



Highlands

School & Sixth Form

**Dare to
flourish**

Equality objectives and statement

September 2023 - 2025

APPROVED

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| Date of Last Review | September 2023 |
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| Governors Committee | School standards and performance |

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Section 1: Equality objectives statement

September 2023- July 2025

1.1 Rationale

At Highlands School equality of opportunity is central to our school ethos and values. We expect all students and staff to challenge and act upon racism, sexism, homophobia and all other forms of prejudice and discrimination, including bullying and harassment. We are proactive in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, through policy, assemblies and the curriculum and through developing our students' character and values.

1.2 Vision statement and school values

Highlands School is a community school where every student and colleague is nurtured to be the very best they can be. Our values and ethos are clear and tangible from the moment you enter the school, and all members of the school community share our DARE values; determination, aspiration, respect and equality. Being part of Highlands School is based on a shared understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. We are a very diverse community and our diversity is our strength. Every member of our community is included, heard and valued.

Community education is very important to us. We believe that our school is here to serve and support the local community, and that the children of our community deserve the very best. We are committed to being a forward thinking employer with established best practice in ethical recruitment, flexible working and gender equality. Our curriculum celebrates diversity in all its forms and embodies British Values. We are a reflective organisation and we are always reviewing our policies and process to ensure they reflect our school ethos and strong equalities focus.

1.3 Legal Requirements

Our school aims to meet its obligations under the public sector equality duty, which is a duty placed on public authorities to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

When public authorities carry out their functions, the Equality Act says they must have due regard or think about the need to:

1. **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation
2. **Advance equality of opportunity** between people with protected characteristics and those who do not
3. **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We ensure that our school policies and practices reflect The Equality Act 2010. The Act aims to promote a fair and more equal society and to protect our students and colleagues from unfair treatment. The Equality Act defines nine protected characteristics applicable to our students and colleagues.

1. age
2. disability
3. gender reassignment
4. marriage and civil partnership
5. pregnancy and maternity
6. race
7. religion or belief
8. sex
9. sexual orientation

The Equality Act states that discrimination of the above protected characteristics can manifest in the following forms

- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- failure to make reasonable adjustments
- discrimination arising from a protected characteristic
- harassment
- victimisation

At Highlands we take an intersectional approach to equal opportunities, ensuring that we are mindful that colleagues and students have multi-layered identities. This might mean that some staff and students may identify with more than one protected characteristic.

1.4 Eliminating discrimination

- New staff receive training on the Equality Act as part of their induction, and all staff receive refresher training every September.
- The school has a designated member of the senior leadership team responsible for leading the schools equality, diversity and inclusion strategy who works closely with school governors on the EDI strategy and action plan.
- Questions on EDI are asked of all staff during recruitment interviews, not only to assess the candidates understanding of equality but also to ensure mission alignment and to demonstrate the school's commitment to EDI.

1.5 Advancing equality of opportunity

As set out in the DfE guidance on the Equality Act, the school aims to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising challenges and disadvantages connected to specific protected characteristics (e.g. students and staff with disabilities, non-bi)
- Taking steps to meet the particular needs of staff and students who have a particular characteristic (e.g. enabling Muslim students to pray at prescribed times).

1.6 Fostering good relations

The school aims to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it through the following.

- Promoting tolerance and understanding of a range of religions and cultures through different aspects of our curriculum. This includes teaching in RS, citizenship and PSHE, but also activities in other curriculum areas. For example, as part of teaching and learning in English/reading, students will be introduced to literature from a range of cultures.
- Assemblies dealing with relevant social, moral and cultural issues.
- Our school council has representatives from different year groups and is formed of students from a range of backgrounds.
- House captain leading key areas of school improvement and representing our houses.

1.7 Equality considerations in decision-making

- The school ensures it has due regard to equality considerations whenever significant decisions are made and new policies are introduced.
- The school always considers the impact of significant decisions on particular groups. For example, when a school trip or activity is being planned, the school considers whether the trip:
 - Cuts across any religious holidays
 - Is accessible to students with disabilities
 - Has equivalent facilities for boys and girls

Section 2: Equalities objectives

At least every two years we will publish equality objectives.

Highlands School's equality objectives 2023-25

- 1) Be proactive in eliminating all forms of discrimination and discriminatory language eg- sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic and disability language. This will be achieved through the curriculum, adherence to the school's values which inextricably link to fundamental British values, and policies.
- 2) Continue to ensure that our disability provision for students with special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health enables them to participate in all aspects of school life, and to make academic progress in-line with their starting points.
- 3) Close the gaps in academic progress of student groups (specifically Black Caribbean students).