Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Mission Statement

Live, Love, Learn

Holy Rood is proud to be a Catholic school, where Christ is at the heart of our community.

Working in close partnership with the home and parish, we share and celebrate our faith, while respecting and accepting those from other traditions and cultures.

We acknowledge each person's uniqueness and aim to provide a happy Christian environment where everyone can thrive.

We are committed to delivering a broad and balanced education, where each child can become the best they can be. We seek to nurture self-esteem in everyone and develop a sense of responsibility for ourselves and others.

We strive for excellence in all we do.

Introduction

Holy Rood School understands that, under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, all schools have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our school's overall values are underpinned by our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. We are dedicated to ensuring that every pupil receives an education that offers them the best chance at fulfilling their potential, and to promoting mental wellbeing amongst our pupils. We are committed to supporting and celebrating all pupils' individual identities. We recognise and value the diverse strengths, experiences and identities of our pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), neurodivergent pupils and those from disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. We have developed this policy to provide a clear framework for how we will achieve our school's aims.

Our school's demographic state is directly linked to our overall aims for achieving equality. Specifically, we aim to:

- Ensure that all learners have equal access to a rich, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
- Encourage pupils to be open-minded, recognise and challenge prejudice, contribute to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and ensure that no one is unfairly or unlawfully disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic.
- Help pupils to develop their self-esteem and to recognise that they are each valued as individuals through actively encouraging their access to the full curriculum and extra-curricular activities;
- Demonstrate that pupils are respected as individuals;
- Help each pupil to achieve their full potential by ensuring that teaching and learning and the curriculum promote equality, celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion by fostering good relations;

- Enable pupils and parents to contribute actively to the process of education by bringing their cultural experiences, values and perspectives to it;
- Be sensitive about equal opportunities issues in the selection of teaching materials and be aware of images and text, which may stereotype or denigrate groups or individuals;
- To ensure that within the school budget, adequate funding is provided to underpin this policy and that intervention, positive and preventative action is funded where necessary.
- Ensure this policy is applied to all we do.

To achieve our aims, we will adopt the following methods:

- Embedding equality within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of our school
- Promoting community cohesion
- Promoting parental engagement
- Investing in regular staff training
- Using key data, such as measures of wellbeing, to monitor the progress of pupils with protected characteristics
- Regularly reviewing our policy to ensure it reflects current trends and issues

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This policy has due regard to statutory and good practice guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act 2010 and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Admissions Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children in Care Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Uniform Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body will:

- Be responsible for ensuring the school complies with the appropriate equality legislation and regulations.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils and potential pupils will not be discriminated against, harassed or victimised in relation to:
  - Admissions.
  - The way the school provides an education for pupils.
  - Access to benefits, facilities and services.
  - Exclusion or any other detriment.
- Ensure all policies are developed and implemented with appropriate consideration of their impact on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and review relevant pupil data to help identify and address any inequalities or barriers to achievement, participation or wellbeing.
- Ensure sufficient resources are available to support the aims of this policy.

The headteacher will:

- Implement and champion this policy, ensuring that all staff and pupils apply its guidelines fairly and consistently.
- Promote a culture of inclusion, respect and belonging throughout the school community.
- Conduct regular training sessions to ensure all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding equality, diversity, inclusion and protected characteristics.
- Review and amend this policy in response to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, school data and reported incidents.
- Ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, neurodivergent pupils, looked-after and previously looked-after children, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are able to participate fully in school life.
- Ensure appropriate support is available for pupils who require emotional, pastoral or wellbeing support.
- Monitor prejudice-related incidents and ensure appropriate action is taken where concerns arise.

Staff will:

- Be alert to possible discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation and prejudice-related incidents, both inside and outside the school, and respond to them promptly and appropriately.
- Carry out their statutory duties relating to equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in accordance with this policy.
- Promote equality of opportunity and foster positive relationships between pupils from different backgrounds and communities.
- Have due regard to the needs and sensitivities of all pupils and ensure that teaching materials and resources are inclusive and free from discrimination or stereotyping wherever possible.
- Act as role models for equality, diversity, inclusion and respectful behaviour across the whole school community.
- Support all pupils to feel safe, valued, respected and included within the life of the school.

Protected Characteristics

The school also recognises that pupils may experience discrimination because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.

Staff will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of their:

- Sex.

- Race.
- Disability, which includes mental health, encompassing prejudiced assumptions, attitudes or behaviours related to mental health.
- Religion or belief.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender reassignment.

Staff will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic related to a person, such as a parent, with whom the pupil or prospective pupil is associated.
Staff will not discriminate against a pupil, or prospective pupil, because of a characteristic which they are believed to have, even if the belief is mistaken.

Sex

For the purpose of this policy, sex refers a pupil's biological assignment at birth depending on their reproductive organs. The school understands that some pupils identify as a gender different to the sex they were assigned at birth, and we will support pupils through their transitioning phases.
Staff will ensure that pupils of one sex are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to pupils of other sexes.

The school will only separate pupils by sex where there is reasonable justification for doing so, or if one of the following applies:

- Pupils will suffer a disadvantage connected to their sex
- One sex has needs that are different from the needs of the other sex
- Participation in an activity by pupils of one sex is disproportionately low

The school will consider non-statutory exceptions on a case-by-case basis, and regularly review the impact of any separation to ascertain whether it remains lawful.

Pupils will be offered equal opportunities to undertake any activity in the school, e.g. in relation to technology lessons, all pupils will be allowed to choose which skills they learn.

There may be occasions where we deem it necessary to teach some subjects in single-sex classes, but the school will ensure that such classes do not give pupils a disadvantage when compared to pupils of the other sex in other classes. Occasions where pupils are separated to be taught in single-sex classes will be documented and the separation justified to ensure parents, Ofsted and, where necessary, the wider community can understand the reasons behind separation. Where a subject is taught in a single-sex class, trans pupils will be allowed to attend the single-sex class that corresponds with the gender they identify with.

Pupils' age and stage of development will be taken into consideration before segregating sports teams. Both sexes will have equal opportunities to participate in comparable sporting activities; where separation is deemed necessary, the single-sex sports teams will receive the same quality and amount of resources.

Race and Ethnicity

Staff will ensure that pupils of all races and ethnicities are not singled out for different and less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils and the school will regularly review its practices to ensure that they are fair.

Staff will ensure pupils with EAL are treated equally and fairly, while ensuring they are supported at all times.

The school will not segregate pupils on the basis of their race or ethnicity, understanding that claims of 'separate but equal' will not be tolerated, and that such actions will always be viewed as direct discrimination.

The school may, however, take positive action, e.g. organising open days for pupils and families of a specific race that is under-represented, to address the particular challenges affecting pupils of one racial or ethnic group, where this can be shown to be a proportionate way of dealing with such issues.

Disability

Staff will ensure that pupils with disabilities are not singled out or treated less favourably than other pupils simply because they have a disability, which includes any mental health issue, regularly reviewing our school practices to ensure they are fair.

The school recognises that disabilities may be visible or non-visible and may include physical, sensory, cognitive and mental health conditions, as well as neurodivergent conditions such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

The school will avoid implementing rules that could have an adverse effect on pupils with disabilities (e.g. by making physical fitness a basis for admission, or asking all pupils to deliver a presentation, as this could be unfair towards pupils with anxiety), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

Staff will ensure that they do not discriminate against pupils with disabilities because of something which is a consequence of their disability (for example, by not allowing a pupil on crutches outside at break time because it would take too long for them to get in and out), unless it is for a legitimate reason and is a proportionate way of achieving that legitimate aim.

The school will make any reasonable adjustments, and provide any auxiliary aids, necessary to ensure the full inclusion of pupils with disabilities, especially where the pupil also has SEND but does not have a SEND support plan or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The school will meet its duty to undertake accessibility planning for pupils with disabilities and ensure that an Accessibility Plan is implemented and reviewed where necessary.

The school will adhere to its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for pupils with SEND.

Religion and Belief

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because of their religion or belief. The school will ensure that pupils are provided with the appropriate space in which they can practice their faith, e.g. to perform their daily prayers.

Requests for absence relating to religious observance will be considered in accordance with the school's Attendance and Absence Policy and current statutory guidance.

Sexual Orientation

Staff will ensure that all gay, lesbian and bisexual pupils, or the children of gay, lesbian or bisexual parents, are not singled out for different or less favourable treatment from that given to other pupils.

The school will ensure that pupils are taught about the nature of marriage, including same-sex marriage, by presenting the facts of English and Welsh law – teachers will not offer personal opinions when discussing marriage in RSHE. The school will educate pupils about respectful relationships, different family structures and the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect, in accordance with the RSHE curriculum and statutory guidance.

Staff will ensure that any religious beliefs with regards to sexual orientation are taught to pupils in an educational context, in a manner that is not prejudicial or discriminatory.

Staff will support LGBTQ+ pupils to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity. The school will ensure that there is a designated safe space where pupils can discuss issues of sexual orientation without fear of discrimination.

Gender Reassignment

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably in relation to gender reassignment, i.e. because they are trans or have trans parents, siblings or other family members. The school recognises that gender reassignment does not necessarily involve physical change, and can be solely social and emotional.

Pupils will have the right to dress in accordance with their true gender identity within the constraints of our dress code, outlined in our School Uniform Policy.

The school is aware that the law requires the provision of single-sex toilets for boys and girls over the age of 8, and single-sex changing facilities for boys and girls over the age of 11.

The school will consider the needs, welfare, dignity, privacy and safety of all pupils when making decisions regarding access to facilities. Any arrangements will be considered on an individual basis, taking account of the needs of the pupil, the rights of other pupils, current legislation and relevant guidance.

The school will support trans pupils to feel comfortable and ensure they can celebrate their identity.

The school will ensure that all pupils have access to appropriate pastoral support and a trusted adult with whom they can discuss concerns relating to identity, wellbeing or inclusion.

Looked-after children (LAC)

The school recognises that looked-after and previously looked-after children may face barriers to achievement, attendance, wellbeing and participation, and will work proactively to remove these barriers wherever possible.

LAC and previously LAC (PLAC) will be given the highest priority for admissions, as per the requirements of our Admissions Policy.

Staff will ensure that pupils are not singled out or treated less favourably because they are looked after, or have previously been looked after, by the state.

A personal education plan will be created and implemented for all LAC, to ensure that their education and development needs are fully covered, including appropriate transition and catch-up support to ensure that they do not fall behind.

Staff will ensure that any SEND that LAC or PLAC have are duly considered and addressed, whether this is with or without a SEND support plan or EHC plan.

The school will adhere to its LAC Policy containing further information addressing equal opportunities for LAC.

Prejudice-Related Incidents

The school will not tolerate discriminatory language, prejudiced behaviour, harassment or bullying based on any protected characteristic or perceived protected characteristic.

All prejudice-related incidents will be recorded, investigated and addressed appropriately. The school will take educational and restorative approaches where appropriate, while ensuring that pupils affected by discriminatory behaviour receive suitable support.

The school will monitor prejudice-related incidents to identify patterns, address concerns and inform future equality, diversity and inclusion work.

The Curriculum

Pupils will be exposed to a broad range of experiences, perspectives, cultures, beliefs and ideas through the curriculum. The school will not make any unjustified changes to curriculum content on the grounds of any protected characteristic. The curriculum will be planned and delivered in a balanced and age-appropriate way, promoting respect, inclusion and understanding while challenging discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping.

Equality, diversity, inclusion and acceptance are embedded throughout the curriculum and wider school life. Teaching and learning will promote respect for individual differences and help pupils develop an understanding of the diverse communities in which they live, both locally and nationally.

Where appropriate, curriculum resources and learning opportunities will reflect a diverse range of cultures, backgrounds, experiences, family structures and perspectives. Staff will be mindful of ensuring that teaching materials are inclusive and do not perpetuate discriminatory assumptions or stereotypes.

The school will ensure that Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is delivered in accordance with statutory guidance and that pupils are taught about respectful relationships, equality, diversity and inclusion in an age-appropriate manner. The school will respect the right of parents to request withdrawal of their child from the sex education elements of the RSHE curriculum in accordance with statutory guidance.

Promoting Inclusion

The school will promote inclusion, equality, diversity and a sense of belonging through:

- Ensuring that pupils are treated with dignity and respect and, where appropriate, are referred to by their preferred name, taking into account the correct spelling, structure and pronunciation.
- Striving to ensure that the governing board and workforce reflect, as far as possible, the diversity of the community we serve.
- Providing an environment where discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping and discriminatory language are challenged and addressed appropriately.
- Helping pupils to recognise, understand and challenge prejudice, discrimination and unfair treatment.
- Promoting respect, kindness, empathy and positive relationships between individuals and groups from different backgrounds.

- Providing a variety of educational visits, enrichment opportunities and experiences that expose pupils to a wide range of cultures, beliefs, communities and perspectives.
- Ensuring all pupils have equal access to opportunities, including extracurricular activities, leadership roles and the curriculum.
- Taking care in the use of language, resources and displays so that teaching and non-teaching staff avoid reinforcing stereotypes or discriminatory assumptions.
- Valuing and celebrating the achievements, experiences and contributions of all pupils, regardless of their background, identity or protected characteristic.
- Recognising and supporting the needs of pupils with SEND, neurodivergent pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who may face barriers to participation or achievement.
- Communicating this policy to parents and carers and working in partnership with families to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to contribute to discussions about equality, diversity and inclusion, including through the school council and other pupil voice activities.
- Promoting equality of opportunity within the school and preparing pupils to live and thrive in a diverse society.
- Ensuring that admission arrangements do not unfairly disadvantage any pupil, including those from particular racial, cultural, social or economic backgrounds, or those with SEND.
- Monitoring and responding appropriately to prejudice-related incidents to ensure that all pupils feel safe, valued and included.

Pupils That Have Left School

The school's responsibility to avoid unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation does not necessarily end when a pupil leaves the school. The school will continue to act fairly, consistently and without discrimination in matters arising from a previous relationship with a former pupil.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- The provision of references or reports.
- The sharing of information with educational providers or support services where appropriate.
- Responses to complaints or concerns relating to the period when the pupil attended the school.
- Participation in transition arrangements with future education providers.

The school will ensure that any decisions or actions relating to former pupils are carried out fairly and without discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The school will meet its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty by:

- Publishing information, at least annually, to demonstrate how the school is complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty and promoting equality of opportunity for pupils and members of the wider school community.
- Publishing and reviewing equality objectives at least every four years, setting out how the school intends to further equality, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations.
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of school policies, practices and procedures on different groups of pupils.
- Using relevant school data to identify and address any barriers to participation, attendance, achievement, wellbeing or inclusion.

There are some protected characteristics for which statistical information may not be readily available. Pupils and families will not be required to disclose information relating to protected characteristics, and any information that is shared will be collected, stored and used in accordance with data protection legislation.

Information used to support equality monitoring will be treated sensitively and, where appropriate, anonymised. The school will use this information to help identify trends, inform decision-making and ensure that all pupils are able to access the opportunities available to them.

Bullying and Discrimination

The school's Anti-bullying Policy will be used in conjunction with this policy to prevent, respond to and resolve incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The school will not tolerate discriminatory language, prejudice, harassment or bullying based on any protected characteristic, perceived protected characteristic, or association with a person who has a protected characteristic. All prejudice-related incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly and appropriately.

Any incidents of bullying, discrimination or prejudice-related behaviour of a child protection or safeguarding nature will be reported, recorded and managed in line with the procedures outlined in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Headteacher will determine whether it is appropriate to notify external agencies, including children's social care and/or the police, taking into account the nature, severity and circumstances of the incident.

The school will record and monitor incidents of bullying, discrimination and prejudice-related behaviour to identify patterns, inform preventative work and support the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion across the school community.

Concerns regarding the handling of bullying, discrimination or prejudice-related incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

Staff Training

New staff will receive relevant training on the provisions of this policy as part of their induction.

All staff will receive appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion training, which will:

- Ensure staff are aware of, and comply with, current equality legislation, statutory guidance and school policies.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and protected characteristics.
- Support staff to identify, prevent and respond appropriately to discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation and prejudice-related incidents.
- Develop staff understanding of the experiences and needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, including pupils with SEND, neurodivergent pupils, looked-after and previously looked-after children, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Provide support for teachers and other staff to effectively manage incidents of discriminatory behaviour and promote positive relationships between pupils.
- Provide up-to-date information on the terminology, concepts and current understanding associated with protected characteristics and inclusive practice.

- Support effective communication and partnership working with pupils, parents and carers on issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Promote inclusive teaching approaches, curriculum design and classroom practice.
- Focus on specific areas of need identified through school self-evaluation, pupil voice, incident monitoring or local and national priorities, for example tackling racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disability-related or faith-based bullying.
- Ensure that the school is aware of, and where appropriate participates in, relevant awareness events and educational opportunities, such as Black History Month, International Women's Day and other events that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and governing body annually and updated where appropriate – any amendments will be duly communicated to staff.

Approved by: Chair of Governors 

Approval Date: September 2026 Review Date: September 2027