Hillcrest Early Years Academy

Equality Policy

Produced By	L Commander
Date Produced	March 2025
Approved By	Headteacher/ Board of Trustees
Date Approved	March 2025
Review Due	March 2026

Contents

1. Equality statement
2. Legal Duties
3. Protected Characteristics
4. Vision statement
5. Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents
6. Responsibility
7. Breaches
8. Monitoring and Review

Hillcrest Early Years Academy wants to be recognised as a school at the heart of the community, providing an inclusive, safe, caring and stimulating environment in which to learn.

Equality Statement

At Hillcrest Early Years Academy, we are committed to ensuring equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers receiving services from the school, irrespective of race, gender, disability, faith or religion or socio-economic background. We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

The achievement of pupils will be monitored by race, gender and disability and we will use this data to support pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive teaching. We will tackle discrimination by the positive promotion of equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and creating an environment which champions respect for all. At Hillcrest Early Years Academy, we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here.

Legal Duties

As a school we welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010. The general duties are to:

- Eliminate discrimination,
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

We understand the principal of the act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equality of opportunity.

A protected characteristic under the act covers the groups listed below:

- Age (for employees not for service provision)
- Disability
- Race
- Sex (including issues of transgender)
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (for employees)

In order to meet our general duties, listed above, the law requires us to carry out some specific duties to demonstrate how we meet the general duties. These are to:

- Publish Equality Information – to demonstrate compliance with the general duty across its functions (We will not publish any information that can specifically identify any individual)

- Prepare and publish equality objectives which we will review on an annual basis
- Consult all our stakeholders in the development of our equality objectives and report on progress against our objectives on an annual basis

In order to do this effectively we will collect data related to the protected characteristics above and analyse this data to determine our focus for our equality objectives. The data will be assessed across our core provisions as a school, but we will also analyse available data relating to the context of our local community, including hate crime data and demographic information. In relation to school provision we will pay particular attention to the following functions:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Attainment
- Exclusions
- Prejudice related incidents
- Curriculum
- Complaints/Compliments

Our objectives will detail how we will ensure equality is applied to the services listed above however where we find evidence that other functions have a significant impact on any particular group we will include work in this area.

We also recognise that our work on equality is central to the successful promotion of fundamental British values, especially in relation to the values of respect and tolerance and the rule of law. We will therefore ensure that our curriculum helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. We will work proactively to address all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including derogatory and discriminatory language. We will mainly do this through the delivery of our statutory PSHE Curriculum. We will also utilise all other subject areas to foster positive relations and to ensure that we consciously cultivate opportunities to challenge stereotypes and support positive identity development for all our pupils. We will regularly audit our resources, displays, lesson content, and assessment processes to ensure that they meet the needs of all groups. We will scrutinise outcomes across a range of measures, analyse the results and address any identified areas of concern.

We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

In fulfilling our legal obligations we will:

- Recognise and respect diversity
- Foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of belonging
- Observe good equalities practice, including staff recruitment, retention and development
- Aim to reduce and remove existing inequalities and barriers
- Consult and involve widely
- Regularly review our progress

Definitions

Discrimination is unfair treatment towards another or a group of individuals who share one or some of the protected characteristics.

Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Association occurs when someone is treated less favourably because someone they are associated with, such as a friend, family member or carer, has a protected characteristic.

Direct Discrimination by Perception occurs when someone is treated less favourably because someone believes they have a protected characteristic, regardless of whether their perception is correct or not.

Indirect discrimination can be more difficult to identify and sometimes is not intended. It can occur due to a lack of understanding of the law or a genuine error of judgement about an individual. For example, a policy that is applied to all individuals equally may inadvertently disadvantage individuals or groups who have a protected characteristic. It is therefore essential that all aspects of school life and policies are scrutinised carefully to avoid any unlawful provision, criterion, or practice.

Victimisation occurs when an individual has either raised a complaint or grievance that they have been discriminated against based on having a protected characteristic; or has supported someone who has raised a complaint or grievance.

Harassment is any form of unwanted behaviour intended to violate an individual's dignity or create an environment which may be described as hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive. The victim will be subject to this harassment based on a protected characteristic or the perception that they have a protected characteristic, or because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Prejudice can be conscious or unconscious and involves stereotypes, prejudgements, and beliefs (which are usually negative) about an individual, or group of people, based on a protected characteristic.

Our Vision Statement

"Aim high and Achieve"

The journey through Hillcrest Early Years Academy, will give **every** member of the community the courage and self-belief to, 'Aim High and Achieve'.

At Hillcrest Early Years Academy, we have a firm belief that anything is possible and strive to ensure that **all** children can 'be the very best me they can be' regardless of their starting points. All children have the right to be provided with high quality education which is achieved across the Academy through creative, innovative and exciting teaching that will inspire our children to become lifelong learners who are enthusiastic and proud of their achievements.

Our values are the heartbeat of the Academy and promote the very 'magic' of the earliest stages of education:

M- Memories

A – Ambitious Aspirations

G – Growth

I – Independence

C – Courage

At the heart of our vision for Hillcrest Early Years Academy lies the child. All children are different all children are special and should be treated as such. Our primary purpose is to enhance the quality of children's learning through the effective and efficient delivery of the curriculum. We are committed to honesty, sensitivity and responsibility in all relationships. We will adopt a philosophy of continuous improvement in every aspect of the school's work and life.

Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

This Academy is opposed to all forms of prejudice and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice related discrimination may fair less well in the education system. We provide both our pupils and staff with an awareness of the impact of prejudice in order to prevent any incidents. If incidents still occur we address them immediately and may seek support from the Local Authority Equality Team.

Responsibility

We believe that promoting Equality is the whole Academy's responsibility:

School Community	Responsibility
Board of Members	Monitoring of the overall Equality policy and its objectives and holding to account the Board of Trustees and Headteacher within this to ensure effective practices which promote equality are in place.
Board of Trustees	Involving and engaging the whole school community in identifying and understanding equality barriers and in the setting of objectives to address these. Monitoring progress towards achieving equality objectives. Publishing data and publishing equality objectives. Ensuring that staff have access to appropriate training and resources.
Headteacher	As above including: Promoting key messages to staff, parents and pupils about equality and what is expected of them and can be expected from the school in carrying out its day to day duties. Ensuring that all of the school community receives adequate training to meet the need of delivering equality, including pupil awareness. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.
Senior Leadership Team/Phase Leadership Team	To support the Headteacher as above Ensure fair treatment and access to services and opportunities. Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.
Teaching Staff	Help in delivering the right outcomes for pupils. Uphold the commitment made to pupils and parents/carers on how they can be expected to be treated. Design and deliver an inclusive curriculum. Ensure that you are aware of your responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.

Non -Teaching Staff	Support the school and the Board of Trustees in delivering a fair and equitable service to all stakeholders. Uphold the commitment made by the Headteacher on how pupils and parents/carers can be expected to be treated. Support colleagues within the school community. Ensure that you are aware of your responsibility to record, report and respond appropriately to prejudice related incidents.
Parents/Carers	Take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the Board of Trustees of actions that can be taken to eradicate these. Take an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment given to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.
Pupils	Supporting the school to achieve the commitment made to tackling inequality. Uphold the commitment made by the Headteacher on how pupils and parents/carers, staff and the wider school community can be expected to be treated.
Local Community Members	Take an active part in identifying barriers for the school community and in informing the Board of Trustees of actions that can be taken to eradicate these Take an active role in supporting and challenging the school to achieve the commitment made to the school community in tackling inequality and achieving equality of opportunity for all.

We will ensure that the whole school community is aware of the Equality Policy and our published equality information and equality objectives by publishing them on the Academy's website.

Preventing and Addressing Prejudice Related Incidents

We define prejudice-based incidents/bullying in the following way:

Prejudice-related incidents/bullying – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, or because they have a learning or physical disability. It may include misogyny or misandry and be sexist in nature. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

At Hillcrest Early Years Academy we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. This school is opposed to all forms of prejudice, and we recognise that children and young people who experience any form of prejudice- related discrimination

may fair less well in the education system. We recognise that prejudice-based bullying is a form of child-on-child abuse and is therefore a safeguarding concern, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse. We are committed to working with families and outside agencies to proactively prevent incidents and to create an environment in which all members of our school community feel welcomed, accepted, and safe.

We believe every member of our community should be treated with respect and should not be subjected to prejudice or discrimination in any form. This includes staff, parents/carers, Trustees/Members, and visitors to our school. We provide both our pupils and staff with an awareness of the impact of prejudice to prevent any incidents. We will endeavour to proactively tackle all forms of prejudice by ensuring our curriculum is representative of all sections of society and the contributions made by people with different characteristics are consciously embedded across all subjects.

In doing so, we will challenge stereotypes and work towards inclusivity and identity-safe classrooms where everyone feels validated, accepted, safe and a sense of belonging. If incidents still occur, we will address them immediately ensuring that appropriate levels of support are provided to those affected; that we thoroughly investigate all reports/allegations; and that we will apply appropriate sanctions and address offending behaviours through a programme of education.

All adults in our school community are expected to comply with the school's Code of Conduct. Any allegations made against staff will be investigated in line with our policies and procedures relating to staff conduct and behaviour. Any staff member/parent/carer, Member/Trustee or visitor to the school, who is subjected to prejudice-based abuse can also expect to have their complaint thoroughly investigated and will be supported in accordance with their wishes. We review our practice following each incident including what more we might do to prevent further incidents. We recognise that we must not become complacent and will regularly evaluate satisfaction levels in respect of how we have responded to any reports or concerns raised.

Pupils, Including Bystanders/Witnesses

We talk about trusted adults regularly in school to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to. The definitions of victim, perpetrator and bystander are clarified to pupils, as appropriate to develop a shared understanding.

• We emphasise the importance of all pupils (whether a victim or a bystander) reporting concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a teaching assistant, the Headteacher, a MMSA or a member of the office team.

• The member of staff will listen to the pupil and make an initial note of their concerns, they will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported.

• The member of staff will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and categorise it as such and other relevant members of staff will be alerted.

• The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

• Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns using a restorative approach.

We understand that some pupils may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place such as 'Time to Talk' cards which gives children a safe space to talk/draw/write or communicate in whichever form they feel more comfortable with a trusted adult.

Parents/Carers

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying. We ask that parents/carers report their concerns directly to the school rather than discussing them with other members of the school community, either in person or online. The following steps will be taken to investigate:

• Initially, we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher (in person/via telephone call/via Class Dojo) to explain their concerns.

• The class teacher will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss these in detail.

• The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed if the allegation is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

• Following an allegation, the class teacher will make a formal record of this on the school's recording system (CPOMs).

• An investigation into the allegation will be carried out and appropriate follow-up actions identified and taken.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

School Staff

Our staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, following the procedures outlined above in the 'Parents/Carers' section.

Complaints

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our Academy's actions, we ask that they follow our Academy's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website and by request from the school office.

Breaches

Breaches to this statement will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Board of Trustees.

Monitoring and Review

Every four years, we will review our objectives in relation to any changes in our school profile. Our objectives will sit in our overall school improvement plan and therefore will be reviewed as part of this process. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.