

- We train staff on learning difficulties, autism, Asperger's syndrome, behaviour difficulties, Team Teach and communication is ongoing.
- We use contextual data to improve the support we provide to individuals and groups
- We monitor achievement data by ethnicity, gender, disability and other groups relevant to our setting and act upon findings
- We take account of the achievement of all pupils when planning future learning and set challenging targets based on individual achievement
- We promote equality of access and prepare pupils for life in a diverse society
- We use materials that reflect the diversity within society, without stereotyping or adapt them to meet particular needs
- We challenge racist and discriminatory language and attitudes
- We celebrate aspects of different cultures
- We seek to involve parents and carers in supporting their child's education
- We encourage discussion of equality issues in the classroom and staffroom
- We include teaching and learning styles which are inclusive and reflect the needs of our pupils
- Pupils are given the same opportunities throughout the school
- Older pupils are encouraged to pursue courses and activities that they are interested in and not based on stereotyped images of men and women.
- Links with local organisations e.g. police where men and women fulfil the same role.
- Community Cohesion is promoted in RE, PSHE/Citizenship and through English, Drama, Music and Art in particular.
- Students undertake studies of specific countries in Topic/The World Around Us, as part of a themed Scheme.

- We have a policy on Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in line with the recommendations in the latest national SEND Code of Practice.

Curriculum content is excluded from discrimination law.

The Staff are aware to maintain awareness of delivery that it does not breach a protected characteristic.

Admissions and Exclusions

Our admissions are through referral from the Special Needs Placement panel and do not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender or disability.

Exclusions are rare and based on the school Behaviour Policy with the right to appeal.

Equality and the Law

There are a number of statutory duties that must be met by school.

Race Equality

The general duty requires us to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups

Under the specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an equality plan
- Assess the impact, by ethnicity, of our policies on pupils, staff and parents/carers, especially the achievement levels of pupils
- Monitor the impact of policies in relation to raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 defines a disabled person as someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The general duty requires schools to have due regard to the following:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- Eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people in relation to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encouraging participation in public life by disabled people
- Taking steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Under the specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an equality plan
- Review and revise this every three years

Gender

The Gender Equality Act places a general duty on schools to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender or gender reassignment
- Promote equality of opportunity between male and female pupils and male and female staff

Under the specific duty we will:

- Prepare and publish an equality plan
- Review and revise this every three years

Sexual Orientation

The Equality Act (Sexual orientation) 2007 made discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful for schools, this relates to admission and treatment of, and services to, pupils.

Age

Heltwate School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for people of different ages. Age equality means promoting equal participation in society of people of every age.

Community Cohesion

Schools and their governing bodies have a duty to promote community cohesion. This involves fostering good relations between pupils from different races, faiths or beliefs and different socio-economic backgrounds.

Consultation and Involvement

It is a requirement that the Equality and Diversity Policy and the actions identified in it have been informed by input from staff, pupils, parents and carers. This has been achieved through:

- Feedback from parent/carers questionnaires
- Staff discussions
- Feedback from School council, observations in lessons
- Issues raised at Annual Reviews & Parent consultations
- Feedback from Governing Body meetings

Roles and Responsibilities

Governors

- The governing body is committed to equal opportunities and will endeavour to ensure the school is fully inclusive and responsive to the needs of pupils
- The governing body seeks to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for posts at the school
- The governing body takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the environment is accessible to people with disabilities and that communications from school are as inclusive as possible
- The governing body ensures that no child is discriminated against on account of race, gender or disability

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

- The SLT are responsible for implementing, communicating and monitoring the Equality plan
- The Headteacher/SLT ensure that appointments panels give due regard to the plan, so that there is no discrimination in employment opportunities
- The SLT promote equality of opportunity when developing the curriculum
- The SLT respond to incidents of bullying, racism, discrimination or unfair treatment with due seriousness

Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

- All staff ensure that all pupils are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and maintain awareness of the Equality Plan
- All staff strive to provide material with positive images of race, gender and disability and challenge stereotypes
- All staff will challenge incidents of prejudice, racism or homophobia and record and pass on serious incidents to the attention of SLT

Tackling Discrimination

Harassment on account of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation is unacceptable and is not tolerated within the school environment. All staff are expected to deal with discriminatory incidents and challenge prejudice and stereotyping, and support the full range of diverse needs according to pupils' individual circumstances.

What is a discriminatory incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors, can take many forms including verbal, physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups or activities, unwanted looks or comments, jokes or graffiti. A racist incident is defined as:

“any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur:

- Physical assault because of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Use of derogatory names, insults or jokes
- Racist, sexist, homophobic graffiti
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic badges or insignia
- Bringing discriminatory material into school
- Verbal abuse or threats
- Incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to race, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Discriminatory comments in the course of discussions
- Attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations or groups
- Ridicule of an individual
- Refusal to cooperate with other on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation

Review of Progress and Impact

The policy has been agreed by the Governing Board and it is part of a rolling programme of policy review. In line with legislation, we will review progress on a three year cycle. We make regular assessments of pupils to track progress. As part of this process we monitor achievement by race, gender and disability, to ensure all are making the best progress possible and take action to address any gaps.

Publishing the Plan

In order to meet the statutory requirements, we will:

- Publish our plan on the school website
- Include the plan in the Headteacher's Report to Governors
- Raise awareness of the plan through the school newsletter, assemblies and staff meetings
- Make sure hard copies are available