

Equality Policy

From Staff Policies

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Introduction

Staff at Priory are committed to the equality of opportunity for all members of its community. The Equality policy aims to ensure that no student, member of staff or visitor is subjected to unfair discrimination. The School will not discriminate unfairly on the grounds of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, class or other such unjustifiable cause. The School will endeavour to create an environment in which students and staff give due respect to other people and their work or ideas.

Staff at Priory are committed to working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of our society. We hope that through such work we will eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment and promote equality for students, staff and others who use our school facilities.

This policy runs alongside additional policies and procedures focusing on key aspects of meeting this commitment, examples of which are referenced below and can be found on the school website.

- Equality of opportunity and Diversity Policy statement
- Promoting diversity and equality of employment
- Disability Equality in employment
- Supporting Trans employees guide

Policy Details

Legal Status

Non Statutory

Adopted

June 2011

Version Date

June 2021

Last Review

June 2021

Next Review

May 2023

Responsible SMT

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Narrowing (and ultimately closing) the gap between the progress and attainment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers is central to the work of our school. The recognition of diversity and promotion of equal and inclusive practices are central to achieving this vision. We now believe that it is pertinent to view different equality strands beneath the umbrella of a single coherent and meaningful equality policy, rather than seeing them as separate factions competing with each other for time and resources.

Our equality policy itself is designed to be inclusive of our whole school community, staff, parents, carers and visitors.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how our practice can address discrimination, promote inclusive participation and ensure that those in our community requiring extra support receive it.

This policy will be monitored bi-annually within our learning area review, performance management and data collection audits and its impact measured against identified outcomes. Staff and governors will be given the opportunity to discuss the implications of the policy and any training needed. All members of staff are entitled to appropriate training, in order that they can play their full part in ensuring that our school promotes equal and inclusive practices. Members of the governing body will also identify their own training needs in relation to racial equality.

Our school within the wider context

The national demographic presents an ever-changing picture in terms of age, ethnicity, disability and social deprivation. Lewes itself is a typical mid-Sussex modestly-sized market town. The town is predominantly middle-class with a small, but seriously deprived estate of council housing. Approximately 70% of our students live in the immediate area with the remainder living in the rural village surround and the coastal strip areas of Newhaven, Woodingdean and Peacehaven. The school is predominantly British (white) in its ethnic make-up; there is a small number of bilingual students. The close proximity to Brighton allows Priory students plentiful access to the rich and varied Arts events that take place all year round. Priory staff offer a huge variety of opportunities for all students, advantaged and disadvantaged, to participate in visits and workshops in museums, theatres and galleries.

Overall aims of this policy

- To eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- To promote equality of access within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of our school community, within all aspects of school life. We strive to ensure that our students enjoy learning and are able to achieve their full potential. We actively support this ethos when relating to adults within our school community be they staff, parents / carers or other community partners and strive to enjoy their roles.

Our approach

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- **Shared Humanity.** Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality.
- **Valuing difference and diversity.** We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better.
- **Interdependence, interaction and influence.** We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other.
- **Social cohesion within our school and within our local community.**

- **Excellence.** We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere.
- **Personal and cultural identity.** We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities.
- **Fairness and social justice.** We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society.

Our vision

Priory School seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same.

We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our duties

We recognise and accept our duties and responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, including the requirement to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all.

Our statutory duties are contained within:

- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which introduced the Community Cohesion duty)

See References below for further information about these legislations.

They are also guided and shaped by a range of other national and local initiatives.

Exams

In line with the wider school equality policy, examinations will be conducted in a such a way as to not discriminate against candidates or staff on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment or any other aspect which has the potential to discriminate against or to devalue any individuals within our school community.

Access arrangements will be organised for candidates who are eligible, in line with the regulations of the Joint Council for Qualifications. Appropriate training will be provided to staff who support candidates in examinations who are entitled to the use of access arrangements.

All new invigilators will be observed during their first test session and annually thereafter to ensure assessment regulations are being followed. Existing invigilators will be observed conducting an assessment at least once a year.

Accessibility arrangements will be organised in line with the statutory duties contained within the following documents:

- Equality Act 2010

In accordance with the regulations of the Joint Council for Qualifications, it will be necessary for examination entries to be submitted to awarding organisations using a candidate's legal details.

Roles and responsibilities

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of school life, including the provision of extended services. These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, dependent on our current priorities.

- the participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of students and young people and their parents
- preparation for entry to the school
- school policies
- breaks and lunchtimes
- the provision of school meals
- interaction with peers
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam arrangements
- behaviour management approach and sanctions
- exclusion procedures
- school clubs, activities and school trips
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of students for the next phase of education
- learning and teaching and the planned curriculum
- classroom organisation
- timetabling
- grouping of students
- homework
- access to school facilities
- activities to enrich the curriculum, for example, a visitor to the school or external services such as the Police e.g. PC Ross
- school sports
- employees' and staff welfare

Our **Headteacher** will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, students, visitors and contractors are informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy.
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy.
- develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that the school's actions are in line with the best advice available
- ensure that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our **Governing Body** will:

- designate a link governor with specific responsibility for equality.
- support the school in implementing any actions necessary

Our **Senior Leadership Team** will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy.
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.
- with the Headteacher, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues.

- have a designated SLT member with responsibility for Equalities

Our **students** will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the ongoing development of the policy.
- be helped to understand how equality issues relate to them, appropriate to age and ability.
- be expected to act in accordance with the policy.
- be given access to organisations and events which give them opportunities to express their views (e.g. Priory Amnesty Group, Public Speaking competitions, LGBT group)

Our **Parents/carers** will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the ongoing development of the policy.
- have access to the policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements.
- be encouraged to actively support the policy.
- be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the policy.
- be informed of any incident related to this policy which could directly affect their child.
- be given access to a parent forum which will address their views and concerns around equality.

Staff will:

- be given accessible opportunities to become involved in the ongoing development of the policy.
- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them.
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy.
- make known any queries or training requirements.

How we monitor our policy

In line with our equality duties, the development and review of this policy will involve the whole of our school community. We are committed to listening to what they have to say and include people from broad and diverse backgrounds and of different abilities and taking account of a range of protective characteristics including:

- Ethnic and cultural background
- Gender
- Non-binary
- Gender reassignment
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Socio-economic background
- Traveller community

Our students

Issues of diversity and equality form the basis of many curriculum areas such as Life skills, Humanities and in our tutor and assembly programmes. A student panel sits on each of the Learning Area Reviews and have the opportunity to respond to questions relating to issues of equality specifically relating to the subject areas. Students are able to comment, put forward ideas and challenge school procedures and policy via our School and House Councils and via our Student Leadership Structure. Each year Priory students represent Priory at the Regional Youth Cabinet and champion our vision in a wider context. Much statistical research is conducted to plot the success of all our students and the data collected is used to ensure none are disadvantaged particularly those from minority, marginalised or potentially vulnerable groups.

Our staff

All school staff are consulted regularly to monitor the effectiveness of the policy and are invited to join a working party tasked with monitoring, evaluating and developing the policy and procedures within the school. Information is collected from parents, carers and partners in our local community in a variety of ways and the working party will work on ensuring that all the vulnerable groups have suitable access.

How we identify and prioritise our actions

Key to this process will be the implementation of regular consultation and review to collect information about ourselves in a variety of ways. Other people also help us to do this. (Please also see appendix B)

OfSTED inspectors visit us regularly and report on equality issues during our inspection. We collect a range of information relating to incidents of harassment and bullying including those relating to racism, homophobia, disability and gender. Our action plan directly reflects this consultation. We also complete a Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) which means we are constantly monitoring the make-up and needs of our staff and students – and assessing how well we are meeting those needs. We also value more qualitative information which may be given to us through a variety of methods including those passed on anonymously through surveys such as the Safer Schools Survey.

The Local Authority provides us with a range of services which support the equality agenda and helps us to identify our strengths and those areas requiring action. For example we receive regular support from local health partners, Under 19s Substance Misuse service (U19s SMS), Inclusive Learning Consultants, Connexions, Sussex Police, Anti-bullying service, Children's Centres, the Traveller Education and English as an additional language (TEAL) Service and East Sussex Equality and Engagement team. We have established good links with our local and wider communities. We welcome them into our school. From them, we learn about equality issues outside school and can establish mechanisms for addressing them within school.

By listening to those within our community and to our partners, we are able to identify new areas of work, improve existing approaches and focus our energy where it is required.

We use the results gathered from such reviews as a common sense measure to determine whether a policy, practice or project will impact on all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a differential impact on one or more particular group (either positively or negatively). It helps us to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination against certain individuals or groups and that positive duties are promoted equally. It is a way to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our students/s and staff and that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

We are currently seeking the Rights Respecting Schools Award which will be central to our policy.

Commissioned services (procurement)

Increasingly we are directly responsible for the purchase of goods and services such as maintenance, cleaning and security. We work closely with the local authority on procurement to ensure that equality issues are given full regard. When procuring goods and services from external suppliers, we ask the following questions to help ensure that equality issues and duties are taken into account:

- Could the proposed procurement affect the duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity amongst the school community?
- If so, is there a need to include some equality requirement within the contract and what would this be?

We ensure that contract conditions require contractors to comply with the relevant legislation and with our equality policy and we require similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors and teachers) from discrimination on the grounds of gender, transsexual status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled. This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of our local community and wider society. We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators. We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment.

Responding to equality-related incidents

We recognise that prejudice-based harassment or bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, ageism or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour.

We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through our school ethos and curriculum, we want our students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

We will record all incidents that are motivated by racism and report to the Local Authority as requested. We and the County Council will use this information to identify trends and patterns, so that we have approaches in place to provide appropriate responses in terms of support for victims and their families, sanctions and support for perpetrators and their families and education for our children, young people and communities.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

This policy was updated **June 2021**. It will be actively promoted and disseminated via the school intranet and website. Students will have a chance to discuss it during their tutor programme and through the Student Leadership and School Council structures and Parents/carers and staff will be consulted at various stages throughout the academic year.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these within the detailed action plan.

The policy will be implemented within three years at which point it will be reviewed and revised appropriately.

Consultation and review

The school looks to conduct a considered way of determining whether a policy, practice or project will affect all groups equally or whether it potentially may have a disproportionate impact on one or more particular groups.

Such reviews should help us ensure we are not unlawfully discriminating against certain individuals or groups and that we are promoting our positive duties on equality. It is a way to ensure we are meeting the diverse needs of all our students, staff and other key stakeholders and to help ensure that diversity, equality and inclusion run through all areas of school life.

It is a process of thinking that is included in the review of policies as part of the policy review cycle. It is not about more paperwork but is a common sense approach to thinking through how policies and actions will impact on race, disability, gender and other equality areas. (positive, neutral or negative).

If the impact on different groups is not justifiable, the school will seek solutions to overcome this situation.

We believe that involving the children, young people, staff and members of the community who may be affected by the policy, practice or project provides the best opportunity of identifying impact, exploring solutions and supporting implementation.

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It is a process of thinking that is included in the review of policies as part of the policy review cycle and is considered for all new policies and specific projects. It is not about more paperwork but is a common sense approach to thinking through how policies and actions will impact on race, disability, gender and other equality areas. (positive, neutral or negative)

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Action	When	Underway
Wellbeing and equality data collection from staff	Annual staff survey	✓
Wellbeing and equality data collection from parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As part of Parents evening questionnaire ■ OFSTED ParentView 	✓
Wellbeing and equality data collection from students	Annually (survey)	✓
Policy review - SLT & Link Governor	Bi-Annually	✓
Ratification by Governing body	Biennial	✓

Related Policies

Related Documents

- ESCC Supporting Trans Employees Guidance - August 2020
- Accessibility Plan 2018-21
- CPD Form

References

- Equality Act

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Promoting Diversity & Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Disability Equality in Employment
- Grievances Policy
- Attendance Management Policy and Procedures
- Admissions Policy - In Year
- Admissions Policy - Main round
- Attendance Policy

Related Procedures

- Capability Procedure October 2019
- Rewards Procedure 2021

(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf)

- The Equality Act 2010(Specific Duties Regulations 2011 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/2260>))
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