Highams Park
Academy Trust

Highams Park Academy Trust

Policy and Procedure for Equality

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10 February 2022	Phil Grundy	10 February 2022
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1. Introduction

a) Highams Park School is committed to equality and valuing diversity and actively supports practices that promote genuine equality of opportunity for all staff and students.

b) Highams Park School is committed to promoting a positive and diverse culture in which all staff and students are valued and supported to fulfil their potential irrespective of any protected characteristic.

c) Highams Park School recognises its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to promoting the equality and diversity of all those we work with especially our employees, students and visitors. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying and harassment and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its subsequent provisions.

d) The following groups of students have been identified as key recipients in terms of the implementation of this policy:

- Looked After Children or Children in Need
- SEND
- Children at risk of exclusion
- Children from an ethnic group, including those from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller background
- Children missing in education
- Children with medical conditions affecting attendance at school
- Are school age/teenage parents
- Are young carers
- Children within, or at risk of joining, the criminal justice system
- Children with mental health issues
- Children in receipt of free school meals
- Children for whom Pupil Premium funding is received
- Gifted and talented
- Are gender questioning or going through transition
- Children who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual
- Any other student the school deems to be vulnerable

e) This policy and all associated procedures apply to all staff (including volunteers and students on placement), young people and visitors and should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, SEN, admissions, complaints and employment policies.

f) Failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action. Discriminatory treatment, bullying or harassment of staff or students by visitors will also not be tolerated.

2. Compliance

This policy has been developed in response to the Equality Act 2010 and replaces previous policies relating to race, gender and disability equality. It has been designed to help the school meet the duty to:

a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct.

b) Advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

c) Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

d) The Equality Act 2010 defines nine protected characteristics, of which the following are potentially applicable to the Highams Park community (students, staff and Trustees) are:

- Age (as an employer but not applicable to pupils)
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

e) Staff and Trustees will:

- Actively promote equality of opportunity in all areas of school life.
- Ensure that members of the academy community know their rights, and respect the rights of others.
- Aim to ensure that prejudice or discrimination in all its forms is actively rejected.
- Raise awareness of equality issues for all members of the academy community, and through our links with the local community.
- Establish strategies to ensure equal access to the curriculum and enable each individual to fulfil his/her potential regardless of ability, gender, race, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

f) Equality and diversity principles based on the above aims will be embedded in our daily practices, policies and the processes of decision-making, including:

- Admissions, induction and attendance.
- Students' progress and achievement.
- Students' personal development and wellbeing, particularly in relation to safeguarding.
- Parental involvement.
- Working with the wider community.
- Behaviour management.
- Staff recruitment and professional development.
- Curriculum access and participation.
- Teaching styles and strategies.

3. Publication of Information and Equality Objectives

a) Highams Park School acknowledges its legal duties to publish information on compliance with the three strands of the public sector equality duty (to eliminate discrimination; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations) and, in addition, to publish specific and measurable equality objectives.

b) Highams Park School will work to analyse data and existing practices to set out the actions taken in compliance of the equality duty and to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives to support the development of the school and its community.

c) The information on the equality duty will be updated annually and the objectives every 4 years. Publication takes place on the Highams Park School website.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

a) The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for all equality and diversity matters at Highams Park School is the Principal.

b) It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Treat colleagues, young people and visitors with dignity and respect; and avoid behaving in any manner that may give rise to claims of discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- Support and participate in any measures introduced to promote equality and diversity;
- Actively challenge discrimination and disadvantage in accordance with their responsibilities;
- Report any issues associated with equality and diversity in accordance with this policy.

5. Duty to Make Reasonable Adjustments

We will actively seek to make reasonable adjustments, where there is a need to ensure that a disabled person has the same access to everything as a non-disabled person, as far as is reasonable. We will take positive and proactive steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles faced by a disabled individual, as far as is reasonable.

6. Admissions Policy

Our admissions criteria are defined under the Admissions Policy and are applied consistently to every young person, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

7. Curriculum Delivery

The curriculum is crucial to tackling inequalities for pupils including gender stereotyping, preventing bullying and raising attainment for certain groups. The principles of equality and diversity are embedded in our academic and social curriculum. Positive and proactive steps will be taken to prevent discrimination against, or victimisation of, any student in the provision of education or access to any benefit, facility or service including educational trips, work experience and leisure activities.

8. Exclusion Policy

The decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently is a last resort. Our exclusion criteria are described under the Behaviour Policy and are applied consistently to every student, irrespective of any protected characteristic.

9. Recruitment and Selection

a) All employees, whether part-time, full-time, temporary or permanent will be treated fairly and equally. We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Selections will be made on the basis of aptitude, ability and/or merit, where appropriate.

b) Where appropriate, the Trust will endeavour to make all reasonable and effective adjustments during the recruitment and selection process.

10. Reporting and Recording Incidents of Discrimination and Harassment

All incidents of discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment must be reported to senior staff and recorded as soon as is reasonably possible (and in any event within 24 hours of the incident). All bullying-related incidents (confirmed or otherwise), will be addressed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy (for students) or the Disciplinary Procedure Relating to Misconduct for all Employees (for staff).

11. Complaints and Grievances

If an individual believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, they are asked to follow our complaints or grievance procedure (as appropriate).

12. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

a) The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 'Equality and Diversity Policy' is the Principal.

b) Additional support would also be provided to any parent or significant person, wishing to know more about the policy and procedures outlined above. A copy of this policy document is available for inspection on the premises during office hours and an electronic copy is posted on our website.

c) The Equality Policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle by a representative working party consisting of the following stakeholders:

- Students
- Parents
- Staff
- Trustees
- Community representatives

d) The effectiveness of the Single Equality Scheme will be assessed using a self-evaluation framework and an assessment of progress against targets identified in the action plan together with stakeholder views. Following this evaluation, recommendations will be made for changes to the policy and action planning for the future to continue to improve the culture of equality for all within the academy.