



Equal Opportunities Policy

The Education Committee is responsible for this policy.

Last Reviewed: February 2026

Contents

Equal Opportunities for All	2
Parents.....	2
Children	2
Staff.....	3
Principles.....	3
Actions	3
Equal Opportunities - Multi-Cultural	3
Equal Opportunities - Gender	4
Equal Opportunities - Race	4
Equal Opportunities - Ability.....	4
Equal Opportunities - Class	5
Equal Opportunities - Physical Disability	5
Monitoring of the policy	5
Inclusion	5
Teaching and Learning Style	7
EYFS	7
Training.....	9
Food	9
Meetings	9
Staff	9
Implementation	10
Recruitment and Selection.....	10
Disability	10
Dignity at Work	11
Procedure.....	11
Authority.....	12

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:
Accessibility Plan
Behaviour Management Policy

Curriculum Policy
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Mission and Aims Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
School Development Plan
School Mission and Aims

Equal Opportunities for All

'An entitlement to learning must be an entitlement for all pupils.'

All pupils at Highfield Priory have an equal right to develop and achieve their potential. Equality of opportunity underpins the school curriculum and the work of the school. Children at Highfield Priory are treated as individuals with their own abilities, difficulties, attitudes, backgrounds and experiences.

Within EYFS we are committed to meeting all needs of our children including EAL, children with identified SEN and gifted and talented. We are committed to meeting their needs and ensuring inclusion for all. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion/belief, colour, creed, marital status, ethnic or national origin, or political belief, has no place within the school and nursery.

The Legal Framework and Other Supporting Policies

The following legislation informs our school Equal Opportunities Policy:

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**, which requires schools to ensure that they do not discriminate against either sex in matters of admissions, standards of behaviour, dress and appearance, delivery of the curriculum and provision of all educational services.
- **The Race Relations Act 1976**, which describes direct and indirect discrimination and gives every Local Authority the duty to give due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups;
- **The Human Rights Act 2000**, which makes most of the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights enforceable in the English Courts
- **The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**, which includes a positive duty of schools to promote racial equality measures.
- **The Special Needs and Disability Act 2001**, which includes requirements on schools to ensure there is no discrimination against disabled people, including staff and pupils, and to have available information about facilities for disabled people.
- **The Equality Act 2010**, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

Parents

We will introduce and communicate the Equal Opportunities Policy to parents through the school website, prospectus and admissions meetings.

Children

It is the right of every child irrespective of race, culture, class, gender, special needs or ability to achieve their full potential. Each child should have access to an education, which will enable them to utilise their talents to the full and achieve their potential. We must develop children to

become sensitive to and aware of ways in which equality of opportunity is denied and how this might affect them in society.

Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to foster and facilitate this ideal by creating a welcoming environment for all children. They will endeavour to establish an atmosphere within school which effectively reduces prejudice and raises self-esteem, so that all children can develop independence, freedom of choice and knowledge of their right to take on whatever roles they choose, no matter what their cultural background, gender or ability. All staff are expected to challenge language, actions, behaviours and attitudes which are oppressive or discriminatory on the grounds as specified in this policy.

As a staff we have to remember that we are role models. We must challenge the concept of discrimination based upon differences of race, gender and special needs.

This policy aims to:

- Offer equal opportunities regardless of race, culture, gender, academic ability, physical ability or class.
- Provide an environment free from social, sexual or cultural prejudice for all members of our school community.
- Achieve an environment in which members of the school community can be respected as individuals and in which the varied experiences of the community can enrich the life of the school.

Principles

Equal Opportunities is the responsibility of the whole school community and must be reflected throughout the organisation of the school and be addressed in the taught and hidden curriculum.

All staff, governors, parents/guardians and pupils regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, gender and socio-economic background, are welcome and will be encouraged to participate in the life of the school.

The school recognises its responsibilities under the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act to eliminate discrimination and to promote good race relations.

Actions

Statements of equality dimensions and opportunity will be printed in all relevant school documentation e.g. school prospectus.

Training for staff will be part of the Induction process; if further training is needed, this will be provided.

On acceptance to the school all parents will receive information detailing the school's Expected Behaviour of Pupils (found in the Behaviour Management Policy).

The school will make all reasonable effort to ensure that meetings are accessible and convenient for all and take into account particular needs and requirements, e.g. physical access, child care and interpreter support.

Equal Opportunities - Multi-Cultural

It is our school policy:

- To incorporate a balanced view of the world through a multi-cultural approach.

- To recognise that our pupils are world citizens who will meet a wide variety of cultures throughout their lives.
- To evaluate our practice to ensure that it is not at the expense of indigenous cultures.

Equal Opportunities - Gender

It is our school policy:

- To seek to promote non-sexiest attitudes in both children and staff.
- To allow children equal access to opportunities which will equip them for adult life and to achieve challenging expectations.
- To work towards the eradication of sex stereotyping.

In order to work towards the eradication of such differences we will ask ourselves the following types of questions when evaluating our practice.

- Are all children able to try out new roles in play and learning activities?
- Are all classroom tasks shared equally?
- Do all children get an equal chance to use equipment and resources?
- Do all our displays and teaching aids present a non-sexiest attitude?
- Are our responses to bad behaviour the same to all children?
- Are people from other cultures presented to children in a non-stereotypical way?
- Do all children have equal access to playground space and other play facilities?

Equal Opportunities - Race

It is our school policy:

- That no child or adult should be treated in any way differently, or in a derogatory manner, because of their race.
- To challenge racism in the context of a caring school community.

In order to fulfil the above, the following types of behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Provocative behaviour, i.e. wearing of any racist badges or insignia.
- The use of verbal abuse or name calling of a racist nature.
- The encouragement of other to behave in a racist manner.
- The ridiculing of an individual for cultural differences.
- The telling of racist jokes or stories.
- The exclusion of others because of their culture, ethnicity or race.

Equal Opportunities - Ability

It is our school policy:

- To recognise good effort and attitudes regardless of academic achievement.
- To allow all children access to equipment, resources and teacher time regardless of their academic achievements.
- To value all efforts and achievements of children in all areas of the curriculum.
- In consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, to ensure any special educational needs are met. (see SEN policy)

Every child has an entitlement to a positive, helpful learning environment, with carefully planned work which matches individual needs, in order that they may reach their potential.

Equal Opportunities - Class

It is our school policy:

- That children should not be treated in any way differently because of an assumed social class.
- That assumptions will not be made as regards class difference.

Equal Opportunities - Physical Disability

It is our school policy that:

- Children should not be treated in any way differently to others due to their individual physical disabilities and needs.
- A provision should be made for the individual special needs of any disabled children within our school community.
- A physically disabled child has a right to take part in all activities within the school environment in so far as their individual disability allows them to do so.

Monitoring of the policy

We are committed to meeting the needs of these children, as we are to meeting the needs of all groups of children within our school. The school fully meets the requirements of the amended Disability Discrimination Act that came into effect in September 2002. All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that these children are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled children.

The school is committed to providing an environment that allows disabled children full access to all areas of learning. All our classroom entrances are wide enough for wheelchair access and the designated points of entry for our school also allow wheelchair access. Teachers modify teaching and learning expectations as appropriate for children with disabilities. For example, they may give additional time to complete certain activities, or they may modify teaching materials. In their planning teachers ensure that they give children with disabilities the opportunity to develop skills in practical aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers ensure that the work undertaken by disabled children:

- takes account of their pace of learning and the equipment they use
- takes account of the effort and concentration needed in oral work, or when using, for example, vision aids
- is adapted or offers alternative activities in those subjects where children are unable to manipulate tools or equipment, or use certain types of materials
- allows opportunities for them to take part in educational visits and other activities linked to their studies
- uses assessment techniques that reflect their individual needs and abilities

In our school we value each child as a unique individual. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children and seek to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.

Inclusion

We value the individuality of all of our children, and that of the families they come from. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and

balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all children. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

Our school aims to be an inclusive school. We actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different groups of children within our school:

- girls and boys
- minority ethnic and faith groups
- children who need support to learn English as an additional language
- children with special educational needs
- children with disabilities
- able, gifted and talented children
- children who are at risk of disaffection or exclusion

Coordinators produce and regularly update Schemes of Work. Class teachers modify, as necessary the Schemes of Work and Programmes of Study to provide all children with relevant and appropriately challenging work. We meet these needs through:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to children's diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils

We achieve educational inclusion by continually reviewing what we do, through asking ourselves these key questions:

- do all our children achieve their best?
- are there differences in the achievement of different groups of children?
- what are we doing for those children who we know are not achieving their best?
- are our actions effective?
- are we successful in promoting racial harmony and preparing pupils to live in a diverse society?

We ensure that children with special needs are fully integrated into the daily groupings of the children and their routines.

In order to make appropriate and effective provision or adaptations, we collect information from Parents/Carers to find out the children's:

- Visual/hearing needs
- Physical needs
- Emotional needs
- Learning needs
- Self-help needs
- Communication needs.
- English as an additional language

We ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities are involved in play activities alongside other children wherever possible.

We encourage and support children with special educational needs and disabilities to play confidently with other children and make a positive contribution.

We develop activities and experiences to raise the other children's awareness of positive images of disability and difference.

We make flexible arrangements for additional adult support to enhance social interaction, avoiding segregating children from playing with their peers.

We use a range of strategies to engage the children in play, and provide learning activities to suit individual children's most effective style of learning.

Teaching and Learning Style

The Schemes of Work and Programmes of Study set out what most pupils should be taught at each key stage however, teachers should teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that suit their pupils' abilities. We aim to give all our children the opportunity to succeed and reach the highest level of personal achievement. We analyse the attainment of different groups of pupils to ensure that all pupils are achieving as much as they can. We also make ongoing assessments of each child's progress. Teachers use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. For some children, we use the Programmes of Study from earlier key stages. This enables some of our children to make progress in their own lessons, perhaps after significant amounts of time spent away from school.

When the attainment of a child falls significantly below the expected level, teachers enable the child to succeed by planning work that is in line with that child's individual needs. Where the attainment of a child significantly exceeds the expected level of attainment, teachers use materials from a later key stage, or extend the breadth of work within the area or areas for which the child shows particular aptitude.

Teachers are familiar with the equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability.

Teachers ensure that all children:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the differences they see in others
- take responsibility for their actions
- participate safely in clothing that is appropriate to their religious beliefs
- are taught in groupings that allow them all to experience success
- use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, without stereotyping
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- participate fully, regardless of disabilities or medical needs

EYFS

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and all children and their families. We believe that all children are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential. Account is taken of their range of life experiences when planning for their learning development. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage. Some children progress beyond this into the expectations of KS1. We aim to achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more

able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We ensure that children with special needs are fully integrated into the daily groupings of the children and their routines. To make appropriate and effective provision or adaptations, we collect information from Parents/Carers to find out the children's:

- Visual/hearing needs
- Physical needs
- Emotional needs
- Learning needs
- Self-help needs
- Communication needs

We plan our Early Years Curriculum (with access to the Early Years Foundation Stage), to include children with SEN and disabilities, as follows:

Staff are deployed in order that they are able to provide the necessary support for all children to have first - hand experience with the learning environment. Teaching styles are adapted and changed to facilitate learning activities being delivered to children's individual learning preferences and needs. Staff respond confidently to children's preferred learning styles, recognising that children learn in different ways and using all of their senses. Individual children are planned for using information from parents' knowledge of their child, advice from other professionals and observations of children as they explore the environment. Future learning experiences are planned for as a direct result of what has been observed, parents are invited to comment upon these observations as they happen.

The curriculum offered in our nursery, preschool and reception classes encourages children to develop positive attitudes to people who are different from them. It encourages children to empathise with others and to begin to develop the skills of critical thinking. We do this by:

- Making children feel valued and good about themselves
- Ensuring that children have equality of access to learning
- Reflecting the widest possible range of communities in the choice of resources
- Avoiding stereotypes or derogatory images in the selection of materials
- Celebrating a wide range of appropriate festivals
- Creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance
- Helping children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable
- Ensuring that the curriculum offered is inclusive of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities
- Ensuring that children whose first language is not English have full access to the curriculum and are supported in their learning.

The Nursery and staff are committed to:

- Striving to promote equal access to services and projects by taking practical steps, (where possible) such as ensuring access to people with additional needs and by producing materials in relevant languages and media
- Providing a secure environment in which all our children can flourish and all contributions are valued
- Including and valuing the contribution of all families to our understanding of equality and diversity
- Providing positive non-stereotype information about different ethnic groups and people with disabilities

- Improving our knowledge and understanding of issues of equality and diversity
- Regularly reviewing childcare practice to ensure the policy is effective and practices which are discriminatory
- Making inclusion a thread, which runs through all of the activities of the nursery including encouraging positive role models through the use of toys, imaginary play and activities that promote non-stereotyped images.

Training

The nursery recognises the importance of training as a key factor in the implementation of an effective equal opportunity policy. The nursery will strive towards the provision of equal opportunity and inclusion training for all staff on a regular basis and will refer to and use the National Strategies Early years:

- IDP Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- IDP Supporting Children on the Autistic Spectrum
- Progress Matters
- Mark Making Matters

Food

- We will work in partnership with parents to ensure that the medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met
- We will help children to learn about a range of food, cultural approaches to meal times and eating, and to respect the differences among them.

Meetings

- Meetings will be arranged to ensure that all families who wish to, may be involved in the daily events and special events of the nursery
- Information about meetings and activities will be communicated in a variety of ways according to individual needs (written, verbal and translated), to ensure that all parents have information about access to the meetings.

Staff

Highfield Priory is an equal opportunities employer.

In order to promote an environment within which the school can call upon the widest possible range of knowledge, skill and experience, as well as ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice, we are committed to achieving and maintaining a workforce which represents the population within our recruitment area in terms of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age, and disability (together known as "Protected Characteristics").

To this end, we shall regularly review the operation of our recruitment, promotion, training and development policies to ensure that no applicant for employment or member of staff is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

No employee or prospective employee will receive unfair or unlawful treatment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic, because they are perceived to have a Protected Characteristic or because they are associated with someone who has a Protected Characteristic, in particular but not only, in relation to:

- Recruitment and selection
- Promotion, transfer & training opportunities
- Benefits, terms and conditions of employment
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Termination of employment including redundancies
- Conduct at work
- Procedures ensure fair and equitable treatment in relation to admission and assessment of students.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff must treat visitors, pupils, parents, suppliers and former members of staff.

Please see the Staff Handbook for further detail.

Implementation

The School with the assistance of the staff will:

- Break down any barriers to equality of opportunity which may prevent staff members realising their full potential or accessing benefit
- Advertise vacancies and ensure job selection criteria are appropriate for the job.
- Promptly and fully investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment, taking appropriate action where necessary.
- Ensure that all members of staff are fully informed and trained on this Policy.
- Monitor the composition of the School and the effects of its recruitment practices.
- Existing procedures are reviewed and examined to ensure they are not discriminatory in their operation
- Language used in official communication reflects the letter and spirit of the policy

Recruitment and Selection

The staffing process is governed by the school's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between, on the one hand, the individual's knowledge and skills, experience and character and, on the other hand, the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

- The capability of the individual to perform in the position will be the major selection criterion but the ability both to work with others and to be trained, coupled with individual potential will be taken into account.
- All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible.
- Carefully selected and validated skills and/or psychometric tests may be used as part of the selection process and will be administered by a trained tester.
- Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of satisfactory references and DBS checks (and in the absence of prohibition orders) and/or medical report and/or satisfactory completion of a probationary period.

Disability

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant for a position at the School. Such reasonable adjustments to the application procedures shall be made as are required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of their disability. For

example, where written tests are used, alternative arrangements will be made for visually impaired applicants.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Head of Department to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Head of Department may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible adjustments and you may be required to give your consent to a report being produced about your state of health and ability to perform your duties. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible. Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals, to assess its continuing effectiveness.

The School will make such adjustments to work arrangements or School premises as are reasonable to enable a disabled staff member to carry out his or her duties. This will include, but is not limited to, consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job redesign, flexible hours.

Where during the course of their employment a disabled member of staff recognises their need for a reasonable adjustment to be made to work arrangements or School premises, he or she should discuss this requirement with the School Business Manager.

Dignity at Work

You should not engage in any behaviour or conduct which may amount to harassment of another person at work. Harassment of any kind is regarded as a disciplinary offence and in serious instances may lead to instant dismissal.

Harassment may take the form of unwanted conduct which is related to a relevant Protected Characteristic which is perceived as affecting an employee's dignity at work. It may also take the form of unwanted conduct towards someone based on their appearance or other personal characteristics which is perceived as affecting their dignity at work. It is not only unwanted physical contact, assault or propositions; it includes suggestive remarks or gestures, pin-ups, graffiti, offensive comments, jokes and banter. Harassment may include bullying, intimidatory behaviour, persistent teasing or constant unfounded criticism of the performance of work tasks, unfair allocation of work and responsibilities, or exclusion from normal work place conversation. It may be directed towards one individual or a group. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave.

Procedure

- If you consider that you have been the recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment, it is open to you to try to resolve the problem informally with the other person, either face to face or in writing. If this is not appropriate or has not been successful, you may raise a grievance in accordance with the procedure in this Handbook. All such grievances will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence as far as reasonably practicable to progress the complaint. Both during the investigation of the complaint and afterwards (whatever the outcome), consideration will be given to ensuring that you and the alleged harasser are not required to work together against your wishes.
- If you consider that you have been subject to discrimination of any form, you should inform the Head or the School Business Manager.
- The School will seek to ensure that you are not in any way penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has stopped.

- False or malicious allegations will be treated as a disciplinary offence. Retaliation against a member of staff who complains of harassment can be expected to lead to disciplinary action.

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Finance and General Purposes Committee, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Safeguarding Committee, Education Committee and Marketing Committee.