Holy Rood Catholic Primary School

Staff 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 is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, feels valued and supported, and is able to fulfil their potential. We are committed to providing a workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, and where all employment decisions are made fairly and on merit. We value and celebrate diversity within our workforce and strive to create an inclusive culture where all staff, including those with disabilities, long-term health conditions and neurodivergent characteristics, can be their authentic selves and thrive.

We do not discriminate against staff on the basis of age, disability, gender identity and/or reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the protected characteristics), amended in line with the Equality Act 2010. More detail on each of the protected characteristics can be found in Appendix A.

We are also mindful of intersecting identities within our school environment and will work with our communities to better understand the experience of multiple minority identities for individuals.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat pupils, parents, governors, third party organisations and former staff members.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time. This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including members of the SLT, teachers, TAs, support staff, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, volunteers, casual workers, and agency staff (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy).

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
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Flexible Working Policy
- Teacher Appraisal Policy
- Support Staff Appraisal Policy

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
PSED requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Principles underlying this policy
In accordance with this policy, the school commits to:

- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- Promoting dignity and respect for all.
- Taking proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

This policy applies to all aspects of the school's relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

Instances of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation will be dealt with as misconduct, in line with the school's Grievance Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective operation of this policy.
- Ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- Monitoring the composition of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability.
- Monitoring how the composition of the workforce encourages equality, equity, diversity and inclusion, and meets the aims and commitments set out in this policy.
- Assessing how this policy, and any supporting action plans, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The SLT will be responsible for:

- Setting an appropriate standard of behaviour and leading by example.
- Ensuring that those they manage adhere to this policy and promote the school's aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.
- Taking appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities, in line with the school's Flexible Working Policy.
- Making opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff.
- Ensuring staff are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Making staff progression decisions based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).
- Reviewing employment practices and procedures where necessary to ensure fairness.
- Updating employment practices and procedures, and this policy, to take account of changes in the law.
- The day-to-day operational responsibility of this policy.
- Reviewing this policy regularly.
- Organising equal opportunities training, including for those involved in management and recruitment.
- Answering questions about the content or application of this policy.
- Participating in appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection good practice.
- Monitoring risks relating to harassment and discrimination.
- Considering equality impacts when developing or reviewing policies and employment practices.

All staff will be responsible for:

- Conducting themselves to help the school provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- Understanding that they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors and the public.
- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by their colleagues, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the school's work activities.

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics outlined in Appendix A. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.
Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

Preventing Sexual Harassment
The school is committed to providing a working environment that is free from sexual harassment and will take reasonable and proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the workplace. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

The school will take appropriate measures to prevent sexual harassment by promoting a culture of respect, providing relevant training and guidance, encouraging the reporting of concerns, and responding promptly and effectively to any allegations or incidents.

All staff are expected to contribute to a working environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Third-Party Harassment
The school is committed to protecting staff from harassment, discrimination, bullying or victimisation carried out by third parties, including parents, carers, visitors, contractors, suppliers, governors, volunteers and members of the public.

Any incidents of harassment or discriminatory behaviour by a third party towards a member of staff will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. Where necessary, the school will take reasonable steps to protect staff and prevent further incidents from occurring. This may include warning individuals, restricting access to the school site, or taking other appropriate action.

Staff who experience or witness harassment by a third party are encouraged to report the matter through the school's reporting procedures so that appropriate support and action can be provided.

Recruitment and selection
The school will aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics. The school’s recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the job and not disproportionate. The shortlisting of applicants will be done by more than one person wherever possible.

Job advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. The school will take steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which will only be used with the Headteacher's approval, such as:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

The school is required by law to ensure that all staff are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status will not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, will be expected to produce original documents, e.g. a passport, before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the Home Office.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, the school will monitor applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information will be voluntary and will not adversely affect an applicant's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information will be removed from applications before the shortlisting process, and will be kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps the school take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

Staff training and promotion and conditions of service

Staff training needs and associated development opportunities will be identified through regular staff appraisals, in line with the school's Teacher Appraisal Policy and Support Staff Appraisal Policy. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made based on merit. The school will adopt good practice in terms of data collection and use this data to monitor and measure the attraction, recruitment, retention and progression of staff.

Workforce composition and promotions will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to meet the needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

The school is committed to providing appropriate training and professional development opportunities for all staff. This will include, where appropriate, training relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, unconscious bias, dignity at work, and the prevention of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. The school will seek to ensure that all staff have fair and equitable access to learning, development and career progression opportunities, regardless of any protected characteristic.

The school will monitor access to training, professional development and progression opportunities to help identify and address any barriers that may affect staff from underrepresented or protected groups. Where appropriate, the school will take reasonable steps to promote equality of opportunity and support the career development of all staff.

The school's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they provide equal opportunities for all.

Termination of employment
The school will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

The school will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action, in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Disability discrimination
The school is committed to creating an inclusive working environment for disabled staff and job applicants and will not discriminate on the grounds of disability. The school recognises that disabilities may be visible or non-visible, physical, sensory, cognitive or mental-health related, and may include neurodivergent conditions such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia.

The school encourages staff who are disabled, or who become disabled during their employment, to inform the Headteacher of their condition where they feel comfortable doing so. This information will be treated sensitively and used to help identify any support or reasonable adjustments that may be required.

The school is committed to making reasonable adjustments for disabled job applicants and employees where required by law. Reasonable adjustments may be considered during recruitment, selection, induction, training, career development and throughout employment to remove or reduce any substantial disadvantage experienced as a result of a disability.

Staff experiencing difficulties at work because of a disability, long-term health condition, neurodivergent condition or qualifying mental health condition are encouraged to discuss their needs with the Headteacher. The school will work in partnership with the individual and, where appropriate, seek advice from occupational health professionals or other relevant specialists to identify suitable support and reasonable adjustments.

The governing body will monitor the physical environment of the school premises to consider whether certain features place disabled staff, job applicants, service users or other stakeholders at a substantial disadvantage compared to others. Where reasonable, the school will take steps to improve accessibility and reduce barriers to participation.

The school is committed to fostering a culture in which disabled and neurodivergent staff are valued, supported and able to contribute fully to school life.

Menopause Support
The school recognises that menopause and perimenopause can have a significant impact on an individual's physical and mental wellbeing and may affect their experience at work. The school is committed to fostering an open and supportive environment in which staff feel able to discuss menopause-related issues and access appropriate support.

Where menopause symptoms have an impact on a member of staff's ability to carry out their role, the school will consider appropriate support and, where required, reasonable adjustments to help them remain in work and perform their duties effectively.

Managers will treat menopause-related matters sensitively and confidentially and will work collaboratively with staff to identify suitable support measures. The school is committed to ensuring that no member of staff is disadvantaged, treated less favourably or subjected to discrimination because of menopause-related symptoms.

Part-time, zero hours, and fixed-term employees and agency workers
The school will monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. The school will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under the Flexible Working Policy.

The school will monitor its use of zero hours and fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. The school will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Breaches of this policy
If a member of staff believes that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the appropriate reporting routes and procedures available within the school, including the Grievance Policy. Concerns may be reported to the Headteacher or another appropriate senior leader where necessary.

The school takes all allegations of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and victimisation seriously. Reports will be handled promptly, sensitively and, where possible, confidentially. All concerns will be investigated in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

Staff who raise concerns, make a complaint, report an incident, or participate in an investigation in good faith will be protected from victimisation, retaliation or less favourable treatment as a result. Any act of victimisation against an individual for raising a concern or supporting a complaint will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The school takes a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

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 

Approved Date: September 2026 Review Date: September 2027

Appendix A - Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics
The definitions used in this appendix are based on the Equality Act 2010.

Age: The Act protects people of all ages; however, differential treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

Disability: Disability: The Act protects people who are disabled. A disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some conditions, including cancer and multiple sclerosis, are automatically treated as disabilities from the point of diagnosis.

Gender reassignment: Gender reassignment: The Act protects people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process to reassign their sex. Protection applies whether or not a person has undergone any medical treatment or surgery. A person does not need to hold a Gender Recognition Certificate to be protected under the Act.

Marriage and civil partnership: The Act protects people who are married or in a civil partnership from discrimination in employment because of that status. The protection does not apply to people who are single, divorced, widowed or whose civil partnership has been dissolved.

Pregnancy and maternity: The Act protects individuals from discrimination because of pregnancy, a pregnancy-related illness, maternity leave, breastfeeding, or because they have recently given birth.

Race: The Act protects people of all races; the Act's definition of race includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief: The Act protects people of any religion, including specific denominations or sects, as well as a lack of religion, i.e. employees or jobseekers who do not follow a certain religion or do not follow any religion are protected. The Act protects people of any belief; this is defined as any religious or philosophical belief, or a lack of such belief, that is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sex: The Act protects men and women.

Sexual orientation: The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual staff.

The Equality Act 2010 also protects individuals from discrimination by association with someone who has a protected characteristic and from discrimination based on a perception that they have a protected characteristic, even where this is not the case.