



Equality and Diversity Policy 2024-25

INTRODUCTION

Equality Mission Statement

At Northleigh House School, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all students, staff, volunteers and, parents/carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, faith, or socio-economic background.

We have a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life. The achievement of students is monitored according to the various sub-groups represented in our community and we will use this data to support students, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching.

We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all.

At Northleigh House School we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach, and visit here.

Equality in Practice

The school operates equality of opportunity in its day-to-day practice in the following ways:

Teaching and Learning

We aim to provide all our students with the opportunity to succeed, and to reach the highest levels of personal achievement. To do this, we will:

- use contextual data to ensure that the support we provide for individuals and groups is effective and appropriate;
- monitor achievement data and action any gaps;
- take account of the achievement of all students when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;
- ensure equality of access for all students and prepare them for life in a diverse society;
- use materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population, and local community in terms of race, gender, disability, and sexual orientation, without stereotyping;
- promote attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;
- provide opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;

- seek to involve all parents/carers in supporting their children's education;
- encourage the discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations, and the impact on learning.

Admissions and Exclusions

Our admissions arrangements are fair and transparent, and do not discriminate on race, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic factors. Exclusions will always be based on the school's Behaviour Policy. We will closely monitor exclusions in respect of equality, in order, to avoid any potential adverse impact.

Equal Opportunities for Staff

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities principles and the monitoring and active promotion of equality in all aspects of staffing and employment. All staff appointments and promotions are made based on merit and ability and in compliance with the law. As an employer we ensure that we eliminate discrimination and harassment in our employment practice and actively promote equality across all groups within our workforce.

Equality aspects such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, age, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion, or belief are not considered when appointing staff/volunteers and particularly when allocating teaching and learning responsibilities, additional payments or re-evaluating staff structures, to ensure decisions are free of discrimination. Actions to ensure this commitment is met include:

- monitoring recruitment, retention, and responsibility allocation;
- continued professional development opportunities for all staff;
- senior management team support to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Equality and the Law

The Equality Act (2010) introduced a single equality duty for all public sector organisations including schools: known as the "public sector equality duty". The Act requires all schools to show how they are meeting the aims of the Equality Act by giving due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by 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.

This Equality Diversity Policy is our response to demonstrate a) that we comply with the duty to have due regard for the three aims above and b) specific and measurable objectives which will be pursued over the coming years to achieve the three aims.

Race Equality

The General Race Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Disability

Definition of Disability

Disability legislation has defined 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 definition of disability has also been extended as follows: - people with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer (although not all cancers) are deemed disabled before they experience the long-term and substantial adverse effect on their activities; - individuals with a mental illness no longer have to demonstrate that it is “clinically well - recognised”, although the person must still demonstrate a long-term and substantial adverse impact on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Legal Duties

Legislation places a general duty on schools, requiring them to have due regard for the following when carrying out and delivering services:

- promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related 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.

Gender Equality

Legislation places a general and specific duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender and to promote equality of opportunity between female and male students and between women and men and transgender people.

Sexual Orientation

Legislation makes discrimination unlawful in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of sexual orientation. For schools this means admissions, benefits and services for students and treatment of students.

Age Discrimination

Legislation makes discrimination on grounds of age. For schools this has particular relevance in the appointment and treatment of staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Trustees

The Trustees have set out its commitment to equal opportunities in this Policy and it will continue to do all it can to ensure that the school is fully inclusive to students, and responsive to their needs based on race, gender, sexual orientation and disability.

- The Trustees seek to ensure that people are not discriminated against when applying for jobs at our school on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

- The Trustees take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school environment gives access to people with disabilities and strive to make school communications as inclusive as possible for parents, carers and students.
- The Trustees welcome all applications to join the school, whatever a student's socio-economic background, race, sexual orientation, or disability.
- The Trustees ensure that no student is discriminated against whilst in our school on account of their socio-economic background, race, sexual orientation, or disability.

The Role of the School Director

- It is the School Director's role to implement the school's Equality Policy Plan and is supported by the Trustees in doing so.
- It is the School Director's role to ensure that all staff are aware of the Equality Policy and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations.
- The School Director ensures that all appointment panels give due regard to this Policy, so that no-one is discriminated against when it comes to employment or training opportunities.
- The School Director promotes the principle of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum (along with the Curriculum and Learning Co-ordinator), promotes respect for other people and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The School Director treats all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying or discrimination, including racist incidents, with due seriousness.

The Role of all Staff: Teaching and Non-Teaching

- All staff will ensure that all students are treated fairly, equally and with respect, and will maintain awareness of the school's Equality Policy.
- All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender, sexual orientation and disability, and challenges stereotypical images.
- All staff will challenge any incidents of prejudice, racism, or homophobia, and record any serious incidents, drawing them to the attention of the School Director or a member of the senior management team.
- Teachers support the work of non-teaching staff and encourage them to intervene in a positive way against any discriminatory incidents or to report such incidents to a member of the senior staff.

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 any discriminatory incidents that may occur. They are expected to know how to identify and challenge prejudice and stereotyping; and to support the full range of diverse needs according to a student's individual circumstances. Racist and homophobic incidents and other incidents of harassment or bullying are dealt with by the member of staff present, escalating to the School Director/Chair of Trustees or a member of the Senior Management Team.

What is a Discriminatory Incident?

Harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or other factors such as socio-economic status, can take many forms including verbal or physical abuse, name calling, exclusion from groups and games, unwanted looks or comments, jokes and graffiti.

A racist incident was defined by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) as: 'Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

Types of Discriminatory Incident

Types of discriminatory incidents that can occur are:

- physical assault against a person or group because of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or gender;
- use of derogatory names, insults and jokes;
- racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory graffiti;
- provocative behaviour such as wearing racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory badges or insignia;
- bringing discriminatory material into school;
- verbal abuse and threats;
- incitement of others to discriminate or bully due to victim's race, disability, gender or sexual orientation;
- discriminatory comments in the course of discussion;
- attempts to recruit others to discriminatory organisations and groups;
- ridicule of an individual for difference eg food, music, religion, dress etc;
- refusal to co-operate with other people on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

(This is not an exhaustive list)

Responding to and reporting incidents

All staff should view dealing with incidents as vital to the wellbeing of the whole school. Where a formal complaint is raised, the School's procedure for dealing with complaints will apply. This procedure is accessible through the School website or in an alternative form as requested.

Review of Progress and Impact

The Equality and Diversity Policy has been agreed by the Trustees. We have a rolling programme for reviewing our school policies and their impact.

We make regular assessments of students' learning and use this information to track student's progress. As part of this process, we regularly monitor achievement by ethnicity and disability, to ensure that all groups of students are making the best possible progress and take appropriate action to address any gaps.

Review Date: September 2025