



The Priory School, Hitchin

Educating Students for Success in Life

Name of policy	Equality, Diversity and Cohesion
Statutory	Yes
Date policy was up-dated	Autumn 2025
Date of next review	Autumn 2026
Governors committee	Student Wellbeing & Inclusion
Member of staff responsible for the policy	Claudia Omar

Responsibility Respect Resilience

1 Rationale

This document is for the information of parents and students, and for the guidance of staff and other stakeholders. Its aim is to ensure that we give all members of the community equal opportunities to succeed and reflects the school commitment to meeting the Equality Act (2010).

- 1.1 The School is committed to the principle of equal opportunities for all. Therefore, it will ensure that all students, colleagues, parents and governors receive equal consideration at all times in every aspect of school life.
- 1.2 The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to ensure protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of specific characteristics (referred to as protected characteristics). This means that schools cannot discriminate against students or treat them less favourably because of their sex (gender), race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or pregnancy or maternity.

Age and marriage and civil partnership are also “protected characteristics” but are not part of the school provisions related to students.

The Act requires all public organisations, including schools to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and two specific duties

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** or “general duty”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

- 1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- 2 Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- 3 Foster good relations between different groups

Two “specific duties”

This requires all public organisations, including schools to

1. Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty
2. Publish Equality objectives at least every 4 years which are specific and measurable.
3. Publish annually progress towards Equality objectives.

This policy describes how the school is meeting these statutory duties and is in line with national guidance. It includes information about how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and also provides guidance to staff and outside visitors about our approach to promoting equality.

Appendix 1 is a checklist of key equality considerations

Appendix 2 shows the school’s Equality Objectives in an Equality Action Plan

- 1.3 As a school, we are committed to ensure that all children regardless of ethnicity and race, religion or belief, disability, gender, gender identity and reassignment, pregnancy, social background, sexual orientation, age and ability have equal opportunities to be happy, healthy, safe, able to learn and achieve, are able to contribute to their community and are valued.
- 1.4 Our society is diverse. In order to succeed and be good citizens, our young people need to be tolerant and non-judgemental in their treatment of, and relationships with, members of society who are different to themselves.
- 1.5 In developing this policy, we took account of the DfE guidance on the Equality Act 2010, Keeping Children Safe in Education and also the Ofsted inspection framework, which places a strong focus on improving the learning and progress of different groups and on closing gaps in standards between the majority of children and young people and those that are vulnerable or underachieving (See appendix 1 for vulnerable groups). We note that OFSTED has a statutory duty to report on the outcomes and provision for students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- 1.6. The school is committed to tackling prejudice and promoting shared understanding within our

school community and the development of community cohesion.

- 1.7 Although this policy is the key document for information about our approach to equalities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we ensure that information about our responsibilities under the Equality Act are also included in our school improvement plan, the school prospectus, school website and newsletters.

2 Aims

- 2.1 At The Priory School we aim to meet the three duties stated in the 2010 Equality Act: schools should eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations.
- 2.2 To ensure that all students benefit from the same opportunities in all areas of school life.
- 2.3 To promote and provide equal opportunities for all colleagues at The Priory School. The Governing Board are responsible for ensuring that equality and discrimination are tackled.
- 2.4 To ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students – designed to enhance access and ensure that those with additional needs (see SEND policy) such as learning difficulties, emotional and physical needs are not subject to unlawful discrimination and have the same opportunities as all students to achieve.
- 2.5 To encourage full participation of disabled children and adults in the school.
- 2.6 To ensure that all day-to-day needs of the disabled are met.
- 2.7 To ensure that there is no discrimination against particular racial and religious groups, when applying the admission and behaviour policies.
- 2.8 To support the transition of all students moving to the school to enjoy and achieve and to access learning.
- 2.9 To take appropriate account of cultural and/or religious needs when developing or reviewing rules relating to school uniform and appearance.
- 2.10 To ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all students.
- 2.11 To provide a safe and welcoming environment where each person has respect for themselves and others.
- 2.12 To encourage all students to develop a positive self-image.
- 2.13 To promote understanding of others, regardless of their race, religion, belief, disability, sex, gender, social background, sexual orientation and ability.
- 2.14 To promote greater awareness amongst all members of the community of the many faces of discrimination and the need to combat it.
- 2.15 To prepare and promote in our students an understanding of life in a diverse society.
- 2.16 To help children to understand each other, value diversity, share values and promote equal rights through teaching and learning across the curriculum
- 2.17 To promote equity and excellence, making sure there are no barriers to achievement and moving to remove disparities in attainment between different groups.
- 2.18 By promoting engagement and offering extended services.

3 Procedures

- 3.1 All staff have a responsibility to monitor the progress of students and ensure that prompt interventions are implemented for students that are underachieving. We know the needs of our school population very well and collect and analyse data in order to inform our planning and identify targets to achieve improvements.
- 3.2 We have procedures, working in partnership with parents and carers, to identify children who have a disability through our student induction process. We collect data and monitor progress and outcomes of different groups of students and use this data to support school improvement. We act to close any gaps, for example, for those making progress which is below expected in acquiring age-appropriate reading and number skills
- 3.3 The objectives which we identify represent our school's priorities and are the outcome of a careful review of and analysis of data and other evidence. They also consider national and local priorities and issues.
- 3.4 We produce an Equality Action Plan that shows how we will achieve our objectives (See Appendix 3).
- 3.5 The progress of all categories of vulnerable students is monitored after each half termly assessment to allow effective interventions to be used in accordance with the intervention policy.
- 3.6 The Staff Committee meet to discuss and share issues enabling colleagues to be part of the change making process.
- 3.7 All suspected incidents of discrimination or harassment on racial, religion, belief, disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation grounds (HBT), are dealt with in a timely manner, following identified procedures.
- 3.8 Members of the Pastoral team will interview and gather written evidence from the victim and perpetrator and witnesses to ascertain the details of the complaint.
- 3.9 All incidents proved to be race or gender related will be recorded on our administrative system (SIMS). The name, gender and ethnicity of the victim and perpetrator will be recorded. At this time HoY should ascertain from SIMS if the offence is an isolated incident or part of a repeated pattern of behaviour.
- 3.10 Depending on the severity and frequency of the incident, sanctions will be given in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- 3.11 Depending on the severity the parents/carers of the victim and perpetrator will be informed.
- 3.12 Actions taken to ensure that the perpetrator understands why this behaviour is unacceptable and wrong will depend on the severity and frequency of it and will be decided upon by the Head of Year.
- 3.13 The victim will be offered appropriate support by the Pastoral team and additional support mechanisms as required.
- 3.14 The Pastoral team will monitor the attendance and attainment of the BAME and EAL students and liaise with relevant colleagues to provide the most appropriate interventions if there is a concern, which may, amongst others, include support in lessons.
- 3.15 The SENDCo will monitor the attendance and attainment of those students with SEND and liaise with Heads of Department and the Pastoral team to provide the most appropriate interventions if there is a concern, which may, amongst others, include support in lessons by Teaching Assistants.

- 3.16 The Pastoral team will liaise with the SENDCo and engage external agency support as appropriate, should the case require more intense intervention.
- 3.17 Heads of Department will ensure that their schemes of work include diversity and improve students' cultural capital where relevant
- 3.18 Through assemblies, Heads of Year should raise awareness of and promote diversity in its many forms.
- 3.19 The SENDCo and members of the Pastoral team will visit those Yr 6 students with a disability, special educational needs, EAL students and BAME as part of the transition procedure. The aim of this is to offer reassurance and ensure their needs will be addressed before their arrival.
- 3.20 Wellbeing & Safeguarding surveys are undertaken for each year group. The results are analysed in order to decide on appropriate interventions, support mechanisms and strategies.
- 3.21 The Pastoral team will inform Heads of Department and Heads of Year about special cultural events and celebrations.
- 3.22 There will be displays throughout the school which will celebrate and raise awareness of diversity & equality.
- 3.23 There will be provision for mentoring and support of Asian girls whose families believe in forced marriages.
- 3.24 The Family Support Workers will engage with the families of vulnerable students and vulnerable parents of students using attendance data and attainment data.
- 3.25 Information will be given to all students to help them identify if they are Young Carers.
- 3.26 Citizenship and RSHE Schemes of Work include the opportunity for sharing values and promoting awareness of human rights.

4 Monitoring

- 4.1 All cases of racial/sexual discrimination/ harassment will be logged onto SIMS to highlight the perpetrator and victim, nature of the offence and resolution by the person dealing with the incident. This is for all students, regardless of background or contextual factors.
- 4.2 Heads of Year will use SIMS to ascertain if there are any patterns in racial abuse, bullying or homophobic incidents. Persistent offenders will be mentored using internal systems or external agencies, as appropriate, and parents will be informed.
- 4.3 Attendance and attainment data of all groups of students will be monitored. The different categories include: Young carers; disabled students; students with Special Education Needs; BAME students, Children Looked After and by gender.
- 4.4 Incidents of racism and sexual discrimination will be reported to the Wellbeing & Inclusion Committee by identified members of SLT
- 4.5 Analysis of student progress by category is undertaken at key reporting points across the academic year. Data is shared with the Curriculum & Progress committee by identified members of SLT

Other relevant policies

SEND Policy	Behaviour for Learning Policy	RSHE Policy
Transgender Policy	Curriculum Policy	T&L Policy
Offsite visits & LOtC policy		

Appendix 1

Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children include the following groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010:

- disabled students, and those who have special educational needs
- groups of students whose prior attainment may be different from that of other groups
- those who are academically more or less able
- students for whom English is an additional language
- minority ethnic students
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- looked after children
- students known to be eligible for free school meals
- lesbian, gay and bisexual students
- transgender students
- young carers
- students from low-income backgrounds
- other vulnerable groups

Appendix 2

Check list for School Staff and Governors

- The school collects information on race, disability and gender with regards to both students and staff, e.g. student achievement, attendance, exclusions and staff training
- This information is used to inform the policies, plans and strategies, lessons, additional support, training and activities the school provides
- The Equality Policy and Plan and Objectives have been shaped by the views, input and involvement of staff, parents, Governors, students and other stakeholders
- The school analyses student achievement in terms of progress and standards for different groups and acts when trends or patterns indicate a need
- The school sets Equality Objectives to improve outcomes for vulnerable students and monitors progress on reaching these objectives
- A senior member of staff has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the policy and monitoring outcomes
- The school ensures that all staff understand and implement the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The school ensures that visitors to the school understand and follow the key requirements of the Equality Policy
- The curriculum includes opportunities for all students to understand and celebrate diversity and difference
- All groups of students are encouraged to participate in school life and make a positive contribution, e.g. through the Student Leadership Committee (SLC)
- The school monitors bullying and harassment of students in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and takes action if there is a cause for concern
- Visual displays and multi-media resources reflect the diversity of the school community
- Minority ethnic, disabled and both male and female role models and those of vulnerable groups are promoted positively in lessons, displays, discussions and assemblies
- The school takes part in annual events, such as Black History Month, to raise awareness of issues around race, disability and gender
- The school environment is increasingly accessible to students, staff and visitors to the school

- Open evenings and other events which parents, carers and the community attend are held in an accessible part of the school and issues such as language barriers are considered
- The accessibility needs of parents, students and staff are considered in the publishing and sending out of information
- The Governing Board is increasingly representative of the community it serves

Appendix 3: Equality Action plan (including accessibility plan) 2022-2026

	Targets	Who is responsible	What are the key actions to effect improvement	How will we know this action has had the intended impact	Progress 2022-2023	Progress 2023-2024	Progress 2024-2025	Progress 2025-2026
Advance equality of opportunity between different groups	Improve outcomes for more able students predicted 8 and 9 grades at GCSE	HOD's, KDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitoring and effective interventions to identify underachievement ➤ Specific focus on HA vulnerable students through analysis of progress data & 121 interviews ➤ Differentiation to focus on extending more able students ➤ Stretch and challenge to be clear in all SOW ➤ Dedicated TRL roles for HA work at KS3-4 and KS5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A positive progress 8 score of the HA category students with a particular focus on English and maths results (quantitative) ➤ A positive residual of the 8/9 grades against targets (quantitative) ➤ Students able to access next stage of their educational journey 				
	Improve Value Added for SEND K students in English and maths	KEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SENDCo to monitor closely all students and target interventions at students that are underachieving ➤ Teacher of additional support to be appointed to support students in maths and English ➤ Reading comprehension software to be used to support students ➤ Lexonik used effectively ➤ HODs / HOY to track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved results against the starting point of the GCSE cohort of students (quantitative) ➤ Students able to access next stage of their educational journey 				

			<p>students and intervene where needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assistive technology used to increase access to the curriculum. 					
	Continue to “Close the gap” between DA SEND and non-DA SEND students at GCSE	Whole school NPA KEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ KEM/HODs to monitor and track the outcomes of DA SEND students as well as impact of intervention ➤ Interventions will be monitored and evaluated ➤ Parental engagement plan to support students at home as well as in school ➤ Track attendance of the DA SEND students to ensure they are engaging with school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There will be evidenced interventions in place within departments to ensure progress of DA students ➤ Students able to successfully access next stage of their educational journey ➤ Students able to access the necessary technology to support school and home learning 				

	Targets	Who is responsible	What are the key actions to effect improvement	How will we know this action has had the intended impact	Progress 2022-2023	Progress 2023-2024	Progress 2024-2025	Progress 2025-2026
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Achieve a year on year (over three years) reduction in the % of fixed term exclusions for students with protected characteristics	HoY, LF0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the exclusion unit more effectively to reduce exclusions including holding reintegration meetings with parents ➤ Provide CPD to all staff on behaviour management ➤ Utilise “alternative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There will be a reduction in the % of fixed term exclusions over a 3-year period (quantitative) 				

			<p>provision” for targeted students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that the STEPS training is being used effectively by all staff to de-escalate behaviours 				
<p>To promote, celebrate and learn about the diversity of our school community</p>	<p>Establish a Drive team to look at how diversity is delivered through the curriculum</p> <p>SoL to reflect diversity in the curriculum</p> <p>Establish Diversity Committee</p>	COR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stakeholder surveys & meetings to understand current perception ➤ BAME external review (HfL) ➤ Drive team established & calendared as part of directed time ➤ SoL reviewed and mapping of where diversity is taught produced ➤ Planned themed days and links to national campaigns ➤ Assemblies and theme weeks to promote diversity and equality among different groups ➤ Diversity Committee established and working successfully ➤ School web-site & publications to reflect students from a diverse background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ QA of learning & stakeholder feedback will indicate that there is a wider appreciation in the school that reflects the diversity of our learning community ➤ External validation (HfL) to identify areas of progress 			

	<p>Promote tolerance and understanding of LGBTQ+ relationships</p>	<p>COR, HoY, tutors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stakeholder surveys & meetings to understand current perception ➤ Establish a Drive team with a focus on Wellbeing ➤ Review staff training needs to be confident in supporting the LGBTQ+ community ➤ Raise awareness of the LGBTQ+ community through identified themes in tutor time and assemblies ➤ Establish an LGBTQ+ school focus group ➤ Diversity art work around school ➤ Gender neutral toilets ➤ Transgender policy ➤ Diverse relationships included in the RSHE statutory curriculum ➤ Review the behaviour policy & consequence system to ensure HBT bullying is represented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stakeholder feedback will indicate that there is a wider appreciation in the school that reflects the positive experiences of the young people ➤ External validation - Stonewall Champion School 				
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<p>Foster an inclusive and supportive community around mental health & wellbeing</p>	<p>Develop an open culture where mental health and wellbeing is widely recognised and discussed by both staff and students</p>	<p>COR, JLA, FTH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review current Wellbeing provision to inform improvement action plan ➤ Map out current staff mental health & wellbeing training to inform future CP needs ➤ Establish a Wellbeing Drive team to focus on whole school initiatives ➤ Promote mental health & wellbeing through assemblies and themes weeks ➤ The 5 ways to wellbeing present in the RSHE curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A decrease in the amount of unsuccessful CAMHS referrals (quantitative) ➤ Students successfully accessing support post-COVID as part of the recovery curriculum model (quantitative) ➤ Students and staff feel open and confident in discussing mental health and wellbeing (qualitative) ➤ External validation – Hertfordshire Mental Health & Wellbeing kite mark 				
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