



HIGHFIELDS SCHOOL

STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY



BOUNDARY WAY, PENN, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 4NT
Telephone: 01902 556530 Fax: 01902 556531 E-mail: enquiries@hswv.org.uk Website: www.hswv.org.uk

Context:

The Equality Act 2010 brought together a number of pieces of legislation dating back as far as the late 1960s into one legal document. All public and private sector organisations must be aware of the expectations of the Equality Act.

The **general duty** is the overarching legal requirement for schools and means we must consider how our policies, practices and day-to-day activities impact on students, staff and the wider community. Schools are required to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations.

The **specific duty** assists the school in meeting the general duty:

- To publish information showing how we are complying with the Equality Duty. This must be updated at least annually.
- To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives at least every four years.

As a minimum, schools are required to publish information on:

- The diversity of the school population.
- How they are performing in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty.
- The diversity of their workforce, although this only applies to schools such as us with more than 150 employees.

Our Equality Goals:

- At Highfields we pride ourselves on being a diverse and integrated community serving a wide cross-section of the City of Wolverhampton and the surrounding area, fairly and equally.
- All members of the school community including students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Governors, parents/carers, partners and visitors have the right to be free from discrimination.
- We are committed to challenging all forms of discrimination.
- We look to ensure that all students are able to achieve no matter their gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background and/or sexuality.
- Difference should be acknowledged and celebrated to ensure that students have a full understanding of each other and respect for each other.
- The ethos of our school is inclusive. Inclusion is promoted across the school from the nature of the curriculum offered to displays in corridors.
- Everyone should be given every opportunity to succeed at Highfields School.

Protected Characteristics:

- The Equality Act sets out **NINE** protected characteristics and it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that these groups are not discriminated against.

| Nine Protected Characteristics |
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| Disability |
| Race |
| Sex |
| Pregnancy, Maternity & Breast Feeding |
| Sexual Orientation |
| Gender Reassignment |
| Religion, Belief or Non-Belief |
| ADULTS ONLY: Age |
| ADULTS ONLY: Marriage & Civil Partnership |

- The only exception is disability. The Equality Act 2010 promotes positive discrimination in favour of people who are disabled. Organisations are expected to make positive reasonable adjustments to allow disabled people full access.
- Students, staff, parents/carers and Governors will be asked whether they see themselves as disabled and what reasonable adjustment would be of assistance to them. In line with data protection protocols this information will be kept by the school and adjustments discussed with those concerned.
- The DfE is currently undergoing consultation on the relationship between Special Educational Need and Disability. We will monitor this carefully and make adjustments as necessary.
- Under the requirements of the Equality Act if a student’s need is met through SEN input there is no need for further action. Organisations have a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to allow full access to their provision, there is no expectation for them to provide provision outside of their organisation.

GENERAL DUTY:

| | Eliminating Discrimination | Advancing Equality of Opportunity | Fostering Good Relationships |
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| Curriculum | <p>Lesson content in RE and Citizenship lessons directly tackle discrimination, its causes and ways to prevent it.</p> <p>Citizenship Controlled Assessment in Y11 directly encourages students to promote multi-culturalism and challenge discrimination.</p> <p>Literature studied in English covers a wide range of discrimination including racism and social-economic discrimination and the impact that this can have on individuals and communities.</p> <p>A curriculum StoneWall champion will be in place for 2014 to ensure that homophobia is clearly challenged across curriculum areas.</p> | <p>All subjects are available to all students in all nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>Selection procedures for KS4 and KS5 subjects relies on student ability alone, no student is excluded from a subject because of disability and where necessary reasonable adjustments are made to allow students to access more practical subjects like BTEC Sport and BTEC Construction.</p> <p>Displays in curriculum areas support equality of opportunity and encourage students to take part. In some areas for example, Science and Maths protected groups are actively encouraged to take part (Women in Engineering Project).</p> <p>Teachers in their planning are clearly aware of student individual need through the development of '3rd sheets'. Here staff are expected to know and plan for students' SEND needs, health concerns and whether they are eligible for Pupil Premium.</p> | <p>Teaching and Learning strategies across the school focus on developing opportunities for students to work together and be successful.</p> <p>Subjects such as Citizenship, RE, Drama, PE/Sport and English encourage teamwork and give students the opportunity to review and be assessed on how well they work together. Subject content in these areas also provides students with the opportunity to understand why team work is important and how working with others can make a difference in their lives.</p> <p>The RE and Citizenship curriculum in both KS3 and KS4 directly challenges stereotypes and encourages students to reflect on their relationships with others.</p> |
| Monitoring & Tracking | <p>School monitoring systems allow for acts of discrimination to be tracked and reviewed quickly.</p> <p>Monitoring systems allows for further filtering of types of discrimination, cause and resulting actions.</p> | <p>The school is clearly committed to the 'closing the gap' agenda and this is at the heart of the school's monitoring and tracking procedures.</p> <p>Staff are expected to feed back at analysis meetings on student performance against the protected characteristics and there is a particular focus on Pupil Premium students.</p> <p>The school is aware of the groups of students who it needs to target and this is clearly written into the school development plan with measurable targets.</p> <p>The school employs early intervention strategies with individuals and groups of students based on the school reporting system and school exams.</p> <p>Funding received for Pupil Premium students is used to advance the progress of these students and provide new opportunities (see Pupil Premium Section of this website).</p> | <p>Interventions as a result of monitoring and tracking often involve parents/carers and, on some occasions, the wider community.</p> <p>The school is aware that educational jargon and data can be off putting for some and so has developed a colour coded reporting system which is more accessible and easier to use.</p> <p>The school is committed to removing the 'mystery of education' and involve parents/carers fully in their child's progress.</p> |

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| Support, Care & Guidance | <p>Pastoral teams have a 'zero tolerance' on any form of discrimination.</p> <p>Sanctions are used quickly but also include education and mediation and involve parents/carers and, where necessary, outside agencies.</p> | <p>Pastoral teams work closely with individual families and build strong relationships with those who require reasonable adjustments to fully access the school.</p> <p>Students are given access to different opportunities based on ability and expected grades rather than any of the protected characteristics. All interventions are ability appropriate and are focused on giving students high expectations that are achievable and give them the best opportunity in future life.</p> | <p>Pastoral teams are often the first contact that the school has with parents/carers and the wider community.</p> <p>Pastoral teams are recruited from the local community and fully understand the needs and expectations of the community that the school serves.</p> <p>Pastoral teams will visit parents/carers and members of the community if they are unable to access the school.</p> <p>When issues develop between students sanctions are applied by pastoral teams who also look to use mediation to encourage students to overcome problems and challenge their own prejudices.</p> <p>Form Time activities provide students with the opportunity to work together and build on their teamwork skills.</p> |

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| <p>Community & Wider School Life</p> | <p>The school assembly calendar is designed to actively challenge any discrimination by bringing students face-to-face with a broad cross-section of the local community.</p> <p>The school has strong relationships with local community leaders and talks openly with them about any acts of discrimination and how we can work together to challenge them.</p> <p>The school works closely with organisations like Amnesty, Kick It Out and Stonewall to develop staff and student champions against discrimination.</p> <p>Students are actively encouraged to take part in pressure groups for equality like Amnesty International; school has its own Amnesty International Group.</p> | <p>School assemblies and displays challenge stereotypes and clearly set the agenda that all students can achieve.</p> <p>Students are presented with role models from a wide-cross section of society at events such as Staying in Learning Day.</p> <p>Students are encouraged in Y11 to take part in Work Experience which they find for themselves. All students are expected to take part in this experience and it is not limited in any way by any of the nine protected characteristics.</p> <p>The school is committed to ensuring that parents and the wider community fully interact with us. Reasonable adjustments are made for those with any of the protected characteristics to access the school.</p> | <p>The school has a newly appointed community team including a Community Engagement Officer. The aim of this group is to further develop links with the wider community.</p> <p>Over the next year the school will become more readily available for community use which will further develop relationships with a wider cross-section of society.</p> <p>The school assembly calendar brings a large number of outside speakers from both the local and national community into the school.</p> <p>The school has strong relationships with community and religious leaders and will continue to develop these further, providing opportunity for interaction and discussion between groups.</p> <p>The school will look to take a community lead in the celebration of events and provide a wide cross-section of the society to take part in celebrations like Diwali and Christmas.</p> |

SPECIFIC DUTY:

- We will write to all members of the school community about the Equality Act and the school's commitment to it.
- During that communication we will ask people to self-define themselves against the protected characteristics. We think that it is very important that the definition comes from the individual themselves and is not imposed by the school.
- Once this information is gathered we will publish on our website our own school census and link it to the protected characteristics.
- We will also publish our general school accessibility plans.

Equality Objectives:

- Promoting equality is such an essential part of our school that it features heavily in our School Development Plan 2013-16.
- Community and equality are explicitly linked together. Good relations with all sections of the local community mean that together we can challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The school has recently appointed two Assistant Headteachers to oversee a Community Engagement Working Group including colleagues responsible for: Citizenship, Sport, Performance, Business Links and Extended Schools as well as a newly appointed Community Engagement Officer.
- The Community Engagement Working Group has three main focal points which all clearly relate to the Equality Act 2010. These three areas are:
 - Engaging the Community,
 - Promoting Tolerance and Understanding and
 - Creating Confident, Independent and Resilient Learners.

Progress towards these aims will be published on the school website on a termly basis. Items of interest will also feature in the school's News Blog.

Key Focus 2014-15

- Each year we will select one area covered in the protected characteristics as a key focus for the school community.
- Our first area of focus for 2014-15 is challenging homophobic language in school. You can find the action plan in the Promoting Tolerance and Understanding Community Action Plan.
- We are aiming to challenge indirect and ignorant prejudice and homophobia, particularly the use of homophobic language. We believe that often homophobic language is used without thinking or without considering the discriminating nature of what is being said. This does not make it acceptable and it is important that we educate our community on this matter.
- We will do this by developing a StoneWall champion who will train staff and students. This will in turn lead to the development of resources challenging homophobia in some subject areas and ensuring that LGBT issues are discussed by the School Council.
- The school will also take responsibility for ensuring that LGBT services are signposted and that school displays do not promote stereotypes or discriminate.

- We will take student and staff voices at the start of the project and at the end of the project. After the initial Voices exercise we will set measurable number targets for the reduction in the use of homophobic language which will be updated on our website.

Staff Training 2014-15:

- **ALL STAFF:**
All staff will receive training on teaching LGBT issues. Some staff working with the StoneWall champion will trial curriculum developments including LGBT issues in subject content to be fully integrated in 2015. All staff will receive a refresher on the Equality Act 2010.
- **INCLUSION TEAM:**
All members of the inclusion team will receive training on supporting students over LGBT issues. The inclusion team will also receive training from the West Midlands Police PREVENT agenda aimed at tackling violent extremism.

Responsibility for Equality:

The role of Governors

- The Governing Body will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to pupils, and responsive to their needs.
- The Governing Body ensures that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender or disability.
- The Governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities, and also strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and pupils.
- The Governors welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a child's socio-economic background, race, gender or disability.
- The Governing Body ensures that no child is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their race, sex or disability.

The role of the Headteacher

- It is the Headteacher's role to implement the school's equality actions and he is supported by the Governing Body in doing so.
- It is the Headteacher's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Act, and that staff apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The Headteacher ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this Act, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The Headteacher promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum, and promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The Headteacher treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

UPDATED: August 2014